

Norman Eather,

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The Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport,
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
E-mail: rat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you to make a submission with regards to the sustainable future of the Live Export Trade of Sheep and Cattle.

I am a retired stakeholder from the beef and wool industry previously owning Maxwelton Station in the Richmond Shire part of North Queensland where it was my home for 49 years. I believe that when the Live Export Trade commenced that financially Cattlemen were able to move ahead into the 20th century in the early 1980s.

We are all aware of some instances of cruelty as was shown on Four Corners and it is to be deplored. It is something no Australian would ever condone but as a nation we have to move ahead from that and focus on improving the lot of any animals exported overseas and providing more training/education to these overseas nations.

I do not support banning the trade in three years time. My reasons are as follows.

1. If the Live Trade is suspended it will cause wholesale bankruptcies among cattle producers north of the Tropic of Capricorn. The hardest hit will be producers who breed Brahman Cattle, the breed most suited to living in the tropics and grazing on tougher, harder country. The Brahman Breed fits the bill for Indonesian current import requirements. When competing with British Breeds such as the Angus and others in the domestic market the Brahman product is not generally regarded as saleable to Mrs Housewife as the softer British breeds.

2. It would not be a positive move to shut down the beef industry of Northern Australia. To completely wind down the largest industry of agricultural production in Northern Australia would also mean depopulating Northern Australia and Blind Freddy could only envisage further and compounding problems with regard to implementing and sustaining BIO Security, National Security and further down the track issues regarding the sovereignty of that region

3. A lot of mention has been made by pro banning animal activists that the animals could be slaughtered in Australia and shipped overseas as a "value added" frozen product. While any value adding is at this point in time an OK theory in reality it is fiscally unsustainable. Much of Indonesia does not have refrigeration or the electricity grid to sustain bulk refrigeration. The high Australian dollar would also be further enhanced as a reason for value added frozen meat to be priced right off

the market and another live exporting nation could quite easily jump in to fill the vacancy and become Indonesia`s new preferred supplier of live cattle. If you are in the retail/wholesale industry there is the old adage that the customer can be rude, impatient, annoying and difficult to deal with, but always right.

4.If I stated that I had ever been on a Live Export Ship I would be being untruthful. However a former next door neighbour who as a qualified vet who worked on Live Export Ships and described shipboard life to me a few years ago and a former employee who worked for me, David Draccio, whom I spoke to on the telephone this morning both assured me that on the Live Export Boats they travelled on the animals were well looked after. David who worked on the Shorthorn Express told me there was good high quality fodder supplied at the Australian end of the voyage and the stock pens were always well ventilated. It was of paramount importance always that the stock were well looked after. I am confident that the vets who work for the Australian State and Northern Territory Governments would also verify the travelling conditions on Live Export Ships.

In summing up it is my opinion as a former stakeholder in the Beef and Wool Industry that the Live Export Cattle Trade should continue as long as it is economically viable for Australia do so. Trading of commodities worldwide has been important world wide for centuries. Good trading relations with neighbouring countries make for good and long term positive relations in our long term future. It has to be remembered the assistance and the goodwill offered by Indonesia during the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires in the Kinglake area of Victoria. It is extremely important for Australia to look at the Live Export Trade and where it belongs in its place in the overall big picture.

I therefore ask the Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport to consider my submission and retain the Australian Live Export Industry.

Yours Faithfully,

Norman Eather