

Animal welfare improvements in livestock export markets

The livestock export industry has released a strategic plan to deliver improved treatment of Australian livestock in overseas markets.

Focusing initially on the largest market for livestock, Indonesia, plans for other markets including countries in the Middle East will be released in coming months.

The Australian community and Australian producers set the bar high in their expectations of the treatment of our animals overseas.

Improving animal welfare standards in livestock export markets across South-East Asia and the Middle East is a key priority for the industry.

These expectations need to be met and the industry is committed to working with the Australian Government and importing countries to see rapid progress in the improved treatment of Australian animals.

Independent study in Indonesia

Export sales of live sheep, cattle and goats topped \$1 billion in 2010, with more than 99% of all Australian livestock arriving fit and healthy at their destination.

The livestock export trade to Indonesia is vital to the economy and in particular to producers. Producers in the north of Australia

are almost solely reliant on the trade, however all of the industry benefits as over half a million animals travel to Indonesia rather than flow onto southern markets.

An independent assessment of conditions for Australian cattle exported to Indonesia from point of arrival to slaughter has found animal welfare was generally good throughout the supply chain.

The study assessed 17 Indonesian facilities and made recommendations for further improvements by extending existing welfare and training programs such as:

- > training for truck drivers, handlers and slaughtermen
- > introducing rest points for long-haul journeys
- > extending technical support to feedlots to include more nutritional/ration information
- > delivering more training for abattoir workers on correct procedures for processing Australian animals

Ongoing work in live export markets

In conjunction with LiveCorp and the Australian Government, MLA invests about \$3 million annually into animal welfare programs, including a focus on stock management, infrastructure development and training supply chain personnel.

MLA Livestock Exports Manager, Michael Finucan, said the industry works with local operators and government authorities in major export destinations to improve animal handling and processing facilities.

"Most importantly, MLA works on the ground

to educate local workers across the Middle East and South-East Asia on how to correctly handle and manage Australian livestock," he said.

"In 2010 we delivered livestock handling training programs to more than 210 staff in 14 feedlots, 61 stock personnel were accredited in shipboard animal handling and 56 stevedores were trained in low-stress handling techniques."


The joint Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership between the Australian Government and industry delivered animal welfare improvements in key markets last year.

In the Middle East, yards, ramps and slaughter equipment were improved, including construction of new sheep slaughter equipment at two Kuwait processing facilities and a multi-deck port trailer in Jeddah to discharge sheep faster from the vessels.

In Indonesia, 10 new cattle restraining boxes were installed (to now total 109) and standard operating procedure training for new boxes was undertaken at 50 locations. Facilities at Kuala Lumpur airport were also upgraded and equipment improved at a major processing facility in Malaysia.

MORE INFORMATION

Michael Finucan, MLA
Phone: 02 9463 9334
Email: mfinucan@mcla.com.au

 *Independent study into animal welfare condition for Australian cattle in Indonesia:*
www.daff.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1886477/indonesia.pdf



Live export truth on the net

The social media phenomenon YouTube is being used to make accurate information about Australia's livestock export trade and its animal welfare initiatives readily available to the public.

MLA and LiveCorp created the 'Livestock export truth' YouTube channel in 2009, which has since received more than 118,000 views.

Livestock Export Program Communications Manager, Anna Inglis, said the industry is boosting its online presence as this was where more people were seeking information.

"YouTube is an excellent medium for us to

distribute accurate information and topical stories about the livestock export trade," she said.

Ms Inglis said the 'Livestock export truth' channel contained more than 20 video clips highlighting all aspects of the trade, from shipping to overseas handling and processing facilities.

MORE INFORMATION

Anna Inglis, MLA
Phone: 02 9463 9189
Email: ainglis@mcla.com.au

 www.youtube.com/livestockexporttruth