

The House Standing Committee on Agriculture

Committee Secretary

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Date: 5 June 2024

From the onset, I want to clarify that the impact on growers, graziers, and rural communities will be far more disastrous than the impact on our business, and the focus must remain on the Wheatbelt.

The intent of this submission is to highlight how far-reaching the proposed ban on live sheep exports by sea has on the broader agricultural sector.

Background

Harvestaire is a global leader in the design, manufacture, and distribution of Header (Combine Harvester) and Front parts. We also manufacture and distribute a rotary lamb marking cradle. We support close to 4,500 farmers across Australia via an extensive 600+ strong dealer, reseller, and independent ag mechanic network.

Our Harvestaire Lamb Marking Cradle has been and continues to be the premier lamb marking cradle used by generations of farmers across Australia. An estimated 6000 units have been sold across multiple decades.

From a business perspective, our lamb cradle ensures we keep our production team busy for 12 months of the year. As our name suggests, we predominantly focus on header parts. But from a practical perspective, lamb marking cradle sales help us maintain the right size production and despatch team across the entire year, ensuring we can supply growers with locally manufactured header parts.

How has the proposed ban impacted cradle sales?

Description	Value
Average sales per year 2007 to 2023	285
Sales FY2023 January to May	199
Sales FY2024 January to May	25
YoY % Decrease in Sales	-87.44%

What does the decrease in cradle sales mean to Harvestaire?

As previously stated publicly, to maintain our current staffing levels, we will either need to find additional markets for our products globally or provide new products for the Australian market. Neither of these two options happens overnight. We recently tested the waters with an export order into the USA, but we have no guarantee that we will receive an order for 2025.

What does a decrease in cradle sales mean for broadacre farmers in Australia?

Decreased staffing levels and decreased lamb cradle sales at Harvestaire will have the following flow-on effects:

- More expensive header parts, as our cost of manufacturing would increase
- We are increasing our reliance on imported products that are not designed for our conditions and are considerably more expensive to import into Australia.
- Decreased availability of locally manufactured header parts due to longer lead times

Recommendations

- Do not implement the ban—it does not have broad community support and does not have its foundations in science.
- Instead, we should opt to strengthen the industry by investing in export infrastructure, supporting Australian growers and rural communities, and uplifting the standard of living in export countries.

This is a well-self-regulated industry that, if the political will exists, can continue to support the entire agricultural sector, including regional communities, for decades to come.

Regards,

Dirk Vorster

General Manager