Sheep on long journeys

Rest, water and feed intervals

**Journey planning and preparation**

1. Bring rests for animals and drivers together where possible, to **minimize transit time**
2. Sheep need **longer resting periods** when they are transported for long journeys, or for more vulnerable sheep
3. **Timing and quality of resting of sheep** on multiple, consecutive journeys should be carefully considered

**Journey time (including (un)loading)**

**Adults:** max. 14 hours + min. 1 hour rest + max. 14 hours
**Unweaned lambs:** max. 9 hrs + min. 1 hour rest + max. 9 hours
**Followed by rest of min. 24 hours (unloaded, and provided with water and feed)**

**Travelling**

1. Before starting the journey or leaving a stop, **make sure that all sheep can access the facilities.** Check water + food quality and quantity. Use food (such as hay and fibre if they are lactating) that the animals are accustomed to eating.
2. **Check** animals at regular rest stops (also after difficult road or weather conditions). Each sheep should be visible (e.g. design of vehicles, distribution of animals, space allowance).
3. Switch on the water system and show the animals that **water is available.** Provide them with water and food at **ground level** and make sure all sheep have access. Encourage water intake (showing animals how the drinkers work, providing water manually or feed first). In case of hot weather (especially during delays), water the animals manually to guarantee that all animals receive enough water. Is there a general problem with drinking? Check the quality of the water.
4. **Monitor the animals** during resting (see ‘Page 2’). Where there is doubt about the fitness of an animal; extend resting period and seek veterinary advise. If journey can continue by solving the problem, make additional checks afterwards.
5. Take special care for **unweaned lambs!** These animals are young and need specific care. They need hands-on assistance of each individual animal (no metal nipples or troughs) and the liquid feeding should have the correct temperature and solution strength, to avoid digestive problems.
6. At place of destination: provide **feed and water** to animals (essential for sheep more than three months pregnant, special requirements for unweaned lambs).
7. **Records** should be kept and made available to the competent authority

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### Inspection of Sheep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverse effect</th>
<th>Clinical/observational indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hunger</strong></td>
<td>• Weight loss (in long journeys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dehydration</strong></td>
<td>• Skin-pincher test</td>
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| **Lack of comfort around resting** | • Tired animals  
• Lack of space to lie down all at the same time  
• Lying down behaviour  
• Lack of space above the top of the head  
• Dead animals due to asphyxia |
| **Heat stress**         | • Panting  
• Respiration rate (low heat stress: 40-60 breaths/min, medium heat stress: 60-80 breaths/min, high heat stress: 80-200 breaths/min, severe heat stress: over 200 breaths/min (Silanikove, 2000)  
• Drooling  
• Position of animals (isolated individuals or group clumped or dispersed)  
• Increased body temperature  
• Mortality  
• Extreme thirst, high drive to drink |
| **Cold stress**         | • Shivering  
• Stand in physical contact with one another  
• Reduced body temperature |
| **Exhaustion**          | • General lethargy  
• Apathy  
• Lack of reaction  
• Inability/reluctance to rise |
| **Injury**              | • Visible signs of injury (bite marks, wounds, bruises, scratches, abrasions) |
| **Disease**             | • Incoordination  
• Posture  
• Limping  
• Teeth gnashing/grinding/bruxism  
• Incapacity to walk  
• Head tilt gait  
• Eye and nasal discharge  
• Difficulty breathing  
• Respiratory sounds  
• Coughing  
• Lethargy  
• Apathy  
• Abnormal faeces |
| **Pain**                | • Evidence of pain on palpation of “injured” area  
• Increased heart rate  
• Teeth grinding  
• Panting |
| **Locomotion problems** | • Slipping and falling events  
• Stiff in gait  
• Slower walking speed  
• Shorter strides  
• Lameness |
| **Fear**                | • Increase in heart rate  
• Increase in respiratory rate  
• Head alert  
• Stand still  
• Escape behaviour  
• Turning away  
• Freezing behaviour  
• Reluctance to move  
• Moving backwards  
• Urination and defecation  
• Teeth grinding |
| **Isolation distress**  | • Isolation  
• Vocalisation  
• Teeth grinding |