

NAVAN VETERINARY SERVICES – JULY 2015 NEWSLETTER

CULL COW WELFARE

There are 26 Livestock Auction Facilities in Ontario, where 140,000 – 180,000 cull cows are sold yearly. The large majority of these (greater than 80%) are dairy culls.

OMAFRA, the Provincial Government Branch responsible for overseeing Ontario Sale Barns, is also responsible for ensuring the welfare of animals arriving and leaving.

The Food Safety and Quality Act and Livestock Community Sales Regulations are two pieces of legislation that allow appointed inspectors to assess animals that appear unfit for slaughter either due to being compromised, diseased, injured or unfit for transport. The various regulations and acts give inspectors a few options on how to handle these animals including euthanasia at the sale barns. Ontario is the only province in Canada that has provincially appointed inspectors at their sale barns.

OMAFRA reports that 40-70 incidents per month where animals are either sent home for treatment or euthanized at auction. Another 10-35 animals are euthanized by sales barn staff each month.

A large misconception is that once the cull cow leaves the farm it will be quickly slaughtered in a day or two. The reality is that these dairy culls often spend 7-9 days travelling between other holding barns, back and forth to various auction facilities before ever reaching a slaughter plant.

A dairy cull that is mildly compromised (low fever, slightly dehydrated, for example) will often be much worse in a weeks time as she floats around the province, not being treated and ultimately being unfit for slaughter when that time arrives.

A much better fate for cows that are mildly to moderately compromised would be the “direct to local slaughter” option.

Almost every producer has “their guy” that will take a marginally acceptable dairy cull. It is OK to tell the Drover to take your cow directly to a slaughter facility that you have made pre-arrangements with. Although the number of these local slaughter facilities are small, below is a list of at least five.

The attitude that *‘once the cow leaves the farm it is no longer my problem’* is probably not the right one. I would suggest that ensuring these moderately compromised cows get to slaughter ASAP is our responsibility and the better decision.

Bilal Farms Inc	Matar Meats	Abdullah Abowath	Mr. Beef	Rideau Meats
1924 Landry Clarence Creek, Ont 613-488-2268 613-762-8604 Kill days - Tues/Fri	2690 Stagecoach Rd Osgood, Ont 613-821-7929 Kill days - Tues/Fri	3944 County Rd 1 Brinston, Ont 613-652-1301 416-843-5043 Kill day – Fri	233 McWatty Rd Pakenham, Ont 613-624-5222 Kill day – Thurs	R.R. 6 Smith Falls, Ont 613-283-3477 Kill day - Wed