

OriginalStudy

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Compliance and non-compliance in the transport of animals in the Calabria Region

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Abstract

Despite the strict rules of the current legislation, road transport origins countless stress factors to animals. The purpose of this retrospective study is to assess the current welfare conditions during animal transport in Calabria and all related operations in the three years 2013-2015. The results showed that during this period 2015 the checks carried out by regional police are increased whereas sanctions imposed are decreased. The most frequent irregularities registered regard documentations (74.8%), animal welfare irregularities shows low incidence (6.5%), and percentage of irregularities regarding inadequate of the vehicle is halved in 2014 and 2015 respect to 2013. Data reported demonstrate the need for the competent Authorities to continue in their inspection actions in order to contrast the irregularities in the animal transport and improve animal welfare.

Key-Words: animal transport, animal welfare, official controls

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Introduction

Currently, road transport of live animals is the most common mode of transport for livestock production species and represents an important global business due to its flexibility and speed. The most of the animals of zootechnical interest are subjected at least once in their life to this kind of transport, which can cause important factors of stress.

Animal welfare is a very important status, but still in its essence it is widely debated. Over the years many definitions have been elaborated on the "delicate" concept of animal welfare. Among these, probably, one of the most used is proposed by Donald M. Broom in 1996, according to which, "the welfare of an individual is its state as regards its attempts to cope with its environment" (1).

The European Union has been at the forefront of legal innovation in the field of welfare and in the context of animal welfare issues, transport has been and still is the cause of much controversy.

In particular, the legislation on animals protection during transport has continuously evolved and actually, in Europe the Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 regulates the transport of live vertebrate animals carried out within the Community, including the specific checks to be carried

out by officials on consignments entering or leaving the customs territory of the Community, and D.Lgs 151/2007 establishes the sanctioning provisions for the violation of the provisions of Regulation (EC) 1/2005 (2, 3). Despite the strict rules of the current legislation, road transport origins countless stress factors to animals. This would have a negative impact on animal welfare leading to decrease in the quality of their products and in some cases to death of the animals. The purpose of this retrospective study is to assess the compliance of animal's road transport to European regulation in Calabria during the years 2013-2015.

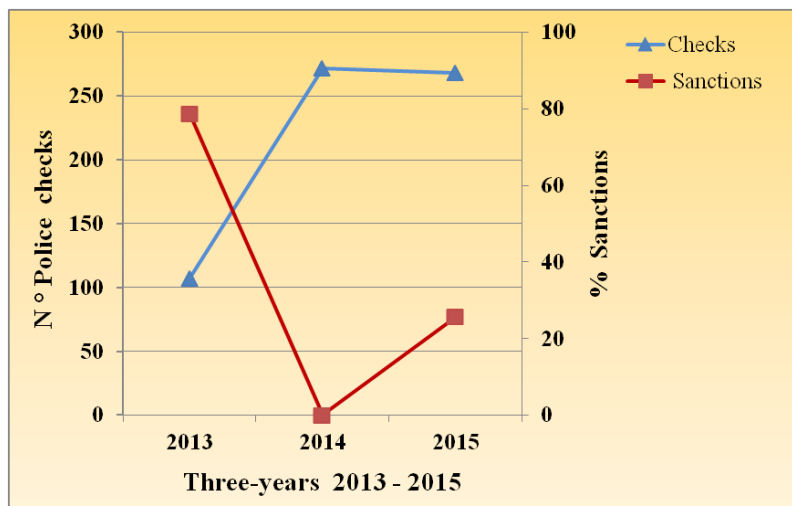
Material and Methods

All data were provided by Department of Public Safety of the highway patrol for Calabria, Ministry of Interior, thus limiting the availability of further information. Data regarding the years 2013-2015 in Calabria were analyzed and categorized in four classes on the basis of violated articles of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 and D.Lgs 151/2007 that regulate the transport of live vertebrate animals. The four classes are: adequacy of means of transport, animal welfare, non-observance of transportation practices and enclosed documents.

Results

The results of survey showed that during the period 2013 – 2015 the official checks carried out by Calabria police are increased from 107 in the year 2013 to 268 in 2015 (table 1). At the same time, we observed the slightly reduction in the number of sanctions imposed (79 in 2013 to 69 in 2015) (table 1).

Figure 1. Trend of Police checks and sanctions during the three-years 2013-2015



The incidence of sanctions imposed on the total checks carried out drastically decreases from 78.8 % in 2013 to 25.7% in 2015 (Fig. 1), and during the period 2013 – 2015, the overall incidence of sanctions was 33.1%. The Police checks and related sanctions concern various aspects related to the transport of animals as adequacy of means of transport and animal welfare. On the total irregularities

registered during 2013 - 2015 emerges that, on average, the 74.8% regard not compliant documentations, 12.6% inadequate of the vehicle, whereas animal welfare irregularities (watering/feeding/travel and rest periods) shows a low incidence (6.5%). Furthermore, the non-observance of transportation practices represents the 4.2%, while the class of "Other non-compliance" reached 1.9% of irregularities. Analyzing in detail the data reported year by year (tables 2 – 4), can be observed as irregularities concerning the accompanying documentation is the main problem found representing the 67.1% of irregularities in 2013 until to 86.4 % in 2014. Contrary, the % of irregularities regarding inadequate of the vehicle is halved in 2014 and 2015 respect to 2013 (table 2 – 4). Notably, the irregularities concerning animal welfare show a growing trend passing from 2.5% in 2013, to 4.0% in 2014 until to 11.6% in 2015.

Table 1. Controls and sanctions registered by Calabria police during three years (2013 – 2015)

YEAR	CONTROLS	N° SANCTIONS	% SANCTIONS
2013	107	79	78.8
2014	272	66	24,3
2015	268	69	25.7
TOTALE	647	214	33.1

Table 2. Type of irregularities found in 2013

YEAR 2013		
TYPE OF IRREGULARITY	N°	%
DOCUMENTATION	53	67,1
INADEQUATE OF THE VEHICLE	16	20,3
ANIMAL WELFARE	2	2,5
NON-OBSERVANCE OF TRANSPORTATION PRACTICES	5	6,3
OTHER NON COMPLIANCE	3	3,8
TOTAL	79	100

Table 3. Type of irregularities found in 2014

YEAR 2014		
TYPE OF IRREGULARITY	N°	%
DOCUMENTATION	57	86,4
INADEQUATE OF VEHICLE	5	7,6
ANIMAL WELFARE	4	4,0
NON-OBSERVANCE TRANSPORTATION PRACTICES	0	0
OTHER NON COMPLIANCE	0	0
TOTAL	66	100

Discussion

The analysis of the irregularities detected during the inspections of the Calabria Regional Police on the protection of animals during transport in the three-year period 2013-2015, highlights the need for the competent Authorities to continue their actions and in the same time reveals some critical issues. Regardless of the type of transport, there is a persistent difficulty in satisfying the requirements of the accompanying documentation and the inadequacy of the means of transport. In fact, these are the classes where non-conformities have been ascertained and which have given rise to sanctions imposed.

Table 4. Type of irregularities found in 2015

YEAR 2015		
TYPE OF IRREGULARITY	N°	%
DOCUMENTATION	50	72,5
ANIMAL WELFARE	8	11,6
INADEQUATE OF THE VEHICLE	6	8,7
NON-OBSERVANCE OF TRANSPORTATION PRACTICES	4	5,8
OTHER NON COMPLIANCE	1	1,4
TOTAL	69	100

It is also necessary to pursue with Police controls on the territory, as the results show a very interesting data: with the increase in controls, sanctions decrease. In fact, this study shows that the checks carried out on livestock production vehicles in 2013 increased in the following two-year period with a simultaneous reduction of the total sanctioned infringements of around one third. In details it observed a positive impact on improvement of means of transport, but not on animal welfare that continues to be a growing problem. The animal welfare is expected to be correlate to conditions of transport, but in this work data analyzed regarded only the type of article violated and the number of sanctions per year. In fact, a limit of this study is that the evaluation of animal welfare was not established through a clinical visit.

The general turnaround will be possible only with an action that convinces all the operators of the sector, including the competent authorities, that through a greater attention to the welfare of the animal at zootechnical production at all stages of life, the entire territory will have objective benefits, both in economic terms and in terms of image.

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated” (Ghandi).

Conflicts of Interest: There is no potential conflict of interest, and the authors have nothing to disclose. This work was not supported by any grant.

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