

Livestock transport

THE NEW ZEALAND LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT Assurance (NZLTA) Programme which came into effect at the end of May is a positive outcome for livestock transport operators, says Road Transport Forum senior policy analyst Mark Ngatuere.

The programme covers cattle, sheep, lambs, goats and calves and Ngatuere says that "one of the major positives is that the NZLTA has been drawn up by the parties involved in livestock transport, not by officials, so it has meat processor buy-in. The Forum has also had major input into many of its provisions."

The NZLTA was inspired by the meat processors' need to satisfy customer demands for greater assurance that all livestock is transported safely and efficiently and according to the Code of Welfare requirements.

Not all processors have signed up at this stage but the NZLTA includes AFFCO NZ, Canterbury Meat Packers, Ovation NZ, Silver Fern Farms and some subsidiary companies: "That's a high proportion of NZ's processing capacity," Ngatuere says.

NZLTA participation requires drivers to be suitably trained - by trainers approved by the National Livestock Transport and Safety Group (NLT&SG) and by NZLTA representatives. Trainers have to apply to the NLT&SG for endorsement and are then provided with training guidance and relevant information.

"The training guidance will be set by the Forum, in association with NZLTA members, including AsureQuality. The Forum and industry representatives will be responsible for developing training material."

Trainer numbers will be limited and it's initially expected that preference will be given to suitably-experienced livestock transport operators and other similarly-experienced industry participants. Once trained, drivers will be registered on the NZLTA driver database, which will be maintained by the NZLTA Programme, with web access for programme members and transport operators. Drivers already registered with NZLTA member organisations through recognised training programmes don't have to complete further training.

Transport operators applying to join the NZLTA Programme must provide a current driver register that includes the drivers' full names, colour or photocopy images of the drivers' licences and their training records, including dates and the names of the trainers.

Application forms for both operators and drivers are available from the Forum and AsureQuality. Non-accredited operators have until November 31 to complete the programme requirements. After that they will not be able to transport livestock to member companies.

Truck, driver and animal welfare audits are free and will be

scheme is good news

conducted by AsureQuality and meat processor staff at the meat processors. Transport operators will be audited free every 18 months by AsureQuality.

There are a whole range of benefits from this approach, Ngatuere says: "Internalising the training regime within the industry will substantially reduce costs and streamline processes. It addresses animal welfare concerns through increased training and creates a single animal transport assurance programme."

"This is of real benefit to livestock operators, as the NLT&SG has become increasingly concerned at the plethora of such programmes. This should reduce the number to two," Ngatuere says.

Other advantages are that the NZLTA incorporates the Forum's and the Ministry of Primary Industries' electric prodder guidelines and acknowledges the Occupational Safety and Health benefits of responsible prodder use. The NZLTA also increases support for the Forum's Stock Crate



The New Zealand Livestock Transport Assurance Programme creates a single assurance programme used by most of the major processing companies

Code for transporting livestock.

"Overall the NZLTA is a significant development and proves how sensible, cost-effective measures can be put in place when all the parties involved are prepared to work together," Ngatuere says.

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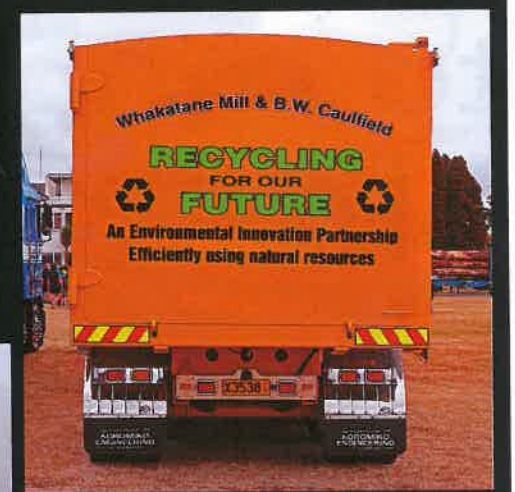


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