No, Not the Trailer!

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This experiment was conducted to determine the effects of stress on cattle due to transport. In order to determine the effects of stress, eight red angus heifers were selected to participate in the experiment. Three vital signs: heart rate, body temperature, and respiratory rate, were recorded in order to indicate the stress. Each heifers' vitals were recorded prior to be being trailered. In order to perform this safely, each heifer was run through gate system. The animal was allowed time and fed grain to reduce any added stress that would produce invalid results. All eight heifers were then loaded into the trailer. The animals were packed into the trailer, which allowed for vitals signs to be recorded without any restraints. The heifers were then driven for a period of thirty minutes. Following the thirty mintues, vitals were recorded. Five of the eight were then unloaded, adding excess room for the animals to stand and move around in the trailer. The remaining three heifers were then driven for an additonal thirty minutes. Vitals were recorded directly after the thirty minute drive. Data recorded from the experiment presented that the animal was the most stressed following being loaded. Data also showed that the respiratory rate increased significantly due to the stress. Heart rate also increased, however it did not increase as significantly as the respiratory rate. The heifers seemed to settle down after the thirty mintues of driving. The three that were trailered alone saw a decrease in pulse, and heart rate after the five were unloaded. In conclusion, cattle experience the most stress during the loading process. It was also found that cattle are able adapt to the trailer after it is driven for a period of time, which reduces the stress already created by loading.

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