

Do You Really Need the Certificate of Competence to Transport Your Pigs?

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The Welfare in Transport (VVIT) team, part of the government's Animal Health Department, is now centralised in Carlisle. Responsible for enforcing the current rules for transportation of animals throughout the UK, they have declared that the transportation legislation does not apply in any form whatsoever so long as there are no more than 4 animals being transported at one time, and so long as there are as many people in the vehicle as there are animals in the lorry or trailer.

That's right, total exemption.

They say 'If you are transporting one animal one person (up to a total of 4) then you are exempt from the regulations therefore you don't require a type 1 or a type 2 certificate of competence, journey log or vehicle approval.'

However they have not promoted this exemption, which could be so important to producers of rare breed animals selling breeding stock to purchasers over 65km away: a single animal exemption was mentioned buried in the 53-page booklet of general guidance on the regulations but even that exemption was and is still omitted completely from current species specific booklets like Welfare of Animals during transport - Advice for transporters of pigs'.

The WIT team says 'The current version of the 'Welfare of Animals During Transport Main Guidance' document makes no mention of the 4 animal limit, however, we are working on a revised version which is likely to be published imminently at which time this document will be updated on the website The (other) publications that you refer to were produced by Defra and are outwith Animal Health's ability to revise. However, I have passed your comments on to Animal Welfare team within Defra.'

The reason for the exemption has been declared as follows: 'The current welfare during transport rules (Council Regulation EC1/2005 and the Welfare of Animals I (Transport) (England) Order 2006) make no mention of exemptions for individual animals. However the exemption has been retained from previous legislation, by Defra, and with Ministerial agreement in order to meet the "Better Regulation" initiatives of this Government, which were intended, in part, to reduce the regulatory burden placed on private sector businesses.

Defra considered it appropriate to extend the definition of the single animal exemption up to a maximum of four animals (providing each animal was accompanied by a separate individual i.e. for the exemption to apply one person could not be responsible for more than one animal.) However, beyond this, the full weight of the Regulation should apply. '

Defra have advised that since this exemption stems from the UK Better Regulation initiative and is not referred to within the Community Regulation, other member States are not obliged to respect it. Therefore, anyone intending to transport animals internationally should check the requirements for single animal transport with the competent authorities of any Member States that you journey through.

I am sorry that the existing welfare during transport guidance is not as clear as it could have been on this point. However, I have consulted with a colleague who has been assisting Defra with its revision and he assures me that the single animal exemption is more clearly explained in the revised document, particularly with regard to the limit of 4 animals each accompanied by a separate individual.

The revised document will, of course, be publicised via the website.'



By Sue Fildes, pedigree Berkshire pig breeder, who investigated the rules after losing an order for 10 gilts to go to France due to interpretation of these regulations.

