



2015/0034786/5

سفارة دولة قطر / كانبرا



Mr Andrew Dawson
Inquiry Secretary - Trade
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Suite R1-120, PO Box 6021
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

Tuesday, 19 May 2015

Dear Mr Dawson,

I am pleased to provide you with some feedback regarding the questions of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's trade and investment in the Middle East countries.

Regarding ESCAS for live animal exports, and whether it has a positive impact on the Qatar's livestock trade in sheep and cattle and the slaughter techniques, Qatar believes that ESCAS is good because it is based on the requirements of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the regulations of the Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council for animal welfare. However, as to ESCAS' impact on the livestock trade, a Qatari company has reported that this system imposes on the company that it slaughters the animals in its abattoir, but sometimes some citizens want to buy sheep for feedlots or breeding, which is rejected by the company as these purposes are contrary to ESCAS for live animals exports; consequently, that affects the company's sales.



About to whether access to live sheep and cattle from Australia is important for Qatar, the customs and traditions of many citizens and residents of the State of Qatar require buying and slaughtering live animals in particular religious occasions and festivals, such as Eid-ul Adha. Therefore, access to sheep and livestock is as important as access to Australian meat imports.

Regarding to the likelihood of applying unlimited shelf life, instead of (70 days) for Australian chilled red meat in GCC countries, the State of Qatar's regulations are based on the Gulf's technical regulations relating to food products' validation, including meat; and food shelf life is based on the Gulf's Technical Regulation No. (GSO 150/2013), parts I and II, that specify (70 days) as the shelf life of frozen meat.

At present, the new specification has become optional, and it is possible to adopt a longer periods of shelf life, providing that applicants submit studies that prove the durability of products for longer; applications may be submitted by a written letter, attaching the study; then specialists will consider the application and refer their recommendations to the Joint Committee.

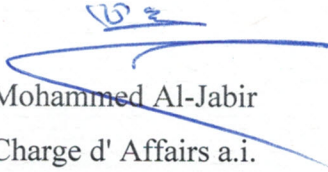
Concerning to whether Qatar is looking to end the requirement of legalisation because it adds unnecessary costs and risks perishable chilled meat products due to delays at Qatar Embassy in Australia, I would like to advise that, meat imports do not require legalisation by the Qatari Embassy in Canberra (noting that any imported goods that are not legalised by the Embassy will be legalised at the arrival port in Qatar, charged legalisation fees and insured by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

As for the possibility of lowering or streamlining the legalising of the paperwork of Australian exports, legalisation fees are mandated by law and they are uniform fees bracketed in percentages according to the legalisation- charts of fees.



With my sincere thanks and appreciation for your work and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, to promote trade between Australia and the Arab World, and to overcome the difficulties in that regards, I will provide you with the rest of the responses from the Qatari authorities in the due course.

Yours sincerely


Mohammed Al-Jabir
Charge d' Affairs a.i.