



Transporting and selling sheep and cattle with visible tumours and lesions

Current as of July 2023.

This factsheet assists a person responsible for sheep and cattle in meeting their animal welfare obligations when assessing whether animals have visible tumours and visible lesions and evaluating whether they are fit for transport or sale at a saleyard.

What is a tumour?

A visible tumour is an abnormal mass (lump or growth) on the outside of the animal that is visible to the naked eye. In sheep and cattle, visible tumours can occur almost anywhere on the body. Tumours most commonly occur around the eye, face and udder in cattle and the nose, ears, and tail region in sheep.

Tumours begin as a small growth or lesion, can grow rapidly and can become infected or fly struck. Early tumours may be treated surgically by a veterinarian. Left untreated, most tumours will continue to grow and invade deeper tissues and may spread elsewhere in the body.

A visible tumour more than 3cm in length in any direction is defined as a prescribed condition under the Animal Welfare (Animal Welfare (Transport, Saleyards and Depots) (Cattle and Sheep) Regulations 2020 (Transport Regulations). An animal becomes unfit for transport and sale at a saleyard if it has a tumour defined under the Transport Regulations.

What is a lesion?

A visible lesion is a **wound, ulcer, abscess or sore** on the outside of an animal visible to the naked eye.

A lesion may have many causes including traumatic injury, infection (bacterial, viral, or fungal) or cancers. They may discharge liquid, such as blood, pus, or clear fluid depending on the type of lesion. The treatment and prognosis of the lesion will depend on its cause.

A visible lesion that is discharging and more than 3cm in length in any direction and a lesion of the pizzle (prepuce), penis, sheath or scrotum of any size are defined as a prescribed condition under the Animal Welfare (Animal Welfare (Transport, Saleyards and Depots) (Cattle and Sheep) Regulations 2020 (Transport Regulations). An animal becomes unfit for transport and sale at a saleyard if it has a visible lesion defined under the Transport Regulations.

See Table 1 for examples of tumours and lesions on sheep and cattle.

Determining whether sheep or cattle with visible tumours or lesions be transported or offered for sale at saleyard

Under the Transport Regulations you must not supply for transport, load on a transport vehicle or offer for sale at saleyard, sheep or cattle that have any of the following conditions:

- Has a tumour more than 3cm in length in any direction.
- Has a visible lesion (wound, ulcer, abscess or sore) that is discharging and more than 3cm in length in any direction.
- Has a lesion (wound, ulcer, abscess or sore) of the pizzle (prepuce), penis, sheath or scrotum of any size, whether or not it is discharging.
- Is suffering from a condition, injury or disease that is likely to cause increased pain or distress to the animal during transport.

Livestock must be fit for the journey

Under the Transport Regulations, it is an offence for all persons involved in the process to consign or load sheep or cattle for transport, that are unfit to undertake the journey, whether from the property of origin, saleyard or other place.

Sheep and cattle that have been assessed as not fit for transport cannot be sold at a saleyard. If an animal is considered borderline for its fitness to undertake the journey, consider whether the animal's condition will deteriorate during the journey and/or at the saleyard rendering them unfit for sale or further transportation. Animals will be assessed at a saleyard before sale and again before consigning and loading on the transport vehicle for the outward journey.

Exemption

An animal that is unfit to undertake a journey may be loaded and transported only under the following conditions:

- the consignor and/or transporter has advice from a veterinarian that the animal can undertake the intended journey
- the transporter ensures that the animal is loaded and transported in accordance with the veterinarian's advice
- the transporter ensures the animal is transported the shortest distance necessary either to another property or abattoir.

A copy of this advice should accompany the animal to the final destination.

It is strongly recommended the advice is provided in writing. It is up to the consignor and/or the transporter to prove the veterinarian advised the animal could undertake the journey and was loaded and transported in accordance with the advice of the veterinarian.

Animals transported under veterinary advice must not be sent to a saleyard as they cannot be offered for sale or sold.

Appropriate arrangements for livestock that are not fit for transport or sale

The consignor or person responsible for the livestock animal must ensure that appropriate arrangements are made at first reasonable opportunity if it is not fit to be transported or sold at a saleyard.

Appropriate arrangements mean one or more of the following, depending on the condition of the animal:

- separating the animal from any other animal and resting it until it has recovered
- treating the animal as appropriate to its condition, including seeking veterinary advice
- destroying the animal using a method of humane destruction.

At the first reasonable opportunity

At the first reasonable opportunity means appropriate arrangements for the animal are undertaken without delay except where a reasonable delay is caused by a significant reason relating to resources, skills, safety or the immediate welfare of other livestock.

More information

- Animal Welfare (Transport, Saleyards and Depots) (Cattle and Sheep) Regulations 2020
- Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines: Land Transport of Livestock; Livestock at Saleyards and Depots
- Animal Welfare Factsheets
 - Transporting and selling sheep with scabby mouth
 - Are your livestock fit to load?
 - Are sheep and cattle fit to be sold at a saleyard?
 - Humane destruction of sheep and cattle
 - Animal Welfare Responsibilities – Consignors and Transporters
 - Animal Welfare Responsibilities – Saleyards
- [agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare)







For more information and to view the suite of animal welfare factsheets, scan the QR code, or visit: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/resources-and-publications>.

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Table 1 – Examples of tumours and lesions on sheep and cattle

<p>Examples of visible tumours and lesions on sheep and cattle <i>Image Source: Animals' Angels Australia (unless otherwise stated)</i></p>	<p>Fit for transport</p>
  	<p>Not fit to load if more than 3cm in length in any direction</p>
	<p>Not fit to load if more than 3cm in length in any direction</p> <p>Yes fit to load If only one eye is affected and its less than 3cm in length in any direction.</p>



Visible tumour



Source for image above: DPIRD



Not fit to load
if more than 3cm in length
in any direction



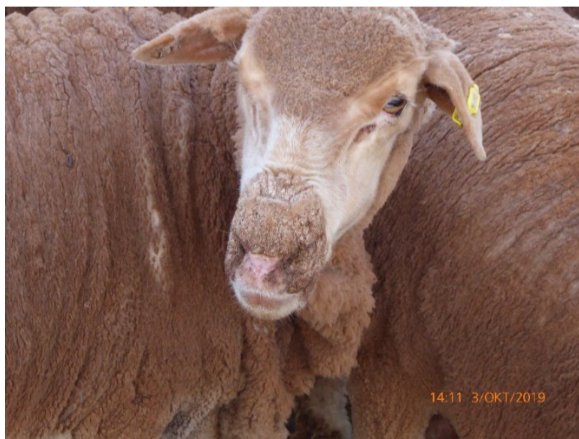
Not fit to load
if more than 3cm in length
in any direction and
discharging



Not fit to load
if more than 3cm in length
in any direction and
discharging



Source for image above: DPIRD



Not fit to load
if more than 3cm in length
in any direction and
discharging