

© 2012 Universities Federation for Animal Welfare  
The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead,  
Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK

*Animal Welfare* 2012, 21(S2): 87-94  
doi: 10.7120/096272812X13353700593725  
ISSN 0962-7286

## **Welfare during gathering and loading of deer bred for meat in Italy**

D Quilquini\*<sup>†</sup> and I Alpigiani<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>†</sup> Consultant, Project Manager Agriconsulting Europe SA, 36 Avenue de Tervueren, B-1040 Etterbeek, Brussels, Belgium

<sup>‡</sup> University of Parma, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Animal Health, Food Inspection Unit, Via del Taglio, 10- Parma, 43126, Italy

\* Contact for correspondence and requests for reprints: d.quilquini@aesagroup.eu

### **Abstract**

---

The aim of this study was to evaluate welfare status and the implementation of Regulation (EC) 1/2005 during the gathering and loading of deer (*Cervus elaphus*) bred for meat in Northern Italy. Four journeys overland along with related operations of 45 deer, destined for game farms, were observed over a period of four months. Planning, animal-management procedures, equipment and facilities, such as enclosures and corridors, influenced the success of the operations and affected the safety of animals and operators. Environmental factors, such as land inclination, were also extremely influential. Elements of the gathering technique led to stress and hyperventilation in a number of animals that were rounded up. Chemical restraint of deer was complicated by consequent physical manipulation and an inability to control withdrawal periods in game reserves. Where facilities were specific to deer, animals displayed no signs of distress and loading was carried out in the absence of stressful behaviour. Instances in which means of transport were non-specific for deer were characterised by falls, escape and trauma during loading and unloading. Where operators had been trained and had extensive knowledge of deer physiology and behaviour, welfare and the safety of professionals were promoted along with an overall regard for the relevant legislation. This study demonstrates a number of the challenges associated with deer transport and related activities. The paucity of specific legislation regarding the management and transport of farmed deer and the absence of European standard procedures have created a lack of harmonisation in transport procedures, ultimately jeopardising the welfare of deer.

---

**Keywords:** animal welfare, deer, legislation, loading, stress, transport