



2 December 2020

Victorian Saleyards/
Regional Livestock Exchanges

Dear Saleyard Managers,

LIVESTOCK HEAT CONSIDERATIONS IN VICTORIAN SALEYARDS

With the arrival of summer, Agriculture Victoria is seeking to remind Victorian saleyard managers to consider their animal welfare responsibilities for the management of animals at saleyards in hot weather.

Saleyard managers are responsible for the overall welfare of livestock at their saleyards. Specific responsibilities of saleyard managers relevant to hot weather conditions include:

- the provision of water for livestock;
- the overall responsibility for penning densities throughout the saleyard;
- contingency plans for adverse weather events (climatic conditions that are likely to predispose livestock to cold or heat stress); and
- arranging for the appropriate care, treatment or humane euthanasia of weak, sick or injured livestock.

Some selling and holding pens at saleyards across Victoria have minimal protection from the sun and livestock may become susceptible to heat stress in hot weather events. Signs of heat stress in livestock can include increased respiratory rates, panting, restlessness, drooling, lethargy and crowding around water troughs or fences in attempt to seek shade.

In hot weather, saleyard managers should ensure that livestock are monitored for any signs of heat stress and that appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk of heat stress in animals. This may include the management of penning densities and provision of water. The management of penning densities is important to ensure that all livestock within the pen can access available water.

Saleyard managers should also communicate regularly with livestock agents and transporters to ensure appropriate management of all livestock on site during hot weather.

The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Saleyards and Depots (Saleyard Welfare Standards) also suggests that:

G1.11 Where extreme weather conditions are forecast, such as extreme hot or cold and wet weather, postponement and rescheduling of sales should be considered to minimise the risk to the welfare of livestock during transport and saleyard processes.

It is the responsibility of each individual saleyard to have appropriate plans in place for extreme hot weather events and to appropriately manage the welfare of all animals on site at all times.

For more information about managing the welfare of animals at saleyards, consult the Victorian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals at Saleyards and the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Saleyards and Depots (see links below). You can also speak with Animal Health and Welfare staff at your local Agriculture Victoria office.

Yours sincerely,



Rachael Holmes

Program Manager Livestock Welfare Compliance

Animal Health and Welfare

Biosecurity and Agriculture Services

Links:

Victorian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals at Saleyards: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/pocta-act-1986/victorian-codes-of-practice-for-animal-welfare/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-animals-at-saleyards>

Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Saleyards and Depots:
http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/files/2016/03/AAW-SG_Livestock-at-Saleyards-and-Depots_2018.pdf