



PHOTOS BY SUSAN PERRY

Long-distance Transportation

Cattle can be transported long distances comfortably with these tips.

by Kasey Brown, associate editor

The National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) changes locations every year, and with that move comes transportation needs. Whether in the Midwest or elsewhere, there are still some states that have a long way to travel. Keeping cattle comfortable is paramount in long-distance trips. Groups from three states with plenty of travel experience give their tips for making the trip bearable.

Single-family travel

Susan Perry, Prather, Calif., has been to every NJAS since 2005 with her family, which

means they have driven as far as Harrisburg, Pa. — 54 hours of road time. They live in the middle of California, so it takes about six hours just to get out of the state.

Because California is so hot in the summer, she explains, they determine the start time of the journey by the weather and the route. Depending on the route they need to take — whether through Las Vegas, Nev., on the way to Denver, Colo., or through the desert of California — they always try to hit the hottest areas at night. This could mean

leaving as early as 4 p.m. or as late as 8 p.m.

“We have three drivers, so we can stay on the road longer. Well, really we have two and a half drivers,” she jokes. “One of our kids is in training to drive the truck and trailer, though our kids never drive at night.”

Living so far away from most NJAS locations means that at least one layover is always necessary. Perry’s sister lives in Oklahoma, and her brother-in-law works for Express Ranches in Yukon, Okla., so they always plan the first stopover in Oklahoma. Additionally, her oldest son graduated from

Oklahoma State University and lives in Stillwater, Okla., so he joins them at their first stop,

which gives them another driver for the last leg of the trip.

The stop lets the calves get off the trailer and get comfortable. She says they feed and water the calves twice a day, sometimes in the trailer, depending on where they are. She adds that when the calves eat is when they get to have a sit-down meal. Most stops are only for fueling. Bathroom breaks and food are grabbed at fuel stops.

The more distant shows require two layover stops, and planning is required. Perry says travel planning starts a few months



► Above: Macy and Colby Perry, Prather, Calif., pose with Flat Andy during one of their treks to NJAS.

before the NJAS. The California contingency attending NJAS lives in different areas of the state, so each family makes their own travel arrangements and schedules. However, sometimes they can assist each other with planning.

Indianapolis is 750 miles away from their stop in Oklahoma, which is already 24-26 hours away from home, so they didn't need two stops this trip. For Pennsylvania, she called Gary Dameron in Illinois, and they stopped there. Once, when plans fell through, she searched the Internet for a horse motel, and she called the owner at 6:30 a.m. It turned out that the owner's kids had shown cattle, and they were able to stay there comfortably.

To stay entertained in the truck on the way there, she notes that movies, games, Flat Andy, books and family conversations help pass the time.

"These trips are our family vacation," Perry says. "Our family is closer from participating in the National Junior Angus Show — our oldest still likes to go even though he has aged out.

"We had it figured that the trip to Pennsylvania NJAS would cost the same as a trip to Hawaii. We offered that to the kids, and they wanted to go to NJAS."

Learning on the way

The Denny family, Don, Wendy and Dylan, from Lubbock, Texas, takes a slightly different approach. They stop every 4 hours to check the untied calves, whether they need fuel or not. Indianapolis is the third NJAS they have attended. This year, they had a layover in Washington, Mo. Don works in printing and had a colleague with the American Hereford Association who referred them to a cattleman in eastern Missouri. They say that even though they didn't show Angus and didn't know the Dennys, cattlemen will offer help if you need it. Those in the agriculture community are always willing to help.

The Dennys always try to see one sightseeing location during an NJAS, though the stopover in Missouri was interesting in itself. Wendy explained that the barn was built in 1908, and the ranch had a lot of interesting history that the Missouri family was willing to share. However, in most cases, sightseeing is reserved for a non-show day at NJAS because the cattle must be kept comfortable on the trip.

Dylan says one of his favorite parts of traveling to NJAS is seeing the different countryside. The Denny family uses the



► The cattle get fed and watered twice a day, sometimes on the trailer, depending where they are.

windshield time to learn about the different areas of the country they are seeing.

Group travel

The New York contingency traveled to Indianapolis a bit differently, but still had a long trip. Randy and Kathie Librock say this is their first NJAS taking cattle, and it was

certainly a new experience. The New York group carpoled from three different areas of the state, each group with a trailer and an accompanying vehicle. The Librock trailer traveled 537 miles, while the other two trailers traveled 585 and 725 miles.

Kathie explains, "All of the trucks and trailers had a travel buddy, just in case something happened. This was really helpful, especially since it was the first time most of us had traveled that far with cattle."

The New York group started planning for the 2014 NJAS about a year ago, initially just testing the waters for interest in attending. In March, a more concrete idea of who was going formed, and then they coordinated who would bring what equipment, etc. Kathie says the group really finalized plans at the beginning of June, and NJAS attendees touched base periodically.

She notes that the New York group took cattle to the NJAS in Harrisburg, Pa., which was their biggest group so far. Most of the families who attended this year were new to the NJAS.

"We made the trip in one basic blast," says Randy. They left at 11 p.m. and drove through the night so it was cooler for the cattle. They only stopped for fuel, though he admits they did stop for breakfast so moods would brighten. At that point, they were about an hour away from Indianapolis. They arrived at the fairgrounds at 9:15 a.m. Had the trip been farther, they would have planned a layover.

The original plan was for all three groups to drive out together, though one group was delayed because the driver had to work late.

The cattle were well-adjusted for the trip from previous planning. Kathie explains they had been tying the calves at 9 p.m. and keeping feed and water till the morning at home before making the trip. When they checked on the calves during the trip, half of them were lying down.

They agree they were lucky to send feed and hay ahead of time on a separate vehicle. This aided in airflow in the trailer, in addition to making some adjustments to the trailer to increase ventilation.

No matter where the NJAS occurs, some families will have farther to travel than others. With planning ahead, coordination with other cattle breeders and mindfulness of cattle comfort, the trip can go off without a hitch.



Tips for long-distance trailer trips

Susan Perry, Prather, Calif.; Don and Wendy Denny, Lubbock, Texas; and Randy and Kathie Librock, Gasport, N.Y., all have experience traveling long distances to the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). Keep cattle comfortable on long trips with the following tips.

- Plan ahead.
- Make a checklist.
- Travel at night.
- Bed trailer heavily with wood chips and rubber mats.
- To avoid creating extra heat, don't feed hay during the day.
- Increase ventilation in the trailer.
- Supplements can help keep cattle on feed.
- Bring some water from home to mix with the new location's water to keep cattle drinking.
- Tie cattle low in the trailer.
- Send feed and hay ahead of time, if possible.
- Use connections, within your state or not, and don't be afraid to ask for help.