

SUBMISSION

Animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets

Australia has little, if any, control over what happens to our animals once they leave our shores, and the treatment that they have received, in all countries, will continue if live animal export continues.

The reason we see repeated breaches of humane treatment of our animals is that the countries we export our animals to do not have animal welfare laws to protect them, and Australia has no control in this area within these many importing countries.

To achieve the outcomes in animal welfare that Australia seeks in these third-world countries, it would require fundamental change to both the cultural and legislative approaches to animal welfare within all those countries. Realistically this is not achievable, and even if it were, it would be a long-term undertaking, and the continued suffering of millions of Australian animals while such change was attempted against all the known impediments is totally unacceptable.

Given the uncontrollable aspect of endemic corruption in these third-world countries that we export live animals to, a "verifiable, transparent, closed-system" supply chain can never be guaranteed. With the inherent risks of "leakage" of our animals to unaccredited abattoirs within these countries, plus the ongoing pressure of the cost and the sheer logistics of maintaining such a system against cultural resistances and practical difficulties, (eg the transient nature of the workforce through these foreign slaughterhouses), the intended "safeguards" are an unworkable and unacceptable alternative to investing in a chilled meat option.

A permanent ban on live animal export would not mean an end to the export industry as Australia's major meat processors have confirmed that Australia has the capacity to process all cattle and sheep currently going to live export. On-shore abattoirs that were previously closed due to competition from the live animal trade could be re-opened, and the proposed facility in Darwin could soon be operating to share the processing load. In fact, thousands of jobs would be created by increased domestic processing.

Given that we can never ensure humane treatment of our livestock once they leave our shores, the only ethical solution is for ALL live animal exports to be replaced by the export of meat products – this is a win for animal welfare and a win for Australian jobs.