

Mrs Adriana Wall

July 17, 2011

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

Dear Sir:

For decades the Australian livestock export industry and government have been trying to improve the standards of animal welfare in Indonesian abattoirs. Some of the measures have been to install restraint boxes and training of slaughter house workers. Yet after all this time the footage obtained by Animals Australia has shown the use of these 'Mark 1' restraint boxes installed by LiveCorp have been sub-standard, causing even more suffering than previous methods of restraint. The footage also showed that any training given to the workers has been badly implemented or ignored. One of the world's leading slaughter experts Professor Temple Grandin of Colorado State University was shown footage of these Mark I boxes in operation and has stated that they "violate every humane standard all around the world" and are "atrocious and completely unacceptable".

The industry and government say that Australia is one of very few countries that intervenes on the welfare of its livestock in the countries it exports to, but from the footage that has been filmed and released over the years by Animals Australia from the Middle East and Indonesia shows quite clearly that any time and money that has been put into animal welfare in these countries has been less than successful and no amount of intervening will ever change the attitudes of the countries involved. Even Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), last year, admitted that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to expand the use of stun before slaughter (the most humane way of slaughter) in Indonesian abattoirs. Both Australia and Indonesia are signatories of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) standards which cover animal welfare

issues, however there is no obligation for any country to implement the standards as they are only recommendations and not enforceable. Australia boasts of higher than OIE standards within its own yet seems quite happy for Australian livestock to suffer elsewhere.

This year MLA had planned to spend \$3.4 million on animal welfare within the industry, yet spend \$23 million on marketing beef exports. That's seven times the amount of funds put into promoting their products rather than making sure the livestock they claim to be protecting from inhumane treatment are actually getting the attention and funds that are needed make the significant improvements required. Expected total earnings for MLA this year is \$173 million meaning only around 2% of total revenue is allocated to animal welfare.

There is unacceptable cruelty and inhumane conditions in the whole chain of export from transport to slaughter that cannot possibly be policed by auditors at all times. The Indonesian issue is just one instance of a whole range of problems. So far the live export industry has been self-regulated and this is just not acceptable.

The figures for mortality rates during transport are freely available to read on the government website and makes for some very shocking reading. For example over 26,000 sheep died on transport ships in 2010. The figures sound acceptable, when it is read as percentages, it reads as less than 1% but we are not talking about a normal inanimate product here we are talking about lives of sentient beings. When research is done into some of the ways these animals die they are not quick painless deaths, they are from sickness and injuries that cause slow, agonizing deaths if not spotted quickly by, quite often, the single on-board vet that oversees thousands of animals during these journeys. There is also debate over the accuracy of the official figures for these mortality rates.

In an article published in the Australian dated the 13th of July Lloyd Reeve-Johnson, a veterinary surgeon accredited with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service who worked as an overseer on some journeys, stated that on one particular trip he recorded a higher than industry accepted numbers of goats dying. He followed AQIS protocol and notified the commonwealth quarantine body immediately. When he compiled his "end of journey" report for AQIS, the livestock company instructed him not to record any of the additional goats that died as they were being unloaded from the ship. How often does this happen? We will never know the true extent of deaths if this is how the industry operates.

I believe Australia as a nation must move forward and set an example to other countries that the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable treatment of animals is always evolving and Australia understands the need to change with the times. Other countries are now beginning to take the issues of animal welfare of animals used for human

consumption more seriously. Just last month the Netherlands lower house parliament passed legislation which states that all animals must be stunned before being killed. The law has yet to be passed in the upper house parliament only to allow for a concession that the Muslim and Jewish communities will have a year to provide evidence that animals slaughtered by traditional methods do not experience greater pain than those that are stunned before they are killed. This, most believe, will be almost impossible to prove. The Netherlands are part of a growing group of countries including the broader European Union that legally recognize animals as sentient beings and the need to protect them from 'unnecessary suffering'. Clearly none of the suffering induced by Australia's live export trade can be considered necessary under any rational assessment.

The live export industry is not up to speed with the general public's expectations of animal welfare in this day and age and will continue to struggle to meet those expectations while it continues to deal with those countries that do not hold the same high regard to animal welfare. Ending live export and offering only humanely slaughtered meat from our own higher than OIE standard abattoirs is, I believe, the only way to move forward.

Sincerely,
Mrs Adriana Wall.