

Submission

The live animal export industry is an inherently cruel trade. The general public would like to see an end to this trade and instead, animals processed in Australia where there are laws to protect them. It is impossible for Australia to have full control over animal welfare after these animals leave our shores.

Animal welfare has been a distant thought with the Industry bodies, Meat and Livestock Australia and LiveCorp. They have been aware for over a decade of the situation our animals endure in each of the countries they arrive. Who is responsible for this? It is criminal.

Sending animals on long voyages is cruel. Cattle should not be giving birth on these voyages however, this has occurred. Over 26,000 sheep and over 1,000 cattle died in 2010 and apparently this is an acceptable amount as it falls below 1%. They suffer prolonged deaths suffering from pneumonia etc and broken bones. This would not occur if the animals were processed in the Northern Territory and

After Animals Australia uncovered treatment of our livestock in Egypt in 2006, the Government should have ended the entire live trade at this time. In the least, they should have ensured all countries where our animals were being sent complied with humane treatment.

How do animals end up being sold in markets overseas? Why are sheep being dragged through the streets in the Middle East, some being killed in the street. Why are they being shoved into boots of cars in extreme heat, and onto roof racks of cars? This is unacceptable.

This billion dollar industry should have been responsible for ensuring animal welfare since its inception. It should not be up to a non for profit organization such as Animals Australia to undertake random audits to ensure the right treatment is occurring to our animals. I believe that Animals Australia should be reimbursed financially for their work by the Industry.

The Government clearly did not rectify the situation after 2006 as now in 2011 we have the same situation. It is not good enough for people to profit from this abuse just because they always have. With any business venture or industry there is always a risk. Turning a blind eye for over a decade and not taking strong action to ensure animal welfare was maintained.

How were those boxes provided to Indonesia and other countries to assist in the cruel treatment of our cattle? Who approved this?

The Government was informed of the issues in Indonesia in October 2010 and the response was to send a letter to the Industry. Mr Ludwig has failed in his duties as the Minister for Agriculture. It is clear negligence. The officials from Meat and Livestock Australia who allowed this ongoing situation of animal abuse should be held to account.

What part do Indonesia have to play in this? What comes of them 'breaching' the OIE guidelines? Nothing. There is no penalty for breaching this guideline. The guideline means nothing. The Government should only allow our animals to be sent to a limited amount of abattoirs that comply with Australian Standards if the trade is to continue. The countries we send our livestock to are corrupt countries. There is no protection for our animals.

It is not financially viable to continue this trade. The resources and money needed to ensure animal welfare in every country our animals are sent would be astronomical. The cheap live trade is jeopardising the packaged/frozen meat exports which is already profitable in Indonesia. Of course it is cheap to send our cattle and have workers in Indonesia paid next to nothing to slaughter the cattle. It is cheap because their facilities consist of a concrete floor and some blunt knives.

If the trade is to continue, animal welfare must not be overseen by the Industry, the Exporters or Indonesian officials. They are not INDEPENDENT and as a result, corruption is able to occur.

The Australian public are not able to view the footage of animal abuse as seen in the Four Corners program as it is too distressing. They do not wish to become involved as they believe the matter is being addressed by the Government. They assume that there would not be a need to protest or make a written complaint as it is so obvious that the trade needs to stop.

Animal welfare is not good enough in Australia either. There should be mandatory stunning in all Australian abattoirs. There should be stronger legislation for Australian farms in relation to the methods used to slaughter their own animals. Currently, those on farms are allowed to kill their animals in ANY way as long as it is being used to feed that family only. That is not good enough. Australian Courts are reluctant to punish any accused person with a custodial sentence for animal cruelty. Animal cruelty is not taken seriously in this country. We should not allow young puppies from a puppy farm to be sent overseas. Pigs should not be kept in cages. There should be a stop to battery hens. The treatment of bobby calfs is disgusting. Supermarkets should be made to display how animals are killed and Australia should move to a more animal friendly country. We are a Christian society and should not allow any animal to be slaughtered while fully conscious.

Please end this cruel trade. If not immediately, phase it out over three years. There is no excuse for the trade to continue. Australia should follow New Zealand's lead and move to a packaged/frozen meat trade. This is the only option to ensure Australian animals are treated humanely and protected by some laws.

Those responsible for allowing this situation need to be prosecuted.

Kind regards,
Shelley Male.