

Re: Submission to The Independent Review of Live Export Livestock

I am so strongly exposed to live export that this is the first submission I have ever written.

As Mahatma Ghandi stated "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. I hold that, the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man"

OIE guidelines do not require stunning before slaughter of cattle. Without stunning, cattle can exhibit indicators of possible consciousness for up to 2 minutes after the throat is cut, leading to a slow and pain death.

*Our review of the literature on frontal cortex development enables us to conclude that **all mammals**, including rats, have a sufficiently developed prefrontal cortex to suffer from pain.(1)*

I am also concerned about the stress that the cattle undergo during transport. I believe the trip by sea can take 3 days or longer depending on the weather. Cattle from remote areas that are not used to handling would find this whole experience very stressful.

The Humane Society gives evidence of this:

*"The suffering inherent in the live export trade was highlighted when in January 1999, 800 cattle suffocated on a ship en route from Darwin to Indonesia. The dead animals - about 80% of those on board the vessel bound for Irian Jaya - were thrown overboard. In 1996 the Guernsey Express sank killing 1,592 cattle. In 1998, 154 cattle and 283 goats died after a financial dispute delayed unloading of the Anomis in Malaysia. Also in 1998 346 head of cattle perished on the Charolais Express en route to the Middle East. Another 50 died while in port in Jordan and a further 174 injured or ill cattle were rejected on arrival in the Middle East. These animals were apparently killed and disposed of at sea on the return journey.*

*Further mass mortalities include in 1999, 829 cattle suffocated due to ventilation failure on the Temburong during a voyage from Darwin to Irian Jaya; in 1999, 300 cattle died of injuries when the Kalymnian Express met a cyclone on a trip from WA to Indonesia; in 2000, 99 cattle died when the NV Narvantes travelling from Darwin to Jakarta hit bad weather; in 2002, 200 cattle died due to transport delays on the NV Maysora on a trip from Australia to Israel; in 2002, 880 cattle and 1400 sheep died after the NV Becrux met extreme temperatures in the Arabian Gulf." (2)*

According to a report in 2004 the Australian Government introduced tough new live export standards to ensure that live animals will be treated humanely. Obviously these standards were not adequate, and one would question what could change. (3)

*Dr Reeve-Johnson said he had witnessed first-hand the inner workings of the "fundamentally flawed" live export industry where livestock companies were allowed to be self-policing.*

*He had a blunt warning for Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig: ensure exporters cannot directly employ or pay the officials who should be providing independent advice on animal welfare standards -- whether in foreign abattoirs or on the ships that take the animals there. In 2008, Dr Reeve-Johnson was one of several vets trained by AQIS to verify animal welfare standards on export ships in the wake of the death of more than 5600 sheep on the Cormo Express in 2003. It was carrying 50,000 sheep.*

*On his second journey on a livestock ship, Dr Reeve-Johnson kept daily records of the conditions of the animals. When more than 2 per cent of the goats on board died, he followed AQIS protocol and notified the commonwealth quarantine body immediately.*

*Speaking to The Australian, Dr Reeve-Johnson said that while ever exporters employed independent auditors or vets charged with verifying animal welfare standards, the industry remained at risk of a conflict of interest.*

*"There is a fundamental problem in the way the industry is run," he said. "It's been given the trust of being self-policing and with that comes responsibility which I don't think is being taken".(4)*

Some of the arguments for continuing Live Export say that the Indonesians don't have access to freezers, but that doesn't seem to be the main reason for the preference for live export.

*"Strong economic growth in most countries fosters increasing demand for beef. Also, as incomes rise, demand increases for fresh as compared with frozen meats. The other side of the coin is the contraction of demand when economies falter. The Asian economic crisis of 1997/98 is evidence of this, when currency values in Indonesia and the Philippines fell, import demand collapsed (5)*

The following is an excerpt from *The Truth About Live Export* by Leading demographer Tony Ryan (6)

*Government, journalists, cattlemen's associations, and various politicians, are attempting to cloud the issues about Australia's live export trade.*

*Here are some facts:*

*1. Governments (Federal, Territory and State) have known the facts of halal cruelty for 18 years. Indonesian halal is intended to inflict pain, employing a slow sawing motion to cut throats, rather than the less-than-a-second two-motion movement used by Australian professionals. Moreover, halal knives are invariably blunt. Even if animal rights were legislated in Indonesia, the Indonesian Government is simply too corrupt to maintain regulatory controls.*

*2. Australian live export feeds only the rich in Indonesia. Indonesian farmers and their families who supply this market are being driven bankrupt by our exports, and have been calling for cessation since imports began. This harms, not helps the Indonesian people.*

*3. Government warned Australian Meat and Livestock of this crisis six months ago. Crush boxes were sent as a sop to this pressure. Government knew this full well.*

*4. Live export contributes little to Australia's prosperity; only to the handful directly engaged, and on stations that are often foreign-owned.*

*5. Live export is endemically cruel, in spite of public relations stunts and media releases organised by the export lobby. Worse, when animals reach their destination, they may be tied up for hours or days without water, before finally being killed in acts of horrific and indifferent cruelty.*

6. *Live export cost Australians a quarter of a million jobs in: abattoirs, meat packaging, yarding, leather tanning, leather manufacturing, meat distribution, package manufacturing, meat grading dyes, meat and bone cutting implements, organic fertilisers, casein, meat inspection officers, butcher's supplies, freezing works uniforms and laundry services, transport services, and retail.*

7. *That cattle farming is non-viable in the Top End has been known since at least 1982. Buffalo thrive while cattle starve, and the Department of Primary Production urged a move to buffalo domestication as far back as 1975. Buffalo were largely eradicated by 1988/89 to please US cattle lobbyists. Powerful interests in the NT's Country Liberal Party profited immensely from compensation payments made for the buffalo eradication (BTEC) programme. Claims of buffalo damage to the northern environment were falsified, and were in fact caused by feral pigs and disastrous fire regimes executed by the Commonwealth scientists of then ANPWS, which also destroyed one third of Kakadu northern cypress.*

8. *There is talk of Indonesia's lack of refrigerators and how this justifies live export, but since 1978 there has been a plan to export dried meat and fish to Malaysia and Indonesia; exploiting the NT's massive fish by-catch, buffalo, and feral camel and donkey populations, during the six months of perfect Top End dry season drying winds. The Federal Government has sat on this potentially lucrative industry ever since; no doubt under pressure from meat export lobbyists and foreign aid programmes executives.*

9. *Claims that live export employs a significant Aboriginal population are simply untrue. Where there is employment it is only for the few weeks of muster. By contrast, a buffalo and dried meat/fish industry could employ and feed thousands of Aborigines in the Top End, Kimberly, North Queensland and elsewhere. Moreover, this is the kind of industry they can operate without outside interference and this can lead to economic independence and an end to welfare dependency.*

10. *Australia's reputation as a nation of decent and civilised human beings is at stake. If we fail to end live export, our good name will be gone forever.*

There was also a Ministerial Taskforce report in 2004 that was commissioned by the Hon Kim Chance MLC, Minister for Agriculture in Western Australia. This taskforce concluded that at least some of the problems encountered by the West Australian cattle and sheep meat processing trade were suffering directly attributable to the live trade. The Taskforce also believed that the growth in live exports was partly due to the lack of competitive neutrality that can be attributed to foreign governments, the Australian Federal Government and the West Australian State Government. (7)

I understand that what is born must die. It is what happens in between, and how they die, that concerns me. These animals should be treated with respect, and they should be treated humanely. I think that would be hard enough to guarantee in Australia, but impossible to do once these animals leave these shores. One last thing I will add is the link to the transcript of the interview with Temple Gardin.(8)

Virginia Sullivan  
15 July 2011

- (1) <http://www.grandin.com/welfare/fear.pain.stress.html>
- (2) <http://www.hsi.org.au/?catID=163>
- (3) [http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/animal\\_welfare.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/animal_welfare.html)
- (4) <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/vet-worried-about-dodgy-inspections-of-live-exports/story-fn59niix-1226093400993>
- (5) <http://www.thecie.com.au/publication.asp?pID=114>
- (6) <http://www.stoptac.org/index.php?mact=News.cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=218&cntnt01origid=15&cntnt01returnid=15>
- (7) <http://tinyurl.com/3fzmneq>
- (8) <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2011/s3230885.htm>