

SUBMISSION

I make this submission in support of the Australian live export industry for consideration in the 'Animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets' Senate Inquiry being conducted by the Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee.

I refer directly to the Terms of Reference that the Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee will inquire and report on and my opinion in relation to each Term of Reference is as follows:-

1. Investigate and report into the role and effectiveness of Government, Meat and Livestock Australia, Livecorp and relevant industry bodies in improving animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets, including:

- a) The level, nature and effectiveness of expenditure and efforts to promote or improve animal welfare standards with respect to all Australian live export market countries;
- i) expenditure and efforts on marketing and promoting live export to Australian producers;
- ii) ongoing monitoring of the subscription to, and practise of, animal welfare standards in all live export market countries;
- iii) actions to improve animal welfare outcomes in all other live export market countries and the evidence base for these actions.

Regardless of the level of effectiveness up until this point I firmly believe that the only way to improve the welfare of ALL animals in foreign countries is by the continued presence and support of Australia. If live export is banned then we have lost the ability and opportunity to make a positive change.

- b) The extent of knowledge of animal welfare practices in Australia's live export markets including:
 - i) formal and informal monitoring and reporting structures;
 - ii) formal and informal processes for reporting and addressing poor animal welfare practices.

From what I have seen first hand and through the media I believe the welfare of cattle in the live export system up unto the point of being unloaded in the purchasing country is first rate and more than acceptable. Without first hand knowledge of practices after this point I shall not comment. I would like to see more active monitoring and reporting on welfare practices in other countries.

2. Investigate and report on the domestic economic impact of the live export trade within Australia including:

- a) Impact on regional and remote employment especially in northern Australia;
- b) Impact and role of the industry on local livestock production and prices;
- c) Impact on the processing of live stock within Australia.

The full effects of the recent live export ban are yet to be felt throughout Australia. The current permits for 180,000 head are a long way short of the usual 560,000 head that are usually shipped. The animals that do not make it onto a boat this year will have to be absorbed by the rest of Australia. Due to seasonal conditions in Northern Australia many places do not have the option of keeping these animals alive on their stations. There is simply not enough feed and water to provide for these animals. Animals that cannot be kept will have to travel to other markets or pastures or be disposed of. All ready the markets for beef cattle in Queensland have dropped 18% or more. These prices make it almost impossible for any producer to remain viable. Producers have been accused of being money hungry and yes this is about money because producers need money to be able to provide food, water and care for our stock. If we can't make an income then our animals will suffer and some will die. Not because we are happy to let them do so but because we simply cannot afford to look after them. The financial losses to many livestock producers and their support businesses eg. Trucking, helicopter, feed supplies etc. will be far more than the offered \$25000 assistance package. Companies will go broke in the fallout from this ban.

3. Other related matters.

Do we need to look into the welfare of animals in other countries? YES. Do we need to ban live export? NO. The facilities and welfare of the animals up until the point of unloading is first rate. Do we need to look into alternative markets for Northern Australia? YES. Does MLA need to be looked into? Probably. But don't forget MLA works under the Minister for Agriculture. If anyone needs to answer some tough questions it is the minister AND his advisors. I also believe the investigating and monitoring of the live export industry should only be done by those parties who have a solid understanding of the psychology of animals and extensive real life experience in dealing with the species in question.

Signed:	
Address:	
Date:	15/07/11