

SUBMISSION TO:**1. THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE IN LIVE EXPORT IMPORTING MARKETS.****2. THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE LIVESTOCK EXPORT TRADE**

While my submission is structured to refer to the Terms of Reference of (1) above, I consider the issues I raise to be germane to the Independent Review.

My background: Cattle producer, member of the MLA.

Work Experience: Training Officer 10 years with DPI instructing DPI Meat Inspectors and Veterinarians in Management/Supervision in Export Accredited Meatworks 1978-1984.

Qualifications: ANU 1968 BA (Oriental Studies) Hons Specializing in Bahasa Indonesia and SE Asian Studies.

University of Lahore, Pakistan 1969 Diploma Course in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Founding committee member of Animals Australia (originally known as ANZFAS) advising on animal welfare issues affecting primary industries, in particular on the transportation of livestock in Australia, Saleyard standards and Abattoir practices.

Dear Senators and Mr Farmer AO

I am opposed to the live export trade and have serious concerns about the capacity of the industry bodies promoting and monitoring the trade to guarantee proper animal welfare outcomes in the 23 importing countries, and on board the shipping vessels. The basis for my opposition is set out in the following introductory points.

INTRODUCTORY POINTS:

1. There is systemic abuse of animals in all our importing countries and our animals fall victim to that abuse. None of the importing countries have animal welfare laws that can be enforced within those countries, thus leaving our animals exposed to abuse without recourse to action on Australia's part other than to suspend the trade to a country. The footage in Indonesia is not unique to that country. All ME countries have poor animal welfare standards. I witnessed this personally in Pakistan.
2. The acknowledgement by Senator Ludwig that he could give no guarantees that the some 100 000 cattle already in Indonesia would not be subjected to the same treatment seen on 4 corners, as these animals could not be traced, is an indication of the level of control, and thereby concern for the welfare outcomes for exported animals by the industry.
3. The acceptance by the industry that a percentage of animals loaded on ships will likely die during the voyage is acknowledgement by the industry that the nature of the trade is such that it cannot guarantee the welfare of any animal loaded onto a ship. Hence some

30 000 animals continue to die every year on the ships, and the total deaths on ships is now over 500 000. The level of suffering of those animals can never be measured.

4. In that there has been a 20% increase in cattle deaths on ships in the past year protocols to protect the animals have clearly failed. The trend toward long journeys haul voyages to Turkey and the ME generally pose significantly higher risks than short voyage trips. With the Indonesian trade due to downturn significantly in the next three years more long haul journeys will almost certainly result in further poor animal welfare outcomes.

5. There has been a litany of disasters over the course of the trade and major incidents continue to occur during voyages. Eg the loss of 295 cattle in 2010 due primarily to pneumonia and heat stress on board the Ocean Shearer. Ships that encounter problems at sea have frequently resulted in the animals on board suffering for days before any action can be taken. The Stockman's Report on the Kalymnian Express in 1999 graphically demonstrates this.

1. THE ROLE OF MEAT AND LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA AND LIVECORP.

1. Meat and Livestock Australia has lost the trust of many farmers, including MLA members and has no credibility in the eyes of the animal welfare movement. Despite all the claimed expenditure on animal welfare, with Livecorp, it has presided over the export of hundreds of thousands of cattle to Indonesia over two decades, and yet in 2011 we can see the most appalling treatment of cattle I have ever witnessed in my life. Clearly this treatment was long known about.

2. If the industry claims it did not know, given the information it had in the 2010 Report it commissioned, that is clearly not true. If it did not know then it did not bother to check, and therefore did not care. Even as I write some 100 000 cattle are in Indonesia with no guarantees by the industry that those animals will not be similarly ill treated.

3. I have found as an MLA member the organization to be unresponsive to concerns I have raised in regard to the live trade and the use of domestic livestock sale levies to promote and support that trade. It fails to return my phone calls with requests for information, or to answer emails.

4. MLA, in so far as it receives producer funds should be required to report specifically and accurately on animal welfare issues in the live trade, eg, the monthly death rates on ships and the cause of deaths, and specifically on what measures it is taking in each and every importing country in regards to the welfare of the animals shipped to that country and specifically what welfare issues are occurring in each. There must be full disclosure to the public of the welfare situation in each and every one of the 23 importing countries...

5. **LIVECORP:** In attempting to ring Livecorp to discuss animal welfare concerns in the live trade, the number given on the Livecorp website results in an MLA officer

answering. Livecorp should be more accessible to public and producer scrutiny and its relationship with MLA should be clarified.

6. In so far as Livecorp receives the levies for live exported animals, and MLA those from domestically sold animals, with MLA telling me it has no access to the live trade levies, it is not clear why MLA has such a public profile on the live trade. Using domestic levies to promote and expand the live trade that carries serious animal welfare risks and damages the image of the cattle industry as a whole should be disallowed.

7. There is a lack of transparency to producers as to how the domestic levies raised by the MLA are spent and therefore to what extent the live trade is being supported and promoted at the expense of the domestic trade and the domestic processing industry.

2. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE ANIMAL WELFARE OUTCOME IN ALL IMPORTING COUNTRIES:

1. **Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with importing countries.** In the face of the latest Animals Australia footage the treatment of sheep in the ME as they are dragged by the legs and bundled into the boots of cars is an indictment of these so called Memorandums of Understanding which the Howard Government supposedly put in place to ensure sheep were not mistreated that way. These MOUs appear to not be worth the paper they are written on. These must be examined closely in terms of what they are supposed to achieve and their effectiveness, as they deceive the public and producers into believing that the ill treatment of sheep in the ME could not occur under those MOUs.

The Howard Government lauded these MOUs as being designed to prevent the on shore abuse documented by Animals Australia in the ME. They do no such thing.

2. **Proposed Tracking and Traceback Loop for Indonesia:** The NLIS traceback system for domestic animals is designed to allow the tracking of animals within Australia during the lifetime of each animal, up to the point of slaughter. It is not designed to report on the effectiveness or otherwise of slaughtering practices. It is essentially a disease and chemical traceback system. To believe that tagging the animals to ensure they go to a specific works is just going to be a paper trail. It will be useful to ensure animals go to a specific accredited works, but if the works are substandard then nothing will be achieved in terms of improved animal welfare outcomes by this paper trail.

3. **Training:** The value for money in MLA and Livecorp training programs in the face of the Indonesian footage is questionable to say the least. Training had reportedly been carried out in one of the worst of those abattoirs just months prior. I understand several teams can operate for different operators in a given works. This would possibly mean some teams slipped through the training loop. It would appear that millions of domestic producer levies and taxpayer funds have been wasted on ineffective training.

4. **Restraint Boxes:** The restraint boxes installed by MLA and Livecorp clearly have very serious problems and have been condemned by Temple Grandin, the US livestock

authority on livestock handling and slaughter. While these boxes remain in place with the purpose of roping the legs and pulling the animal down in the way seen, then the outcomes will remain the same. I understand there are some 100 of these boxes in Indonesia and some in other countries as well.

5. Even worse is the pulling of cattle to the floor with ropes around the leg in an open race in order to then cut its throat in full view of others in the race. The quivering animal on 4 Corners awaiting its turn in this way was exceedingly distressing.

3. KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE PRACTICES IN IMPORTING COUNTRIES AND LACK OF REPORTING.

The DAFF website states that Australia exports live for meat consumption to 23 countries including many in the ME, also to Mexico, Turkey, Korea, Mauritius and the Phillipines. I suggest that there is very little understanding in the mind of the public and rural sector as to the extent the MLA and Livecorp concern themselves with the issue of the animal welfare practices in each of those countries.

For instance what knowledge if any do Livecorp and the MLA have of animal welfare practices in the Palestinian Territories? Has any representative of those bodies ever been there to check?

1. I have never seen the MLA publish any reports in its Feedback magazine detailing the specific animal welfare issues prevailing in each and every one of the 23 importing countries. Generalizations about improving welfare outcomes without defining the welfare issues are the name of the game. This is not good enough.

2. Animals are frequently on transported in the importing countries with no possible way of ensuring their welfare. Hence Australian cattle in 2005 en route between Israel and the Palestinian Territories were reported by local animal advocates to be distressed in the heat without water when delayed at the border for 24 hours. I have not seen the MLA or Livecorp report on such incidents to MLA members.

3. It is not clear to what extent MLA and Livecorp concern themselves with animal losses subsequent to disembarkation, eg with the deaths of some 200 cattle off the MV Mysora in 2002 in Israeli feedlots, cited by Animals Australia as due to heat stress incurred through delays in offloading and transport. Or, for instance in 2006 with the deaths in Israel of some 241 cattle, again from off the MV Mysora. Monitoring of the welfare outcomes of our animals after arrival should be mandatory as poor outcome may reflect deficiencies in the shipping protocols.

4 **Treatment of sheep provided for religious festivals:** The MLA and the industry are quick to report on the need to meet the higher demand for animals for end of Ramadan festivals in Muslim countries, while knowing many of the animals will dragged off, shoved on the roofs of cars and in boots for ritual slaughter in home backyards and small

slaughter houses. Animals Australia has previously filmed horrific scenes in these alley slaughtering premises.

I spent the Ramadan in Pakistan and became aware that in this religious festival young boys were required from the age of nine to slaughter a sheep, cutting its throat without of course any stunning.

5. The practice of supplying animals for these ritual practices and religious festivals should cease and all sheep should be handled by an accredited abattoir in a closed loop system to stop this type of endemic abuse as filmed yet again in 2010 by Animals Australia.

6. **Indonesia:** It is clear the MLA and Livecorp knew from the report commissioned in 2010 that the practices in Indonesia seen on the 4 Corners program were occurring, eg head slapping, roping, water tossing, prolonged cutting of the throats, injury to animals that regained footing after being roped etc. To claim that it did not know is not believable and given the similar Egyptian experience of some three years ago it beggars belief that the industry could be found to be so wanting in the market to which it was aware it transported the vast majority of live cattle.

7. The resumption of the live trade to Indonesia with no guarantees being given that all animals will be stunned is to me and I suggest a large number of concerned Australians totally unacceptable. **Stunning should be mandated by Australia for all its cattle. The International Standards are minimum standards and are far too limited and will simply mean such practices as seen on 4 Corners will continue.**

8. Also unacceptable is the statement that the Indonesian Government will carry out the auditing process, suggesting that Australia has no role in guaranteeing the welfare of animals we export there.

9. If the trade is to continue with any assurances of proper welfare outcomes, then a closed loop system, tracing all cattle to a works that stuns prior to slaughter must be imposed, and be under Australian supervision. The animal welfare movement and many in the public will not accept anything less.

10. **Korea:** The shipping of cattle to far destinations and the lack of control over the outcomes is evident in the stoning of six Australian imported cattle in South Korea, by people opposed to the imports due to impact on their domestic industry. This lack of control is not acceptable.

4. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE TRADE.

1. I request the Inquiry give close attention to the findings of Acil Tasman in its independent report commissioned by the RSPCA into the live trade and the implications of any phasing out of the trade. For the live export industry to claim that the ending of the

live trade would have a damaging effect on the Australian livestock industries and the Australian economy would appear from this report to have no sound basis.

2. As a cattle producer I know only too well that the closure of meatworks across Australia has caused increased costs of transportation to farmers operating on the domestic market. Cattle are having to be sent hundreds of kilometres by road to meatworks. The live trade has been partly responsible for those closures thus causing the loss of thousands of Australian jobs and leaving the domestic cattle industry carrying increased costs due to the live trade. On top of that domestic levies are then used to promote the live trade!

3. Recently the Goulburn meatworks was sold and one of the reasons given was the lack of a reliable supply of sheep for slaughter. The new operator, a WA firm hopes to turn this around but with the seriously depleted national flock and the live trade taking some 3 million or more animals annually out of the domestic slaughtering operations, the likelihood of this works being forced to close, with the loss of hundreds of local jobs, is almost certain.

4. **Indonesian self sufficiency.** The Indonesian Government claims it is close to self sufficiency in beef production so clearly the live cattle trade to that country will fall dramatically within the next three years. So the northern cattle industry, being so dependant on that trade is going to have to find alternative markets.

5. Development of the chilled trade to new markets should be the direction now set for that industry as the transportation by sea over further and further long distances will see a growing animal welfare crisis as death rates rise. Now is the time to rebuild the processing industry in the north, and in the south to meet the growing demand for chilled beef and lamb. The downturn in the live trade to Indonesia must not be allowed to be responded to with increased live trade to more distant markets.

6. I am concerned that the poor public image of the live export industry will over time impact adversely on the domestic livestock industries. I note many entries on blogsites where people are writing that they have been unable to buy beef ever since seeing the 4 Corners footage.

6. OTHER:

a) REPORTING ON DEATHS ON BOARD SHIPS

1. Some 500 000 animals have now died on live export ships with some 30 000 continuing to die every year. The reporting in this area is totally inadequate. There should be no trigger death toll rate for reporting.

2. Every ship voyage should document and report back to MLA on the numbers that died and how they died. Every animal must be accounted for and its fate recorded. Dying

animals should not be reduced to be just an acceptable percentage. The MLA should then publish these facts and figures every month in its Feedback magazine sent to producers.

3. I have read reports that at times sheep dying on board were simply thrown, while still alive into the mincing machines, without first being euthanized. I am not able to confirm these reports but have no reason to doubt them either. **I ask that this issue be investigated.**

b) LEGISLATIVE ISSUES:

1. The judgment in the WA case against Emanuel Exports Pty Ltd in 2005 should be carefully examined and the legislative issues sorted out to ensure live exporters can be held liable under State Animal Welfare laws. Export permits should ensure they do not exempt exporters from liability under State laws.

2. To ship animals in the full knowledge that a percentage of them may suffer stress, suffering and death on board flies in the face of all animal welfare laws in this country. To transport animals with that prior knowledge would be an offence under those laws. Why should the live export industry be exempt from those laws? If made accountable under those laws then no live shipment could ever leave port.

CONCLUSIONS:

After several inquiries and over some 30 years the live export trade has continued unabated, and has indeed been expanded dramatically, with a rising toll in suffering of millions of Australian animals, not the least being the deaths of 500 000 on the ships alone.

Sufficient evidence has been presented over that time to demonstrate that the trade is not humane and despite best efforts can never be made humane.

I submit that this trade is a running sore on the face of this country and brings shame to our Nation. I further submit that the recommendation by the late Senator George Georges that the trade is inimical to good animal welfare some 25 years ago holds true today and his recommendation that it be phased out should no longer be ignored.

In the interim I believe the MLA and Livecorp must be held more accountable in terms of the welfare outcomes for animals shipped live to importing countries and closed loop systems under Australian supervision be implemented in all importing countries.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.

Jennifer Macdougall 12/7/2011