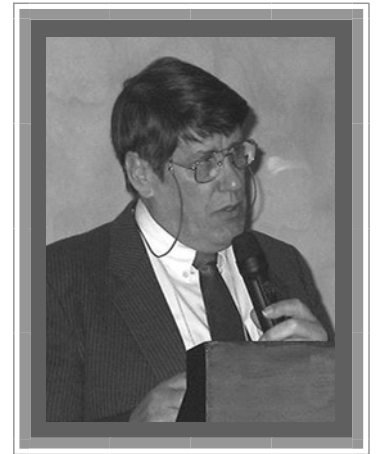


Eddie HARPER, Road Haulage Association

“Past, Present and Future Transport in Europe”



Livestock transport in Europe has been changing over the years. Back in the early 1990's, a consultation programme was in place for a new set of rules for the transport of live animals throughout Europe. This became a Directive and was implemented in the UK under the heading WATO (Welfare of Animals Transport Order 1997). The problem with this was that being a directive, individual countries of the EU could virtually translate it however they saw it. We were told then that all the travelling times for animals that had been decided were the result of scientific evidence. That scientific evidence said that each species could travel a different time. This caused problems throughout Europe as the non enforcement in some parts of Europe allowed the unscrupulous hauliers to take advantage. Vehicles have been followed and a minority found to be transporting animals in appalling conditions. This was highlighted to European members of parliament and has caused yet another set of rules to be proposed. Over the last couple of years interested parties in Europe have been in consultation with their particular Ministries of Agriculture. The new rules are supposedly going to be a regulation which makes all member states enforce them verbatim. The problem is that we have 15 states with 15 different views. From the industries view we could see no problem with the present rules. Lack of enforcement by the EU was the problem on which they all agree.

After much coming and going we are now coming to the main vote on the new proposals, this will be in the middle of April approximately at the same time as the Vienna conference - we may or may not know the results at the conference. It could have a very great impact in the transport of live animals in Europe. The big concern is that if no result is obtained at the voting of Agricultural Ministers meeting in April, it could be many months or years before some sort of order is arrived at because on May the 1st the EU expands from 15 States to 25 and if 15 cannot agree then 25 have no hope.

Mr. Harper's long career in livestock transport has involved him in the worldwide transport of all species, and allowed him to build up a wealth of specialist knowledge on vehicle types and paperwork required. Together with the NPTC, Mr. Harper introduced the Certificate of Competence for livestock drivers. As a Livestock Transport Consultant, He designs courses in Transport and Animal Welfare for various EU countries, and has run courses for DERA, CVL and Local Authorities. In his professional capacity he is working closely with Silsoe Research and the Roslin Institute on a livestock vehicle ventilation project. Mr. Harper has given papers at many conferences and seminars and has previously spoken at the AATA conferences in Houston and Mexico. In 2002 he received the AATA Animal Welfare award for outstanding contributions to International Animal Transportation. He is a member of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) and is the current Chairman of the Road Haulage Associations Livestock Transport Group.

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