

Transport

Quality Assurance Programme

Mission Statement

“To enhance the profitability of the deer industry by providing a specialist deer transporting service performing to an industry agreed code of operating standards”

“A producer prepares animals to specification, transports them using an accredited transport operator to an approved licenced plant or farm”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Kincaid', with a large, stylized circular flourish at the end.

Brad Kincaid, Chairman, DeerQA Transport Programme

DeerQA Transport Programme

OPERATING STANDARDS

CONTROLLED

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Foreword

These operating standards describe the minimum standards a deer transport operator must satisfy to achieve accreditation under the DeerQA Transport Programme.

This Transport Programme is part of the deer industry quality assurance programme. These programmes support the Deer Industry New Zealand's quality strategy which ensures New Zealand venison is recognised as a high-quality premium product in the international marketplace.

These Quality Assurance Standards must be read In Conjunction with the Animal Welfare Act 1999, Code of Welfare - Deer and Code of Welfare - Transport within New Zealand.

If you require more information about this Programme, please contact Deer Industry New Zealand, PO Box 10-702, Wellington. Ph: (04) 473 4500 or info@deernz.org

Approval Signatures

This manual has been reviewed and approved for use as a standard procedures manual within the New Zealand deer industry by:



Merryn Pugh, Deer Industry New Zealand Representative



Brad Kincaid, DeerQA Transport Technical Committee Chairman

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PROCEDURES

Manual Holder's Responsibilities

Each manual holder will be responsible for:

- the removal and destruction of the obsolete manual
- ensuring manuals are available for use when required:
deernz.org/deer-hub/handling-and-welfare/transporting-deer
- protection of manuals from damage, loss and deterioration
- maintaining the confidentiality of the manuals

Manual Review Process

The process for review and subsequent amendment of this manual is as follows:

The manual will be reviewed annually by the DeerQA Transport Technical Committee.

This review will encompass:

- a) evaluating change request forms
- b) formulating amendments if necessary

You can participate in this review process by submitting areas and suggestions for changes to these standards. Just complete the Change Request Form at the back of this manual and send it to the address shown.

General Principles of Accreditation

The welfare of the deer is paramount

1. The transport operator, rather than the individual driver, will be the accredited body.
2. Transport operators will be accredited on the basis of meeting the standard.
3. It is the transport operator's responsibility to ensure that their management systems, equipment and drivers continue to meet the standards as set down in this manual.
4. Drivers become certified to the programme by attendance at a DeerQA Transport Driver Training Course.

OPERATING STANDARDS

DeerQA Transport Programme

1. The Deer Crate

Standard

For effective and humane transportation, deer shall be transported in purpose-designed and built crates appropriate for the species to be carried.

1.1. PENS

Standard

Deer pens within the crate shall not exceed dimensions of 2.7m x 1.25m and shall be of solid construction.

Qualifier

Using the loading density formula of 0.40m² floor space per 100 kg liveweight deer, "as a guide" this size pen "could" hold up to 8 x 100 kg liveweight deer.

Recommendations

For the cartage of larger animals, e.g. wapiti/elk, it is recommended single animals per pen or when partitions are provided, they may be removed to accommodate these animals.

As a guide 4 x 400 kg animals per double pen (2.7m x 2.5m maximum).

Trophy Stags (refer Standard 4.11).

1.2. FLOORING

Standard

The surface on which deer stand must:

- 1.2.1. ensure secure footing
- 1.2.2. ensure safety and freedom from injury
- 1.2.3. ensure cleanliness
- 1.2.4. ensure adequate drainage

Qualifier

The ideal flooring to meet this standard is steel or alloy mesh with a maximum aperture of 19mm x 19mm. This type of flooring is required for both single and double deck crates. Certain other types of mesh, such as alloy pressed plate, and some types of rubber matting have been approved by the DeerQA Transport Technical Committee. Refer Appendix - Transport of Stud and Trophy Stags.

Approved rubber matting will have apertures with a minimum of 17mm sq and a max 25mm sq.

Solid rubber matting is not suitable flooring for the transport of deer.

1.3. INTERNAL DOORS

Standard

- 1.3.1. Internal doors must secure deer within the pen.
- 1.3.2. They must allow for unobstructed flow of deer through the crate.
- 1.3.3. There must be no protruding catches.

- 1.3.4. They must be of solid construction.
- 1.3.5. Clearance from the floor must not exceed 15cm.

Recommendation

Internal doors should have clearance at the top to allow for the free flow of air.

1.4. ROOF

Standard

- 1.4.1. The roof must be purpose built to secure the deer within the pen and prevent stress.
- 1.4.2. It must be constructed and secured in such a way that it cannot dislodge, flap, or create noise when deer are being transported.

Qualifier

Where canvas/synthetic roofing is used, it must be properly secured. It must not impede ventilation. The minimum fabric weight shall be no less than 440 gsm.

Covers must always be in good condition and consistently maintained.

Covers must be taut at all times and not sag below the line of attachment.

1.5. VENTILATION

Standard

For each pen there must be a continuous opening on the external walls or roof at the top of each pen to allow unrestricted movement of unpolluted air. Total width of openings must be not less than 100mm for each deck; where ventilation is not continuous the areas of opening must be equivalent. Such ventilation must ensure that deer are not heat stressed.

Note

Ventilation is recognised as one of the most important aspects of crate design. It is essential to have a free and unrestricted flow of air through all pens and to this end the standard must be seen as a minimum.

It should be noted that trucks with vertical exhaust systems will be unlikely to be able to meet the requirement for unpolluted air on the top deck.

A free and unrestricted ventilation gap of 100mm minimum can be sited at any distance up the external walls of a deer crate provided there is another gap free or restricted to allow for hotter air to dissipate from within.

Where these 100mm gaps are sited other than at the top of the pen wall, a rod should be attached through the centre of the opening to prevent any legs from protruding through. There should be a minimum opening of 50mm either side of this rod.

For fiberglass crates both the upper and lower rows of ventilation holes on the bottom deck must be open and unrestricted at all times when carrying deer.

1.6. INTERNAL PROTRUSIONS

Standard

Deer crates must be constructed with flush fittings so as to avoid protrusions that could bruise the deer.

Qualifiers

Care must be exercised to ensure internal fasteners, hinges and the like are sited such as to clear all parts of the deer's anatomy.

Any protrusions must be rounded off to ensure they will not harm deer nor injure persons working within the crate.

1.7. POSTURE

Standard

Deer within the crate must be able to display a normal pattern of behaviour.

Recommendation

When transporting large wapiti/elk animals it is recommended they be transported single deck only and in cases of multi-purpose crates, the center or top floors should be folded up. If all floors are folded up, the crate must have an approved type of roof or cover. Refer to standard 1.4

1.8. INTERNAL LOADING RAMPS

Standard

Internal ramps must be at such an angle and of such a surface as to enable deer to maintain footing when walking up and down.

Qualifiers

When in place there must be no gaps around the ramp which could trap the legs of the deer.

When loading and unloading, all guides, flaps and false walls around the loading ramp must be in place.

1.9. DRAINAGE

Standard

All decks must be adequately drained.

Qualifier

Drainage must ensure deer do not get contaminated with effluent.

Recommendation

All effluent should be collected into holding tanks fitted to the truck and /or trailer.

All transport operators should be aware of the requirements and recommendations contained in the industry Code of Practice for the Minimisation of Stock Effluent Spillage from Trucks on Roads.

1.10. CRATE MAINTENANCE

Standard

Crates must be maintained in sound condition, be in a clean and tidy state and be washed out on a regular basis.

Qualifier

When diseased deer (e.g. Tb reactors) have been carried, the crate must be washed out before any other deer are carried.

2. The Transport Operator

- 2.1.1. The transport operator must have documented procedures describing how deer are handled and transported.
- 2.1.2. The transport operator must ensure the use of approved crates and approved drivers at all times

Qualifier

These documented procedures are used to form the basis for audit purposes

3. Driver Training

Standard

All drivers must attend the Deer Industry Training course to obtain a certificate of competence and knowledge of deer handling, transport, welfare and legal issues.

Recommendation

It is recommended that management and dispatch staff also attend these training courses.

4. Animal Handling and Welfare

4.1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEER

Standard

- 4.1.1. The driver is responsible for transporting only fit and healthy deer at all times.
- 4.1.2. The driver is responsible for the safety and welfare of the deer during transport.
- 4.1.3. The driver must ensure that the correct documentation accompanies each consignment of deer.

Recommendation

The farmers, agent or DSP stockman should be present to both load and receive (and sign for) deer, acknowledging their condition, unless by prior arrangement.

4.2. TOOLS

Standard

- 4.2.1. When handling or transporting deer, drivers must not use electrical prodders.
- 4.2.2. Electrical prodders are banned for the use on deer.

Recommendation

The following tools are recommended:

- Shields
- Rattles
- Flappers
- Plastic bags
- Alkathene/plastic hose used as an arm extension
- Dogs should not be used when handling or transporting deer

4.3. BOXING/MIXING OF GROUPS

Standard

- 4.3.1. Groups of deer which have not run together (either on the same farm or on different farms) must not be mixed during transport.
- 4.3.2. Stags and hinds must not be mixed, and age classes shall be kept separate during transport unless they have been previously mixed/ or run as cohorts.
- 4.3.3. Animals of different species must not be transported in the same container, except where individual animals are known to be compatible as per Code of Welfare – Transport within New Zealand, Minimum Standard 7(k).

Qualifier

The exception to this standard is other deer under 2yrs old where farmers have run mixed sex mobs.

4.4. ANTLER AND VELVET

Standard

- 4.4.1. Deer with bleeding antler and deer with hard antler or growth greater than 110mm measured from the centre of the skull, in any direction between the pedicles shall not be accepted for transport.
- 4.4.2. Stags shall not be transported until 7 days after velvetting.

Qualifier

The exception to this being when trophy stags in hard antler are being transported. Refer to standard 4.11.

Spikers (male deer in their 1st year of antler growth) velveted in accordance with the Mechanical Block system using NaturO™ rings may be transported to slaughter within 72 hours of being velveted provided the rings are still attached.

Note

Drivers have the legal right to refuse to transport of velvet stags that have the potential to be damaged during transport.

4.5. UNFIT DEER

Standard

Unfit deer must not be accepted for transportation.

Qualifier

The exceptions are with a Fitness of Livestock for Transport Veterinary Declaration at owner's expense and risk.

The driver has a legal right to refuse to transport unfit deer.

Unfit is defined as any condition which renders the deer physically unable to stand and bear weight on all limbs and unable to undertake the journey without suffering undue or unreasonable pain or distress.

These conditions also include:

- a. any limb or part of limb amputated
- b. scouring
- c. open wounds or lesions
- d. staggers
- e. any hind due to calve within 21 days of due calving date
- f. over-aggressive deer that may be a danger to handlers and other deer

Note

Special conditions apply for emergency transport of otherwise unfit animals, e.g. salvage operations in drought or snow, those covered by a Fitness of Livestock for Transport Veterinary Declaration.

NB All conditions on the fitness to transport declaration must be read and complied with.

4.6. TB REACTORS AND DEER FROM TB ENDEMIC AREAS

Standard

- 4.6.1. Tb reactors shall only be transported to a DSP.
- 4.6.2. Documentation MUST include a Permit to Move issued by OSPRI NZ

Qualifier

These deer shall have appropriate documentation where required and prior notification with the DSP must be made.

Tb reactor deer are identified by orange/red Tb reactor ear tags.

Where deer are being delivered from farm to farm, Tb reactors en route to DSPs shall not be transported on the same unit (TB reactors can only be transported within a separate crate or trailer)

4.7. WEANED DEER

Standard

- 4.7.1. Where deer are transported at weaning, they must proceed directly from farm to farm immediately following weaning and the total duration of yarding and transport must not exceed six hours.
- 4.7.2. These deer, when weaned less than 10 days, must not be transported on the same unit as their mothers.
- 4.7.3. Unweaned deer and deer weaned less than 10 days must not be transported to auction or sale yards.
- 4.7.4. Weaned deer sold at on-farm sales must be weaned a minimum 10 days prior to transport unless transported as per standard 4.7.1.

Qualifier

In emergency situations (e.g. drought, snow) deer with young at foot may be transported, but only with prior veterinary or MPI certification.

Individual hinds with fawn at foot can be transported in a single pen.

Recommendation

It is recommended that all deer be weaned at least 10 days prior to any transport.

It is recommended that hinds not be sent to slaughter within 10 days of their calves being weaned.

4.8. TRANSPORT OF STAGS

Standard

- 4.8.1. Stags (3yrs +) MUST not be sent to slaughter after 14 February or before 14 July.
- 4.8.2. 2yr stags may move to slaughter between 14 February to 1 March.
- 4.8.3. Only stags under 2 years of age can be transported to DSPs during the roar.

Recommendation

With consideration to the date change above, allowance has been made for the 2026 year to allow stags (3yrs +) to move to slaughter up to and including 21 February 2026.

Note

Mixed age stags can show the effects of the roar through to button drop. The greatest care must be exercised when transporting this type of animal.

A deer's birth date is recognised as 1 December.

4.9. TRANSPORT OF PREGNANT HINDS

Standard

Pregnant hinds due to calve within 21 days of due calving date must not be transported.

Recommendation

Pregnant hinds should not be transported to slaughter after 01 October.

4.10. TRANSPORT OF TROPHY STAGS STANDARD

- 4.10.1. Trophy stags must not be transported in velvet.
- 4.10.2. Trophy stags in hard antler MUST only be transported in crates especially designed for this purpose.
- 4.10.3. Trophy stags in hard antler must only be transported in single pens.

Qualifier

For further details refer to Appendix Transport of Stud and Trophy Stags.

5. Appendix

TRANSPORT OF STUD AND TROPHY STAGS AND LARGE HINDS

5.1. PEN SIZES

Standard

Floor areas and minimum heights

Elk/Wapiti

For the cartage of Elk/Wapiti the maximum pen size must not exceed a floor area of 5.5sqm and not less than 3sqm. The minimum height for these pens must not be lower than 1.85m.

Stud stags

For the cartage of individual stud Red Deer and Fallow Deer the maximum pen size must not exceed a floor area of 3.5sqm and not less than 2sqm. The minimum height for these pens must not be lower than 1.5m

Trophy stags

For the cartage of Trophy Stags the maximum floor area must not exceed 6.75sqm and not less than 3.375sqm. The minimum height for these pens must not be lower than 2.0m.

Recommendations

For crates constructed in the "East/West" configuration it is recommended that for the cartage of trophy stags the minimum depth of any pen is not less than 1.4m and for stud deer the recommended minimum width is not less than 1.2m.

5.2. CRATE DOORS

Standard

- 5.2.1. For stud deer the minimum width of all stock access doors to each pen must be no less than 1.0m.
- 5.2.2. For trophy stags the minimum width of all stock access doors to each pen must not be less than 1.4m.

Recommendation

It is recommended that internal doors within crates carrying trophy stags be 1.6m width.

5.3. FLOORING

Standard

- 5.3.1. Flooring for all pens carrying stud or trophy deer must provide safe and secure footing for animals and be of a rubber type compound.
- 5.3.2. Flooring must ensure drainage of effluent and allow for animals to lay down according to their normal behavioural patterns.

Recommendation

The recommended aperture for any rubber type flooring is 17mm. The maximum aperture is 25mm.

It is recommended the minimum thickness of any rubber type flooring is 20mm. This will provide a flexible footing that will alleviate any jarring of the feet of the deer.

5.5. CRATE ROOFS

Standard

The roof of all crates transporting stud deer and trophy stags must be constructed so as not to cause stress to any deer being transported.

Qualifiers

All roofs on single deck crates must be of solid construction of either metal or plywood and secured in such a way they cannot flap or open by themselves.

Where deer are transported on the bottom deck of combination crates the roof of these crates must meet the standards of the DeerQA Transport programme. The upper decks of these combination crates can be folded up to allow for space, but the roof must be in place at all times.

5.6. USE OF DRUGS

Standard

Drugs must not be used to aid any deer in the loading or unloading process.

Qualifier

The only proviso to this is if there is a veterinarian in attendance and that he/she administers and certifies this operation.

Documentation regarding this must accompany any deer and be given to the receiver on delivery.

5.7. UNLOADING OF STUD AND TROPHY DEER

Standard

- 5.7.1. Stud or trophy deer must never be allowed to jump out of deer crates into paddocks.
- 5.7.2. When unloading Stud or Trophy Stags all steps must be taken to always ensure the safety and welfare of these animals.

Qualifiers

These animals should always be unloaded down purpose-built loading ramps where possible.

If no ramp is available, then a suitable loading bank should be used to avoid the risk of any injury to the animal.

The height of these loading banks should be similar in height to the floor of the crate.

5.8. LAIRAGE FACILITY

Standard

- 5.8.1. Lairage facilities must provide for a safe and secure environment to contain all animals being held and allow for these animals to be able to display their normal patterns of behaviour.
- 5.8.2. Water must be made available until yarding prior to transport (Deer COW 2025 Minimum Standard 22c) - deer are not to be held in yards without access to water for more than 4 hours before being loaded for transport.

Qualifiers

Floors within the lairage facility must provide for a safe and secure footing.

Recommendations

Deer should be yarded without feed for a minimum of 4 hours before transportation but for no more than 12 hours (Deer COW 2025 Recommended Best Practice)

Experience suggests that deer are less stressed and travel better when there has been a period of feed restriction prior to transport. Four to six hours of feed withdrawal is a commonly accepted period.

DeerQA Transport Programme Change Request Form

Request made by:

Date:

Details of Change Requested:

Reason for Change Requested:

(If necessary, attach additional pages to this form)

Signature _____

Send to:

FREEPOST No. 3942

DeerQA Transport Technical Committee, PO BOX 10-702, Wellington 6143

or

info@deernz.org

