



# JUT

RIVEREN STATION

Website: [www.terryunderwood.com](http://www.terryunderwood.com)  
ABN 84 854 094 685

15 July 2011

## Submission

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia  
[rat.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:rat.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir/ Madam;

I refer to the review into Animal Welfare Standards in Australia's Live Export Markets, specifically clause 2a regarding the implications of the Live Export Trade on regional Australia and those who rely on this trade for their livelihood. Please consider our story and the impact the Live Export trade has on our lives.

I am a third generation Northern Territory pastoralist and it is my dream to bring my 3 children up in the bush. My parents have invested over 60 years of their lives working hard to build up the business that we proudly operate today. There are 4 families supported by our business including eight children less than 5 years of age. We employ 15 staff. We have three cattle enterprises in the NT covering 5,000 square kilometres and we care for 40,000 head of Brahman cattle. It costs around \$200,000 each month to run our business. Each year we turn off around 8,000 head which are bred specifically for live export. Last year 95% of those cattle went to Indonesia.

We are in this industry because we love what we do.

I was horrified and angered by the disturbing footage of animal cruelty shown on the 4 Corners programme. Animal welfare is an intrinsic part of every aspect of our business. We do not condone animal cruelty in any way.

Our business has been severely curtailed by the suspension of the Livestock Export Trade. Now that the suspension has been lifted there will be an oversupply of cattle due to limited capacity in Indonesia. This will result in depressed cattle prices verging on a break-even result. Businesses like ours that carry debt will struggle to survive.

The current impact on the trade has the ability to decimate the northern cattle industry destroying the lives of farming families, indigenous communities, as well as many other businesses that rely on it such as transport and fodder providers, exporters, contractors and veterinarians.



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Over the past 20 years the Australian Brahman has transformed the northern beef industry from near bankruptcy to an efficient and profitable trade which contributes millions of dollars to export income. Vast areas of previously unproductive land have been pioneered and developed into profitable beef enterprises using Brahman cattle. North Australia does not have the improved pasture or grain industry to support fattening and finishing of cattle. It is not an option to simply send our beef to southern markets. The logistics are cost prohibitive, the animal type is also not generally sought by processors for the premium meat market and the cattle require further feeding on grass or feedlots prior to slaughter. For us to send cattle south it is a break- even exercise at best. If the Live Export Trade does not resume to its full capacity soon, our business and others will not make it.

If Indonesia decides to import live cattle from other countries then we could potentially have Foot and Mouth disease in Australia within a few years. This could potentially devastate all livestock industries in Australia, not just live export and not just cattle.

It is critical that the review into Animal Welfare Standards in Australia's Live Export Markets takes into account the massive devaluation of land and infrastructure that has taken place as a result of the suspension on Live Exports to Indonesia. This affects the equity and borrowing capacity of all businesses and service industries to the live export trade and ultimately affects the economy of North Australia and especially the Northern Territory.

We acknowledge that improvements to animal welfare are required in Indonesia. We are confident that the Supply Chain Assurance programme along with Independent Auditing that has been implemented will ensure animal welfare outcomes that all Australians expect. The longevity of the Live Export trade is extremely important to Northern Australia and Indonesia.

There is a legitimate demand for protein in Indonesia, a country of 240 million people. Australia has a moral responsibility to provide it.

Regards,

Marie Muldoon

Third Generation Pastoralist and Mother of Three