

SUBMISSION

I provide my submission in support of the continuation of the Australian livestock export industry.

In providing this submission I refer directly to the Terms of Reference that cover a range of issues surrounding the live export industry that the independent review will examine and my opinion is set out below:-

- a. the facilities, treatment, handling and slaughter of livestock, exported from Australia, in the importing country for consistency with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recommendations and standards set out in *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2010)* published by the World Organisation for Animal Health and other relevant standards

There is no way that I condone the treatment of slaughter cattle as shown on ABC 4 Corner TV program.

I believe that footage to have been a biased and unbalanced view presented.

I would like to be reassured that that type of unbalanced presentations does not occur again!

I know that there are facilities in Indonesia that do meet these required WOAHA standards and they should have been allowed to continue operations.

Other slaughter facilities need to meet these standards and come back online when they do.

Cattle exported need to carry NLIS ID that is then able to be traced through any all transportation and slaughter facilities.

MLA needs to work with Indonesians (and Australian importers and cattle industry) to ensure that they understand these requirements and have the capacity to put the process in place AND are trained to work within the guidelines.

- b. the adequacy of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) as they apply to the preparation and export of all livestock with consideration of responsibilities for compliance and enforcement of the ASEL

Perhaps it's been shown that these standards are adequate but it's more the traceability at the other end where we have been negligent.

This is why I'm stating that NLIS needs to be implanted in EVERY beast exported AND the importing country must have the capacity to use this system (read/record) in order to demonstrate the required traceability and thus transparency required by people who wish to be assured of the ongoing welfare of the animals in question.

The exporter must comply with the export standard at our end/start and the importer then must be responsible for complying with it at his/her end. Each government must support this process and

help it to be financed if/as required as they are making these standards.

- c. the adequacy and effectiveness of current Australian regulatory arrangements for the live export trade

I feel that I have covered this thus far

I might add that the boat transportation has improved dramatically over the past decade and new ships being commissioned as we speak are state of the art for conditions and that is reassuring right across the industry and should be to welfare agencies too.

Transportation at the Indonesian end may need closer attention but that's a financial capacity that if both governments want to change will need to help with as well.

- d. the types of livestock suitable (weight, age, body condition, breeds) for export as feeder or slaughter animals

We are talking about tropical countries here and so tropical cattle are best suited with little adjustments needed. Brahmins are the breed for sure.

The weight range determines whether they are feeder or slaughter animals.

Cattle under 300kgs would be feeder cattle and thus required to go into feedlot situations at the other end of the system and this also allows small family operations or for individuals to value add to the product too and thus gives them an income and business purpose otherwise not available to them.

Slaughter cattle are those of heavier than 350kgs that are ready to go direct to slaughter off the boat on arrival. The feeding and animal welfare onboard transportation allows for them to maintain or even add weight enroute and thus ensure they can be killed on arrival. This of course builds in no capacity for the people in say Indonesia to value add and this could be an issue or expectation of the importing countryman or their government commitment as well. The heavier beast also means that fewer numbers can be carried on ship or truck and must be taken into consideration.

I fully support and acknowledge the vast improvement and processes in place with accredited pregnancy testing taking place for every female exported from north Australia at present. This ensures that no female calves in transport or at slaughter point. Each female exported must have this status signed off by a before accredited person.

Horn status has already been addressed as well and is another good/best practice that industry has accepted over the past decade with excellent results.

Temperament is another issue that importers/exporters look for when selecting animals and I believe in this rather than colour being an issue when selecting animals to meet this trade.

Age also is something that I do not personally believe should affect what animal goes or not – it's the weight and pregnancy that should exclude an animal not age or colour!

- e. the extent of monitoring required for each export consignment of feeder or slaughter

livestock, in a manner that ensures accurate and transparent reporting to the Australian Government of the condition of the livestock from departure from Australia up to and including the point of slaughter in the country of destination

I believe based on experience of over 40 years in the beef industry in north Australia, that since NLIS was commenced that it has been under utilized by government in particular.

The NLIS gives the capacity for every animal to be tagged and thus able to be monitored and tracked from farm to any destination and throughout the transportation and changes of that transportation and again at arrival/destination and thus through the next farm/feedlot or even slaughter processes IF the will is there!! It simply needs every one in the line of transportation and slaughter process to have the capacity and equipment to READ/record each animal and then cross reference as when required and delete from the system as they drop off for whatever reason or way of death.

YES – I strongly believe that we all need support to better use the system that we have – state of the art and world breaking too as I believe.

f. the risk management strategies necessary to address the welfare of animals from departure from Australia, up to and including the point of slaughter in the country of destination

I do believe that the animal welfare risk has/is being managed very well with animals actually increasing weight enroute to Indonesia under current (past) practices and the new/better ships being used and commissioned over the years and more coming online or expected to prior to this debacle.

In order to ensure that animals do continue to do well in transit, there is the capacity to “background” animals in special export holding facilities (feedlot like) where the process enables/ensures that animals are trained to drink different water from troughs and eat the particular hay cubes etc that will be fed to them once on ship.

I truly believe that this risk management is crucial as if cattle come in from bush paddocks straight to boat and are a bit temperamental, they are at greater risk to not being familiar to eating anything other than grass or even drink from anything other than a creek or dam. I know that this is fast becoming past practice but it can still be the case and is an issue that pastoralists are again addressing in their best management processes this past decade.

Cattle that are used to people being about at feedtimes then settle into the new environment both on the ships as well as at the end in Indonesia where some animals almost become a live-in pet as small farmers value add to their product. These small farmers may need help from their government or at the slaughter processing plant to read the animal NLIS identity for that traceability.

If slaughter houses continue to let individuals kill their own animals then there needs to be an educating process in place and an understanding of the ongoing importance for them to have their animals checked off the ID listings and the welfare of the animal addressed and their responsibility.

g. Other matters relevant to these terms of reference that the reviewer considers appropriate.

I have already stated that we as a family operation have worked in isolated areas right across north Australia and have also been breeding Zebu type Brahman cattle for over 40 years. Our whole operation in the beef industry is not totally dependent on the live-export trade but it is a crucial

market for us and ALL others in the Northern Territory cattle industry as there are no public abattoirs operating in the NT where we can slaughter animals.

On our two properties (over 550sqkms of natural open savannah country) we run about 4000 head of purebred Brahman cattle under holistic management principles alongside low stress handling practices. We pride ourselves on the quality and temperament of our animals and have a dedicated following of repeat buyers across north Australia (Queensland, NT and Western Australia) who are testimony to this. As well we conduct our own public cattle auction sales each year.

The animal welfare of our stock is paramount as each beast carries an individual ID (in addition to any NLIS tag) that is recorded in our own management systems for our own best practice inline with our breeding programs. All our animals graze in native pasture that is monitored under a planned grazing system that ensures we are growing more grass in a healthier and more diverse environment.

I personally host people in my home as a Station Stay business accredited in the national Tourism system and this allows us as a family to ensure that visitors gain a true insight to the operations of a cattle property where people live and make a living off and from the land. It's in our best interest to ensure that our land, our animals and our people live in harmony for the best health of them all too. Guests get up as close and personal with our animals as they wish and leave with a better understanding of how and why we live as we do, with our animals as very much part of a big family picture.

We strongly believe that we need to live with our environment – not against it AND that goes for our animals too – it's "horses for courses" when it comes to what breed of animals we need to breed/run in this region of Australia. There is no way that we could run temperate type animals as this would be totally inappropriate and unfair to them (a real animal welfare issue as some animals will never be able to adapt to such an environment) ... and this also goes for trying to grow out a beast to slaughter coverage – we are breeder country and not fattening as we get such a dramatic two season window of opportunity – the wet and dry. When each one starts/stops is a big issue with management and certainly comes with experience as well as the capacity to recognise the deficiencies this brings too and the need to supplement for phosphorus.

In conclusion,

I, along with my family still struggle to understand how such a knee jerk decision to a TV program that presented only one side of what was a very dramatic and appalling issue in another country, could be made by our Government with little to no thought or consideration as to the dramatic impact it would have/make on the people on BOTH ends of this live-export trade to Indonesia? If this can be addressed in this review, I will welcome it as will we welcome the recommencement of this trade.

IF this trade is not allowed to resume (and people must know – they need to be told NOW that this trade has NOT resumed just because the Minister lifted the ban!) the impact across north Australia will surely be worse than any economic downturn experienced and the welfare of it's people worse than any third world country ... it is hurting already that's plain to see but this will be nothing for what to expect AND might I add that it's not totally economic by any means either The issue of boat people arriving undected along with food security and disease/quarantine issues will be so massive and will be unknown for so long that it will then be too late, when finally be discovered When will this Government recognize that pastoralists and all people (including our indigenous communities) living right across north Australia are the unsung heroes of bio-security as the custodians of the vastly unpopulated isolated region.

As Deputy Mayor of Roper Gulf Shire Council, I personally have vast experience too with

indigenous people and their involvement in this industry and how this is a massive impact on their lives and more so their capacity to become independent of welfare in a manner that they excel as it is after all their backyard and something they can do outdoors and in an environment where others might find excessive or oppressive.

I can not state strongly enough, that the implications of this have not really started to be felt yet and that is rather daunting, don't you think when it is now up to our Government to right the wrong of such a decision OR at least demonstrate to us, why/how they can justify the decision taken without any consultation?

I wish to thank you for this opportunity and make myself available for any further input.

Signed:	
Address:	
Date:	22 July 2011