

**SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE STANDING**  
**COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO LIVE**  
**ANIMAL EXPORTS**

August 2011

Why we are still in a similar position, regarding animal welfare in the live export trade, as we were in 1985, the time of the earlier Senate Inquiry into the treatment of animals sent to the Middle East?

We feel the answer to this question is multi faceted, which includes:

**1. Animal welfare and protection laws.**

Farm to Feedlot: cattle, sheep and goats.

The sheep are bought by agents from the farmer and are transported over the next 14 days in the 4 tier trucks we see on the roads to feedlots. There are Codes of Practice and the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) set out for the trucking of animals outlining the stocking densities, conditions etc. of the animals on board, however these codes are entirely voluntary and there is **NO policing undertaken** to ensure the trucks are not over loaded and that the animals are fed, watered, are upright or otherwise in good condition at the beginning, during and after the trip.

The WA Dept of Agriculture, Journal 31(3) reviewed 2002 states that sheep are "counted and those with injury, overt ill health or not-to-specification (wrong sex or those in poor condition) are rejected. Rejected animals are either destroyed or sold for slaughter." Whereas this may possible be the case when the animals get to the feedlot- we only have the live export industry word for that, but we do know for a fact is that there is **NO monitoring or enforcement by ANY Federal or state government department in ANY STATE to ensure compliance with the animal welfare requirements within the Federal live export regulations (ASEL) or the state animal welfare legislation from SOURCE to PORT.** This means the animals transported from the farm or source can be ill, suffering minor or major injuries, unfit for transport and moved from the farm to the port and onto the ship.

**It is of immense concern that the Australian Government is misleading the world in such a way as to suggest that the export regulations governing live export are complied with because they wouldn't know. It is also of immense concern that animals are routinely transported and that both the Federal and state governments know and ignore that these animals are not checked to ensure compliance to the regulations and legislations. It is our firm belief that the Federal and state government wholeheartedly and unreservedly support this legal cruelty due to the fact they FAIL to fund routine livestock inspections for compliance.**

Time and time again serial non compliance has been proven by those involved in animal welfare yet the exporter continues to get his licence to live export from the Australian Government and the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) trust that the exporter will comply and do not check the animals for welfare. They instead turn a BLIND EYE.

The sheep stay for 1-5 days (cattle up to 30 days and goats 10 days) at the feedlot in order to accustom the animals to pulverised pellets. The pellets turn

to dust due to machine handling and the moisture in the air once the ship is at sea can make any remaining whole pellet crumble. This 'powder' is what the animals are made to eat (see Bader III report). Salmonella associated scouring diarrhoea tends to appear after 5 - 7 days and so the first occurrence does not appear until the animals are on board. Salmonella is one of the causes of high mortalities. **(In 1983, 15,000 sheep died from exposure in Portland feedlots while awaiting loading. see Death Files)**

Source: [http://www.liveexportshame.com/background\\_sheep.htm](http://www.liveexportshame.com/background_sheep.htm)

## **2. Advice of professionals ignored by bureaucrats.**

A Ballina veterinary surgeon who worked on ships carrying live exports said his reports to Livecorp highlighting animal cruelty and appalling living conditions were ignored.

Dr Peter Kerkenezov decided to speak about his eye-opening time aboard the live export ships following Monday night's damning ABC Four Corners program, which forced Livecorp into the spotlight for gross abuses of animal welfare.

Dr Kerkenezov served as a vet aboard the Mawashi Tabuk on a voyage from Australia to Saudi Arabia in 2002 and on another ship on the same route in 2003.

He said that he had dispensed large quantities of antibiotics to the sheep on one ship "to keep them alive", but it was the preventable deaths that had shaken him the most.

Each day stockmen would collect the dead sheep from the seven decks on the ship for autopsy by Dr Kerkenezov.

"The ones on their last legs, they would throw them down there too," he said.

"So they would get hurled through the air and fall seven feet below onto the hard steel deck. Then they are mixed in with the dead and come up in the cargo net to be autopsied."

On arriving in Saudi Arabia, Dr Kerkenezov was told to "shut up" while armed Saudi vets boarded the ship to test the animals for disease.

Dr Kerkenezov watched on helplessly as the Saudis used syringes to repeatedly stab the jugulars of sheep.

"I counted 18 jabs," he said.

"We bust our guts keeping them alive to get them there and then they do what they do and we have no control over it.

"We report this but it's never stopped. At the end of the day it's still going on."

A Livecorp spokesman yesterday confirmed the Saudi vets were not trained by Livecorp.

In a mandatory final report to Livecorp on completion of both journeys, Dr Kerkenezov made suggestions for improving the hygiene for livestock to prevent disease and death.

He said he was not asked on another ship again.

A Livecorp spokesman said final reports were reviewed by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service. He said ill animals were treated in accordance with normal veterinary protocols aimed at recovering their health.

"The vet works with qualified stockmen to detect and immediately treat any illness that may arise, and holds daily meetings with crew to discuss the animals' health and care," he said.

Source: <http://www.northernstar.com.au/story/2011/06/04/haunted-by-cruel-live-trade-ballina/>

**3. Fruitless training programmes** *(and no amount of effort will turn things around).*

Farm manager and experienced stockman Terry Coman says he is traumatised by the three years of working in the trade. He has been part of 13 long-haul voyages shipping Australian cattle to ports in the Middle East and China.

He left the industry frustrated that the reputation of Australian trade is being tarnished by widespread ignorance and animal cruelty.

"It is a good trade, if it is policed."

He took photographs of his concerns on many sea voyages and port visits and he also wrote reports of the trips, but he says they made no difference to operations.

"There has got to be an improvement.

"Sending over skilled workers from Australia to police it would be the way to go, and try and educate the Indonesian or anyone else that takes delivery of these cattle realise that people in Australia are horrified."

He says there was widespread abuse in the sector by untrained workers in all the Middle Eastern destinations he visited.

"It is going on today, nothing has changed."

He says cruelty is rife.

"The way they kill them over there, it is not pretty.

"I went to an abattoir in Kuwait and they just do the same thing (as the Indonesian abattoir shown on Australian TV), they tie them up, pull their legs down while they are roaring, just get into them, cut their heads off."

He was also critical of the low levels of staffing and treatment of cattle on ships leaving Australia.

Mr Coman says the stock to staff ratio is supposed to be one stockman to 1,500 cattle, but he says that was not usual.

"Accredited stockmen are there for the health and welfare of the creatures, and you actually live with them."

He says it was common for him to be the only stockman on board the ship that also carried an AQIS vet from Australia.

"Every two hours you are checking, walking decks, making sure everything is comfortable."

He says he was upset by the treatment of dairy cattle off-loaded at Kuwait.

"In the Middle East job they go to the quarantine station, they are held there for 21 days, and it is just a compound in the desert.

"The feed rations there are pretty bad and they do it tough, it's pretty hard on them, (and there is a) lack of water."

Has he observed physical cruelty toward animals?

"For sure. It is just rush, rush, rush to get them in, get the job done, and get them out."

He says untrained, poorly skilled workers can be cruel to animals through ignorance of stock work.

"You are working with day labour. We tried to teach some Bangladeshi's over there but every day you go to the quarantine station and you have got a new tribe of troops."

He says they are paid very low wages of two or three dollars a day as casual workers.

"Today they are a stockman, tomorrow they are a truck driver, the next day they are an electrician (and they have no expertise), none at all, none whatsoever.

"There is no consistency, and when you teach someone one day you expect them to be there again the next day, but he is not and you have got to teach them all again, and it is too difficult (as) there is a language barrier and they just knock them about.

"We are teaching them to slow down, and a little bit of cow sense, they don't have a clue about cow sense (as) all they have been told is to get those cows in that trade, and to do it smartly."

He says the day labourers feel they have to defend themselves from the large cattle so have weapons, gloves and masks to protect themselves.

"(They use) sticks, reo (metal rods), lumps of steel, logs, timber, anything you've got, (to) beat them up, hit them on the spines, on the legs."

He says plentiful labour means there is little incentive to build infrastructure to handle the cattle.

"It is cheap labour, so if you want to fence, get some more troops.

"We used to call them Bangla-fences as they just join hands, hold together, and make a fence."

He says this inhumane animal treatment is common "All the way across the Middle East."

"(I am) traumatised, demoralised (by) the stuff you see, and the stuff you do for the industry, and you think there is going to be an improvement on it, but there never is."

Mr Coman says he is still in the caring sector, now working in aged care in the NSW Bega valley.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2011/s3239896.htm>

#### **4. Animal slaughter in importing countries is a cultural and religious killing.**

As Australian we are concerned at the extent to which political correctness is overriding animal welfare and protection considerations in the export of live animals to importing countries where slaughter practices are based purely on religious grounds, controlled by local clerics. These are an open invitation for all forms of animal abuse to take place. **Australia's political correctness is overriding animal welfare and protection.**

Australia's answer to live export animal cruelty is 'we can reform these countries'. This is unacceptable and no amount of training or education has filtered down to the barbarians on the killing floor with their inherent cruel animal practices engrained in culture and in the name of religion.

#### **5. Australian laws do not provide animal welfare or protection in importing countries**

The Australian live animal export trade operates out of reach of Australian animal welfare and protection laws and exports to foreign countries that have little or no animal welfare legislation. This conveniently allows Australia to abandon its animal welfare obligations and this situation suits certain individuals such as the Minister of Agriculture along with organisations like the MLA and Livecorp down to the ground.

Australia currently exports to countries recognised as some of the cruellest in the world.

By continuing to live export to these countries Australia sends the message we condone their cruel animal practices.

#### **6. In the export trade animal welfare has a profit motive (it's about "profit protection" not "animal protection")**

In the 1985 Senate Select Committee's report on the live sheep export to the Middle East they concluded:

"The committee agreed that the animal welfare aspects of the trade can not be divorced from economic and other considerations. Consequently the committee considered a range of economic and other factors, some of which were: returns to producers, investment in the trade, international trade considerations, changes in the structure of the Australian flock and the cost to the meat processing industry..."

Australia's live export trade sends animals to third world countries to minimise costs and maximise profits. There is no quality infrastructure, few trained workers, constantly changing workforce, no standards to uphold. There is little quality control or monitoring of abattoirs feedlots and the multitude of locations taking Australian live stock. This has all contributed to the brutality inflicted upon Australian animals.

Australia is a developed country and should not accept cruel practices towards its export live stock, which are well documented in some importing countries. The federal government is attempting to reassure the public that they have now fixed the problem; nothing could be further from the truth. The new process adopted by the government requires auditing against the World Organisation for Animal Health Guidelines.

These guidelines do not require animals to be stunned. The guidelines allow traditional roping slaughter using ropes to pull animals down for their throats to be cut.

Why is Australia dumbing itself down to do business with countries that struggle to meet basic OIE standards? These standards are a minimum, then why does Australia choose to set them as its bench mark?

Past and present governments, live export companies have displayed sheer negligence and dereliction of duty towards live exports to foreign countries. How did they envision these animals would be slaughtered in these countries, having little or no animal welfare or protection laws?

It is ethically wrong to send Australian live export animals thousands of kilometres to importing countries whose standards of animal handling and slaughter would not be tolerated in Australia.

**7. Industry bodies do not have animal welfare as a core business driver, they are self interest lobbyists.**

Organisations such as the MLA and Livecorp do not have animal welfare or protection as a core business activity, that is, until the Fours Corners Program highlighted their abysmal performance and ad-hoc efforts in this area. MLA and Livecorp said they were unaware of the treatment of Australian live stock in Indonesia which is blatantly false given they and Livecorp commissioned the report *Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership 2009/10 Final report – Public Release Indonesian point of slaughter improvements @ [http://www.daff.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1886477/indonesia.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1886477/indonesia.pdf)* in 2010, delivered to DAFF. This report proves they had full knowledge of the situation in Indonesia and the overwhelming tide of public opinion has turned against the export industry and organisations like the MLA and Livecorp. This has forced them to take animal welfare more seriously, for PR purposes at least. Their token programs, in education and training appear to have made little difference to bring about lasting and improved animal welfare in importing countries, such as the Middle East and Indonesia.

Given the well documented body of evidence past and present detailing barbaric acts of extreme cruelty against Australian live stock in foreign countries MLA and Livecorp do not have the credentials to be involved in animal welfare.

The attitude past and present towards animal welfare could not be more vividly demonstrated than by the horrifying numbers of animals that have died being transported overseas. Over the past 30 years more than 150 million animals have left Australian shores for slaughter in the Middle East, 2.5 million of these animals died during the journey. Each year many shipments exceed the 'reportable' death rate of 2% for sheep and 1% for cattle on long haul shipment, some are highlighted below.

- a) Al Messilah 2006  
The Al-Messilar carried a total of 320 cattle and 71 309 sheep to the Middle East. Many of these animals died along the way due to failure to eat and heat stress.  
Death toll: 6 cattle and 1,683 sheep
- b) Buffalo Express 2006  
An AQIS investigation was launched when 11 cattle died from injuries sustained from slippery decks and heat stress from inadequate space during export from Fremantle to South Korea.  
Death toll: 11 cattle
- c) MV Cormo Express 2003  
57 000 sheep spent almost 3 months stranded at sea after being rejected by a Saudi Arabian importer. When an alternative buyer could not be found, the Australian Government intervened purchased the sheep, and donated the sheep to Eritrea.  
Death toll: almost 6,000
- d) MV Cormo Express 2002  
Over one thousand sheep died during the sea journey to the Middle East and during discharge from the vessel.  
Death toll: 1,064 sheep
- e) Corriedale Express 2002  
The journey of the Corriedale Express from Australia to the Middle East caused the death of over 6, 000 sheep. These deaths were recorded during the sea journey and discharge from the ship.  
Death toll: 6,119 sheep
- f) Al Shuwaikh 2002  
Close to 6, 000 sheep on board the Al Shuwaikh died during the sea voyage from Australia to the Middle East or during discharge. The Al Shuwaikh was permitted to load more sheep and undertake another journey to the Middle East before any reports were completed. A further 2,304 sheep died.  
Death toll: 5,800 sheep on first journey, 2,304 sheep on second journey
- g) MV Becrux 2002  
On its maiden voyage and boasting the highest standards of animal welfare, the MV Becrux carried 1,995 cattle and 60,000 sheep to Saudi Arabia. Many of these animals perished after the vessel met extreme temperatures and humidity in the Arabian Gulf. The remaining animals were rejected by Saudi Arabia and had to remain on board until another buyer was found to accept them.  
Death toll: 880 cattle and 1,400 sheep



- h) **Norvantes 2002**  
The vessel, carrying 1 169 cattle, hit bad weather en route to Jakarta.  
Death toll: 99
- i) **Temburong 1999**  
More than 800 cattle suffocate when power loss causes ventilation failure on the ship during the voyage from Darwin to Irian Yaya.  
Death toll: 829
- j) **Kalymnian Express 1999**  
Over 300 cattle died of injuries, or were destroyed later due to their injuries, when the ship met a cyclone off the north west coast of Western Australia.  
Death toll: 300
- k) **Charolais Express 1998**  
50% of the cattle carried on the Charolais Express either suffocated during transport or were too ill to land at their destination and were slaughtered at sea.  
Death toll: 570
- l) **Anomis 1998**  
The vessel carrying over 2 400 goats and cattle arrived in Malaysia but could not unload for over two weeks due to a financial dispute between the exporter, shipper and importer.  
Death toll: 283 goats and 154 cattle
- m) **Uniceb 1996**  
67 000 sheep were left to die on board the Uniceb after it caught fire and sunk in the Indian Ocean northeast of the Seychelles.  
Death toll: 67,000
- n) **Guernsey Express 1996**  
Over 1500 cattle drowned when the Guernsey Express sank on its way to Osaka Japan.  
Death toll: 1,592

#### **8. Australia needs to lead by example.**

According to Australians for Animals, the current standard for slaughter in Australia for live stock has made exceptions. In Australia cattle slaughtered for the Kosher market will be stunned immediately after the throat cut. Some sheep will be killed without any stunning in a dozen or so abattoirs according to Animals Australia.

The current Australian standard includes provision to allow ritual slaughter of sheep and cattle without pre-stunning as long as they are killed in such a way that unconsciousness occurs rapidly.

“Scientific evidence suggests that slaughter without pre-stunning causes significant distress to live stock particularly cattle which can take several minutes to lose consciousness”, South Australian Agriculture Minister Mr O’Brien said. He also said Islamic religious leaders have accepted the pre-slaughter stunning of cattle sheep and goats as acceptable in the production of halal meat.

**9. Up until now the industry has been a relatively “closed shop” in their dealings with little public scrutiny.**

Since the Four Corners program aired showing extreme acts of cruelty to Australia’s live export animals in Indonesia. Animal welfare organizations such as Animals Australia and RSPCA have been able to convey their message to a vast audience very successfully using the latest technology. The Internet and social networking has given them the potential to reach people around Australia and the world.

Animal welfare advocacy can be a powerful tool in the fight against animal cruelty. This promotion was one of the most wide-spread animal rights campaigns to successfully impact an entire industry, galvanizing minds and invoking public outcry.

The Internet and social networking was successfully used to champion a specific cause relating to animal cruelty and more importantly, giving people ways they could help, by getting personally involved, through form letters and emails, and online petitions. The weight of public opinion brought to bear on politicians through targeted networking, forced the government to suspend the trade for several weeks, so alternative arrangements guaranteeing more humane treatment of the live export animals could be formulated. As a direct result of mass communications with the out pouring of anger and rage by the public, a quality assured supply chain has been developed and implemented.

Never before has the level of public scrutiny been so intense as to impact an entire industry to bring about change – sign of things to come with the use of current and emerging communication technology and marketing tools.

**10. Live Animal export competition.**

Indonesia wants to become self-sufficient in cattle production by 2014. It does not want to solely rely on Australia and can source cattle from India and Brazil, these cattle of course will meet the same horrific end as we have previously witnessed.

Australia should maintain an animal welfare presence and provide training in these importing countries in the hope that they can acquire better slaughter techniques, more humane treat of their own livestock.

Australia does not need to export live animals to these countries to undertake training and animal welfare improvements.

There are other live export competitor’s besides Australia. Australia should return to on-shore processing of its own live stock with more abattoirs in Australia able to produce export quality chilled meat, resulting in more jobs for Australians. Australia needs to expedite the process of establishing local refrigeration facilities replacing other assistance packages offered. This will allow increased export from Australia of chilled meat in lieu of sending live animals.

There is no guarantee that Australia in its live exports can maintain its competitive edge over other exporting countries. The only reason we are exporting is to reduce cost over heads, maximise profit for stake holders and share holders.

Live animal export is the same as any business that has gone off shore, its cheaper and limited standards to uphold, plenty of unskilled labour.

#### **11. The Legislative Environment.**

The “Australians for Animals” organisation firmly believes and we whole heartedly agree that the Federal and state governments must now urgently modify existing legislation that requires cattle to be stunned prior to slaughter in Australian abattoirs without exemption.

In line with clear community expectations the export of Australian cattle to countries that cannot guarantee animals will be stunned prior to slaughter and treated humanely must be banned. Religious requirements should not be given preference over anti-cruelty legislation.

#### **12. The need for a new statutory authority.**

A new statutory authority would provide particular emphasis on the live animal trade and on those entities which impact the domestic and international meat and live stock export and import business and the community at large. The objective of a new authority would include identifying issues surrounding governance arrangements and to provide specific policy options for Government to get the best from domestic and international markets and provide an accountability framework for office holders such as AQIS, Livecorp, MLA etc. In establishing such an authority, the Government could provide increased focus on areas such as animal protect laws which is currently state based legalisation, where the community has the right to expect the highest levels of animal protection, fairness and transparency with dealings in domestic and international markets.

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22/8/2011

22/8/2011

