



Decision Chart for Culling Cattle in Canada

Making the right decision about when to cull an animal and where to ship them is difficult. The trip a cow takes to slaughter is not always straightforward.

The time from farm to slaughter can be as much as 7-10 days in some cases. This is because they may go through several auctions before making it from the farm to the abattoir. Ensuring we are only shipping cows that are fit for transport is key.

Use the chart on the page below to help make your decisions.

Should I Ship This Cow?

CONDITIONS

IMPORTANT NOTES

YES

An animal is still fit for transport if:

- They are in good body condition (> 2.75)
- There are no signs of lameness and she is standing and walking with strength
- Temperature is < 39.2 °C/102.5 °F
- A cow is bright, alert, and responsive
- Breathing rate is normal (10-20 breaths per minute)
- Treatment has been given in the past, and the cow is through her withdrawal period
- Her milk is normal or only mild mastitis
- There are no other signs of illness
- This might include cancer eye, leukosis/swollen lymph nodes, excessively swollen joints



If you are going to ship an animal, you should be comfortable saying yes to these questions:

- Would I eat meat from this animal?
- Is this animal strong enough to make multiple trips in a truck to be slaughtered 7-10 days after leaving the farm?

A note about shipping lactating animals

Lactating animals may be shipped as long as they are able to:

- Arrive at their destination/slaughter before udder engorgement
- Be milked if need be, at auction or elsewhere in order to continue and finish transport without becoming engorged
- Have a process which is set up/referenced in order to manage/monitor these animals when needed

If the above cannot be managed or that animal has other conditions that hinder its condition then it must be shipped as a compromised animal.

NO - DO NOT SHIP THIS ANIMAL

A cow is unfit for transport if it has one or more of the following conditions:

- Fever (temperature ≥ 39.5 °C/102.5 °F)
- Calving
- Weak/not stable on their feet (moderate to severe lameness)
- Watery/severe mastitis
- Treated, and milk or meat withdrawals are not yet met
- Right displaced abomasum
- Showing signs of pain
- Poor body condition/too thin (< 2)
- She has given birth in the last 48 hours
- Heavy lactation



The following cows should be euthanized — they are not responding to treatment and/or their conditions are untreatable:

- Non-ambulatory/downer cow
- Bone or spine fractures
- Arthritis
- Cancer
- Emaciation (BCS < 1.5)
- Pneumonia that will not respond to treatment
- Uterine prolapse
- Water belly
- Nervous disorders
- Hernias that prevent normal movement

YES, BUT ONLY WITH SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Ship cattle with these conditions to slaughter AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

- Abscesses
- Blindness
- Frostbite
- Mild cancer eye (eye is intact)
- Mild lameness – the animal is still strong
- Left displaced abomasum – without weakness or toxicity
- Lumpy jaw
- Penis injuries
- Mild pneumonia without fever
- Prolapsed vagina or rectum
- She has low milk production



Ship cattle with these conditions to slaughter WITHIN 12 HOURS:

- Bloat
- Hardware with localized signs
- Intestinal accidents
- Recent injuries
- Urethral blockage (very recent)
- Broken tail or jaw
- Smoke inhalation

NOTE

Animals with multiple conditions are not fit to be transported.

Compromised animals should travel in a small compartment, either individually or with one quiet animal.

When in doubt, DO NOT ship her and speak with your veterinarian!