

Anthony Haynes

15 July 2011

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

**Submission to the Animal Welfare Standards
in Australia's Live Export Markets**

I support the complete ban of live animal exports as the trade is inherently cruel and causes much suffering to poor defenceless animals.

There are many issues with the current system, the ability of the importing countries to be able to handle our animals adequately, inadequate slaughtering facilities and torturous treatment of animals at the hands of sadists. These countries cannot meet the international standards set by the World Organisation for Animal Health and I note these standards should be attainable given they were benchmarked for developing countries.

The Australian Standards for Export of Livestock are very minimal, allowing for cruel and cramped conditions onboard and minimal medical supplies. I reviewed the space allowed for sheep of varying weights and had to check and recheck the m2 allowed as it did not seem right. The spaces set are so minimal it is hard to believe it is adequate. Not all shipments require vets, this should be an absolute requirement for each and every consignment. The number of stockman does not seem to be dictated by the number of animals onboard which is deficient yet again. It seems that all the requirements noted in the ASEL are great when reading on paper, but whether these requirements actually occur is another question. There is a wealth of information around the shipments of live animals and the terrible conditions they suffer on these voyages.

MLA and LiveCorp have proven themselves to be ineffectual in managing the live animal trade industry. Self regulation does not work as there is no accountability or transparency. Many decisions they have made are questionable and I look forward to reading the findings of the 2 inquiries underway. It appears that these bodies are more interested in marketing and making money rather than animal welfare, they have let down everyone involved in the industry, and the public. There is no one else to blame for the mess of the live export industry, MLA and LiveCorp should take the full weight of responsibility on their shoulders.

It has been shown that although the cattle exported to Indonesia are very hardy for the northern conditions, these animals are far larger and wilder than their Indonesian counterparts. The handlers and slaughterers have difficulty in managing these animals and have little understanding of animal behaviour.

Animals from WA and NT are currently not required to be electronically tagged in order to trace them, however all animals are supposed to be able to be traced from start to finish. Cattle from other areas are electronically tagged, however it has been found to not be as effective as it should be, with 37% of cattle found to be unaccounted for when an audit was undertaken a few years ago. This demonstrates that the implementation of this type of system is not fool proof and guarantees nothing.

It has been reported that ship master's records are not necessarily the most accurate account of events, with falsifying of numbers to show a more favourable outcome. Animals have been thrown overboard, some already dead, but some still alive. The supposed check of animals whilst boarding the ships involves a quick glance by the vet as the animals are running up the ramp, this cannot be a effective assessment of each animal's health. There needs to be a stockman and vet on every consignment, independent to any recruitment made by the exporter. This will ensure independence and accurate reporting.

Risk management accounts for unexpected events, however this does not ensure the best course of action in the case of emergencies. There will always be events such as bad weather, breakdown of machinery and disasters. Unless a consignment is well prepared, resourced and followed through, risk management strategies account for little. We have seen the case in February 2010 where nearly 300 cattle died on consignment due to cramped and crowded conditions. The report by AQIS found there to be no issues with equipment etc, however the temperatures, humidity and unclean conditions contributed to these cattles' deaths. They died slow and excruciating deaths and towards the end of the journey 25 animals had to be euthanised. Even in modern times high mortalities occur. This should not be allowed to happen and the only best risk management measure is to stop shipments altogether.

If live animal exports are stopped then our industry in Australia could undertake the processing of cattle that would have otherwise been destined for Indonesian and Middle Eastern shores. Studies have confirmed that various abattoirs are more than capable of processing the that number of cattle here in Australia. We would be safe knowing that our animals are handled and slaughtered at the highest standard, but it would also be enormously beneficial to our economy, increasing employment, retaining our assets and increasing GDP. To retain processing here is in fact more beneficial to our economy than live animal export.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Haynes