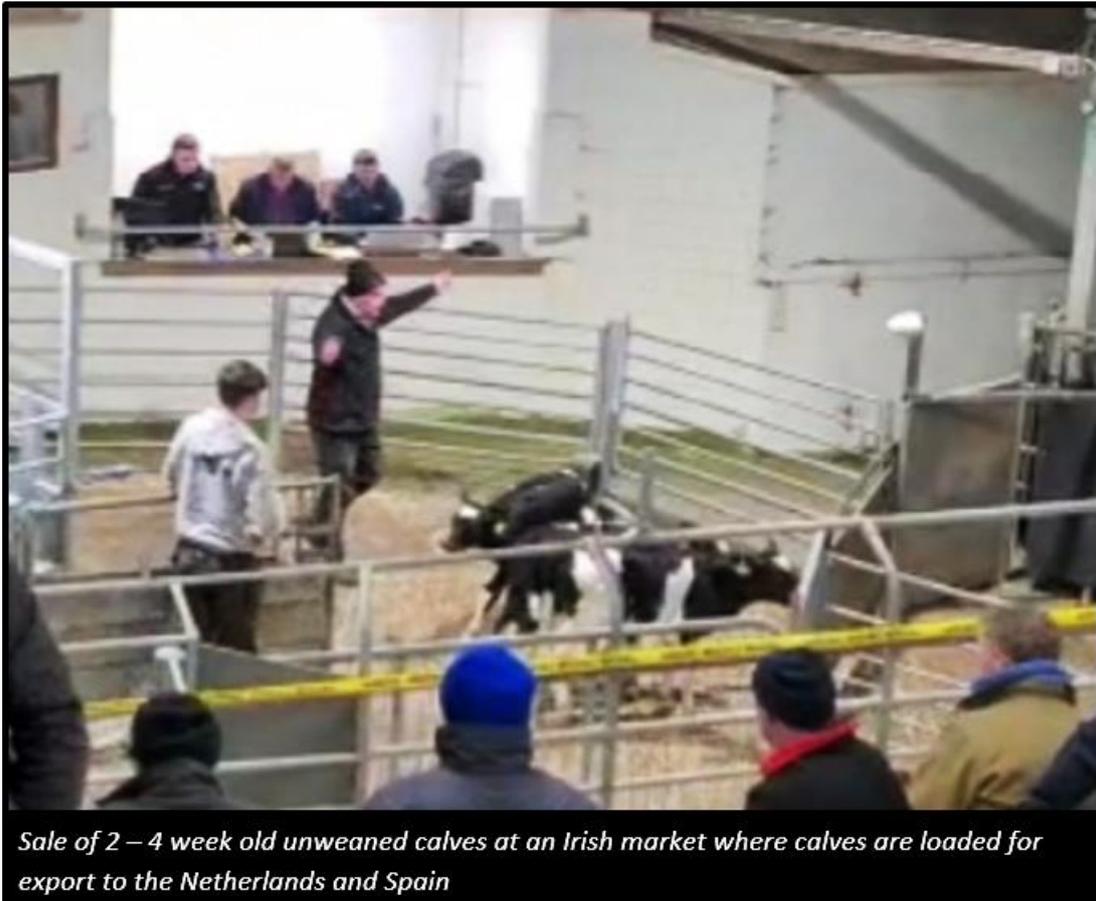


## Transport of unweaned calves: from Irish mart to first control post in France

02.03.22 – 04.03.2022

– external report –





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**Team:**

Eyes on Animals

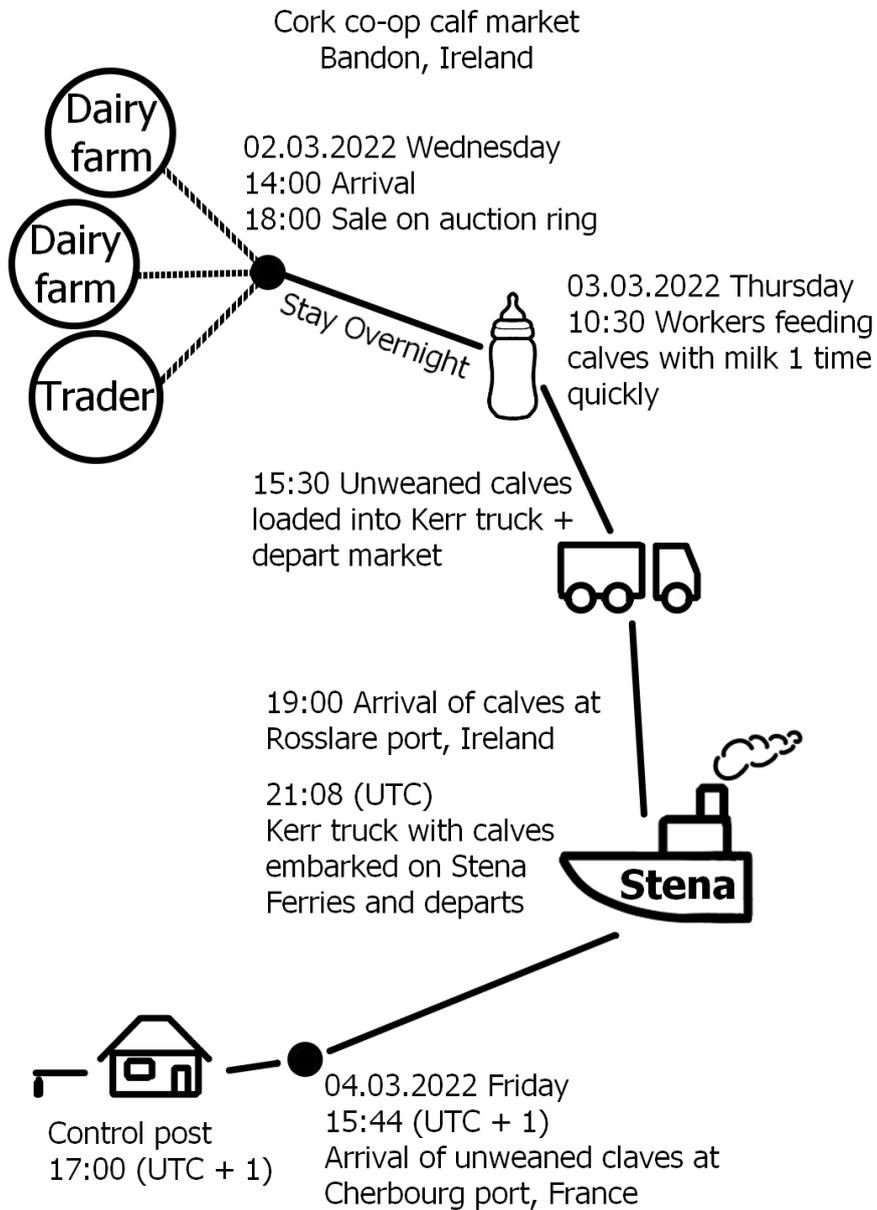
Ethical Farming Ireland

Member of European Parliament, Anja Hazekamp

**Summary:** The purpose of this investigation was to find out what happens to unweaned calves born on dairy farms in Ireland and destined for export. It is well known on the mainland of Europe that Irish calves arrive regularly by boat to France and then onwards to factory farms mainly in Spain and the Netherlands. Animal Welfare Foundation, Animals' Angels, L214, Welfarm and Eyes on Animals have regularly trailed trucks with unweaned calves from Cherbourg port in France onwards to monitor if the calves are unloaded at control posts or not and to clock the total time they are in transit. Calves were observed being beaten at both control posts close to Cherbourg, and even stamped on at one of them. Numerous calves were seen dead upon arrival in France and later when arriving or shortly after arriving to farms in Spain and the Netherlands. Unweaned calves cannot yet eat forage, and they can only get their nutritional needs via milk. Milk is not possible to give to unweaned animals while on board a vehicle. It is also important that the milk be of good quality, the right temperature for it to be digested safely and that each calf gets enough but also not overdrink. Normally, calves at this age suckle from their mother every 4 hours.

EC Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport stipulates that in transit, calves should be given water and if necessary fed after 9hrs and that after the second phase of 9 hrs, they be unloaded at a farm or control post to be rested and fed. However, the ferry journey alone from Rosslare (Ireland) to Cherbourg (France) is 18hrs, during which the unweaned calves are not being fed, as they are stuck on board trucks and it is not possible to feed milk on board to each calf. Taking into account the time waiting to embark and disembark at the ports and to get the calves unloaded at the control posts in France makes this leg of their journey already a breach of the feeding intervals set out in EC Regulation 1/2005 of which Ireland and the Dutch and Spanish importers are supposed to abide by.

But what happens to the calves in Ireland before they arrive in France? Who is feeding them during this leg of their journey, from the farm in Ireland to the ferry port? How often and when? **This investigation confirms that Irish calves as young as 2 weeks and up to 4 weeks of age spend 50 hours in transit after leaving the farm and before arriving at the control posts on the mainland, during which time they are only fed milk once.**



- **1 feeding (between 02.03.2022 ~14:00 and 04.03.2022 ~17:00) in 50 hours**

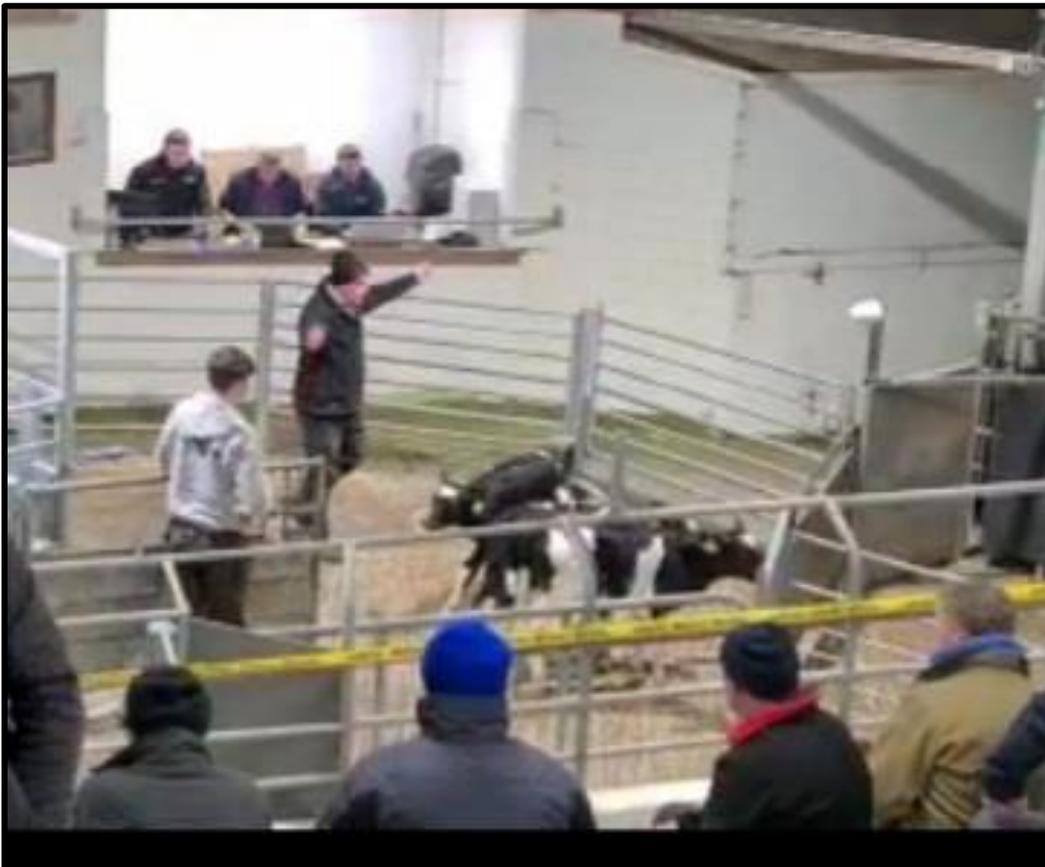
## Observations

### Part 1: Collection of calves for export at Cork Co-op Mart in Bandon

Wednesday 02.03.2022

**18:00** We arrive at Cork Co-op Mart in Bandon. The place is already full of calves. They had been delivered by farmers in small trailers and the mart begins receiving them at 14:00. Inside the mart building, calves are being sold individually or in small groups by passing through a noisy auction ring. The sale is very busy, noise levels are high from gates banging and the tannoy (auctioneer speaker) system, and the environment is very stressful for the calves, many of which are only 10 days old.

**Address:** Cork Co-op Mart, Mill Rd, Clogheenavodig, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland



*Sale of 2 – 4 week old unweaned calves at an Irish mart where calves are loaded for export to the Netherlands and Spain*

**Brief description of mart and recommendations:** The waiting pens are well bedded with straw and each pen has a very clean and well-constructed water bowl for the calves to drink ad lib. This is mandatory, but still we want to compliment the mart for this. It was better than we had seen at Enniscorthy mart where no pens have water and calves are not offered water ad lib. However, some of the pens were overcrowded making it difficult or impossible for the calves to lie down.

What needs to be improved at the Cork Co-op Mart in Bandon is:

1. the noise level from the banging metal gates and hectic workers (solve by placing rubber stoppers or rings on gates and reducing the numbers of workers in the auction ring)
2. the handling of the calves (training employees in humane and professional stockmanship; getting rid of the whip-like tool that one young worker in the ring was using to hit the calves plus forbidding the female worker from pulling on the tails of the calves as tails are an elongation of the spine and this hurts them very much)
3. the frequency and supervision of milk feedings (only fed once the next morning, and despite the well-designed trough, a worker needs to remain in the pen to monitor that every single calf has found a teat and gets enough to drink).



*One particular employee hit the calves too often and too hard.*



*Too many workers in the auction ring = rough rushed handling.*



*Each pen was equipped with a modern water bowl.*



*We saw many calves drinking the water.*



*Many of the calves at the mart had diarrhea, hollow stomachs and were only 10 to 27 days of age.*

Many of the calves stay overnight and during this time are not fed milk.

### 03.03.2022 Thursday

**10:30** Upon arrival we see a large commercial truck backed up at the loading gate. It is from the company Kerr and has the licence plate: P1G BK. There are several hundred unweaned calves from yesterday's sale inside the building. We ask to speak to the manager of the mart, Sean Dennehy and to the official veterinarian from DAFM (Irish authorities) to introduce ourselves and to share our observations, concerns and suggestions.



*When we arrived at the mart the truck "Kerr" (large white one) was backed up and it loaded with calves in the afternoon . MEP Anja Hazekamp took a video note of this.*

The mart manager and DAFM veterinarian confirm that only one feed is given during the time the calves remain at the mart, even for the ones staying overnight. They started feeding them when we arrived at around 10:30. They are hesitant to show us the feeding but eventually do let us walk by the feeding area. The workers are busy placing

calves in pens where a large round bucket is found with teats all around. We see a group of unweaned calves suckling on the teats, but one is running around the group unable to find a free teat. He keeps trying to get one, but the calves feeding push him away.

It remains unknown if a worker really oversees that ALL calves get a teat and get enough time to drink an adequate amount of milk to satiate them. We are not allowed to take photos of the actual milk trough but the mart manager says he will consider sending us one next week showing the milk feeding. We inform both him and the veterinarian of the positive points at the mart but also where improvements can be made. We appreciate that they took the time to talk with us and listen and look forward to achieving concrete improvements together at this mart. We also made it clear that this export route is in violation of the EU feeding intervals because the calves are only fed once at the mart (considered a place of transit according to the EU law) despite remaining there for at least 23 hours, before being loaded onto a truck and then ferry for a 27 hour journey without any feeding.

**14:30** Unweaned calves of 2 – 4 weeks of age are being loaded onto the Kerr truck.

**15:33** After loading the calves, the Kerr truck leaves Cork Co-op mart in Bandon and heads towards the motorway.



**19:17** Kerr truck arrives in Rosslare port and heads down to the port where the Stena Line ferry is waiting. The calves are bawling excessively and can be heard throughout the parking lot. At 19:24 the Kerr truck drives onto the Stena ferry where it waits for over an hour and a half.

**21: 08** Stena Line ferry departs Rosslare and sails for Cherbourg, France.





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04.03.2022 Friday

15:44 local time in France (UTC + 1) Stena Line Ferry arrives at Cherbourg harbour in France

STENA HORIZON	
Recent Port Calls	
Port	Arrival Departure
CHERBOURG (UTC +1)	2022-03-04 15:44 LT (UTC +1)
ROSSLARE (UTC 0)	2022-03-03 2022-03-03 14:15 03 21:08 LT LT UTC UTC

17:00 ETA the Kerr truck would have started to unload the calves at one of the control posts near Cherbourg to finally be fed.

The calves were in transit between the farm of departure and Cherbourg for 50 hours. They spent at least 23 hours at the Cork Co-op Mart in Brandon and were given milk just once quickly during this entire time. Thereafter they spent another 27 hours without milk before arriving at one of the control posts near Cherbourg port in France (they are approximately 10km away from the port.)

It remains unknown how long the calves had to wait at the control post before it was their turn to be fed and what the quality of the liquid was. We know that some control posts only feed electrolytes, and others use very little milk powder, resulting in very watery milk replacement. We would like to request the stakeholders and authorities directly involved in this trade to check on this. It also remains unknown if the handling of the calves at these control posts has improved since the shocking abuse was revealed 3 years ago. Both posts do not communicate with us despite several attempts.



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## Part 2: Violations

The 2 most important violations that sadly continue to be observed on this route are:

1. **Maximum journey times violated: unweaned calves are stuck on a truck for 27hrs, this is much longer than the EU maximum of 19 hours (9hrs driving 1hr break on board 9 hrs driving – unload to be fed and rested for 12 hours).**
2. **Feeding intervals not respected: the feeding intervals of unweaned calves continue to not be respected. Calves of this age are solely dependent on milk and follow a milk diet. In total the unweaned calves spent 50 hours in transit (23 hours at the mart and 27 stuck in the truck during the journey to France) between the farm in Ireland and arriving in France and were only fed once, briefly, in the morning at the mart).**

**EC 1/2005 Annex 1, Chapter V 1.4** The watering and feeding intervals, journey times and rest periods when using road vehicles are defined as follows: **(a)** unweaned calves which are still on a milk diet must, after 9 hours of travel, be given a rest period of at least 1 hour sufficient in particular for them to be given liquid and if necessary fed. After this rest period, they may be transported for a further nine hours; **1.5** After the journey time laid down (9hrs- 1hr- 9hrs = 19hrs), the unweaned calves must be unloaded, fed and watered and be rested for 24 hours. **1.7 (b)** in the case of transport by sea on a regular or direct link between two geographical points of the Community by means of transport loaded on to vessels without unloading of the animals, the latter must be rested for 12 hours (*instead of 24*) after unloading at the port of destination or in its immediate vicinity.

**1.7 (a)** Animals must not be transported by sea if the maximum journey time exceeds that laid down in point **1.2** (1.2 Journey times for domestic bovine shall not exceed eight hours) unless the conditions laid down in points **1.3** (1.3 Chapter VI = Additional provisions for livestock vessels or vessels transporting sea containers) and **1.4**, apart from journey times and rest periods, are met.

*Feeding intervals are to remain the same at sea as on road. This is because the physiological need for food will remain whether a calf is on a truck, at a mart or on a vessel. Here they spent 23 hrs on a mart and were fed just once milk, and then 27 hours on a truck and not fed at all.*

**EC 1/2005 Article:** no person shall transport animals or cause animals to be transported in a way likely to cause undue suffering to them.

### Article 3

General conditions for the transport of animals:

No person shall transport animals or cause animals to be transported in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to them.

In addition, the following conditions shall be complied with:

- (a) all necessary arrangements have been made in advance to minimise the length of the journey and meet animals' needs during the journey;**
- (b) the animals are fit for the journey;
- (c) the means of transport are designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to avoid injury and suffering



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and ensure the safety of the animals;

(e) the personnel handling animals are trained or competent a appropriate for this purpose and carry out their tasks without using violence or any method likely to cause unnecessary fear, injury or suffering;

(f) the transport is carried out without delay to the place of destination and the welfare conditions of the animals are regularly checked and appropriately maintained;

**(h) water, feed and rest are offered to the animals at suitable intervals and are appropriate in quality and quantity to their species and size**