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This Submission is supporting the other Bills in regards to ban Live Exports.

SENATE INQUIRY

IMPROVEMENT TO ANIMAL WELFARE FOR AUSTRALIAN LIVE EXPORTS

I would like to thank the senate for the opportunity to present my submission.

1. Investigate and report into the role and effectiveness of Government, Meat and Livestock Australia, Livecorp and relevant industry bodies in improving animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets, including:

a) The level, nature and effectiveness of expenditure and efforts to promote or improve animal welfare standards with respect to all Australian live export market countries;

I would like to make one point very clear at the beginning of my submission and that is that we cannot control animal welfare in other countries and what we can control is "up to the point of slaughter". So what ever else on safe guards the Inquiry is interested in cannot be implemented anyway as we can only go as far as "at the point of slaughter".

The Writer contacted MLA by email over 9 days ago and again yesterday 14/07/2011 regarding some information not being able to be found on their website after their website was down for a considerate long time..(many days in fact) No reply.

Mrs. Temple Grandin made MLA the laughing stock in Indonesia with the less than 3rd world standard restraining boxes.

I would like MLA to explain to me where the funding of the last 15 years went to. I would like to see itemized accounts to every country Australia invested their monies into, where and on what.

I would like to know why MLA has not ask Indonesia to adopt at least the minimum standard of the OIE being a member or not -well before investing any monies in these appalling abattoirs?

The OIE standard is so unbelievable low and has not been met in the Abattoirs shown on 4 Corners.

see link:

http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_1.7.5.htm

Terrestrial Animal Health Code
Chapter 7.5. Slaughter of animals Article 7.5.1.
General principles

Left alone Australian Animal Welfare Standards that the public wants other countries "rightfully" to adopt but are not enforceable - only up to the point of slaughter.

How do I know as an individual that the other slaughterhouses the "apparently better ones" using stun-guns are any better? Do they too have the primitive outdated restraining Metal boxes?

(Wouldn't it be at least fair to say that MLA & Livecorp utterly failed a Steer that was cut 33 times? - by not providing the slaughter-man at least with one or two razor-sharp knives?)

Both MLA & Livecorp have done very little in the years gone by to accommodate or improve better slaughter practices in Indonesia also they are pretending to try I can only go by what I have personally seen on TV- and what I saw was despicable, appalling and unacceptable.

I am aware that it is MLA & livecorp and others who insist that the majority of all livestock are being send overseas and little is left for the battling Australian Market & meat processors who try to stay open 2 & 3 days a week.

These Organisations etc. also need to understand that Australian Farmers cannot "solely depend" on the Live Animal Trade as it can collapse unannounced at any given time.

3rd world countries are changing their shopping behaviour and built westernized shopping complexes so the live Trade becomes eventually a theme of the past and is going to be replaced by either carcass, boxed or chilled for the buyer's convenience.

Therefore the decades old Myth that 3rd world countries do not have refrigeration and need to buy the animals live becomes the untruth. Poor people simply cannot afford to buy meat and the ones that can are willing to buy it chilled.

When the Egypt live Exports was halted people bought chilled and boxed meat instead. May I then ask what the excuse is for keeping live Animal Exports alive, if people are prepared to by their meat products chilled?

Why can't there be at least a bigger market for our own Australian businesses?

I personally have no confidence in MLA or Livecorp to do an effective quick job in getting the slaughter places up to standard and to get the Indonesians to accept a better animal welfare standard in general. I have not seen any proof of it anywhere as yet. I am still waiting.

I honestly believe that MLA, Livecorp and other Organisations working united to push for predominantly Live Exports need to be severed and another more fair forward looking Organization be formed.

An Independened Authority that supports 50% live & 50% boxed, chilled etc. so overseas people have a choice. But then again our Ministers for Trade only promote Live Exports when they ought to promote equally chilled, boxed or whole carcass form.

i) expenditure and efforts on marketing and promoting live export to Australian producers;

There is no point to invest taxpayers monies in overseas markets if our Australian Standard of animal welfare and stunning prior slaughter has not been effectively implemented before sending our livestock alive. The standards seen on 4 Corners were very well below OIE standard to say the least.

If we can only control or safe-guard the animal "to the point of slaughter" then the animals will continue to suffer as this is the most important and crucial point of animal welfare.

This is the part that needs persistently supervised to make sure the animals are being treated with dignity and respect and humanely and as quickly as possible to minimise the trauma and distress of the suffering animals. All Australian Authorities including MLA fail to be able to receive the support to implement this "last and utmost important part of Animal Welfare which is a humane quick death."

ii) ongoing monitoring of the subscription to, and practise of, animal welfare standards in all live export market countries;

I am personally against live Exports for obvious reasons and I believe it ought to be banned permanently. But if Live Exports has to exist, I would say that overseas countries who willingly accept Australian Standards of animal welfare or at least a higher Animal Welfare Standard than that of the OIE, treat the animal as humanely and quickly as possible and use stun-guns whilst the animal is on its feet, ought to have 24/7 hidden video surveillance preferably via satellite in several places in their slaughter houses - unknown to their slaughter-men. The video surveillance ought to start when the cattle go into the slaughter house, when they are stunned and slaughtered.

There should also be one or two permanent independent observers present at all times so that the animals are indeed slaughtered humanely. These people should be paid solely by the live animal exporters - Not the Australian public - as they are the ones insisting sending the animals alive.

I also believe that people wanting to stay in the Live Exports Trade knowing how their animals are being treated overseas should pay for the additional costs out of their own pockets to satisfy us Australians as a whole.

iii) actions to improve animal welfare outcomes in all other live export market countries and the evidence base for these actions.

I understand that these questions are asked to further Live Exports and use people's brains to yet raise the animal standard bar a bit higher to smoothen out any further inquiries.

As an independent person I would have to say that every new assigned country would have to accept Australian Welfare standard set by us ordinary Australian Citizens well before any MOU or agreements are signed and has to be given the option to choose between live animals and boxed or chilled products.

These Heads of States or their Minister representing that particular portfolio needs to understand and agree to the most humane treatment of Australian livestock as possible using stun-guns whilst animals are on their feet.

There are not ors or buts.

The best facilities in that country ought to be the one receiving stun guns and use them. Hidden Surveillance cameras ought to be installed and watched 24/7 and the slaughter-men to be trained by our special elite of Australian Muslim slaughter-men until such a time that these slaughter-men are doing their job right. There ought to be also one or two observers permanently employed to make sure these slaughter-men and others are treating the animals with the respect and dignity they deserve.

MLA utterly failed to provide proper restraining metal boxes and equipment to the Indonesian slaughter-men. I wonder what they invested in all the other countries?

These sleazy restrainer boxes are far too outdated and not economical as it takes far too long to get to the animals feet.

These boxes need to be replaced by something that is even faster to work with and gives the animal less time to get scared. The restrainer boxes fail to do this. Even the boxes not shown on TV -but mentioned on MLA website "as No4" are way too slow and need too much handling of the animal before its throat is slit. The time its head is put into position by a restrainer takes too long and the weight of the crusher keeping the animal in lying position is not comfortable.

Again the process to slit the throat takes far too long.

The slaughter of the animal should be humane as possible and as quickly as possible so the animal doesn't know what hit it.....

The restraining boxes seem well intended but in my view all of the inventions *fail to be managed quickly and force the animal to lay down on its side which is unnatural behaviour for cattle in the first place.*

Then mucking around to cut the animals throat is wasting far too much time.

I believe that the animals should be stunned standing on it`s feet and then fall on their side or better being rolled on their back to have the throat slit at once.

All other techniques are useless and not economical in my opinion.

b) The extent of knowledge of animal welfare practices in Australia's live export markets including:

i) formal and informal monitoring and reporting structures;

The slaughter houses seen on 4 Corners where not slaughterhouses. They were sleazy primitive filthy, dirty unhygienic places.-An utter disgrace and as mentioned ""above"" failed OIE standards by many miles. Slaughter places can be primitive but done up right.- One animal at a time.

Only the best of the best slaughterhouses succeeding OIE standard ought to be able to slaughter Australian animals after they agreed to stun the animal prior slaughter.

If a structure of a slaughterhouse is not sound - well it ought not to be used and banned. Another more suitable slaughterhouse should be found that can fulfil Australians Standards..

In other words if the slaughter-house(s) cannot provide a place without fear and distress for the animal it is not right and capable of providing a somewhat humane slaughter practice, don`t invest into it.

Naturally all abattoirs slaughtering Australian Livestock ought to be monitored via surveillance cameras 24/7 365 days a year by permanently employed surveyors. To make sure no written agreement is being broken. Again live stock exporters would have to pay these people to assure the safe and humane treatment of cattle etc.

I personally would suggest if you want our livestock that`s what you have to invest into and that is how the abattoir ought to look. We educate & train your slaughter-men professionally for a certain period of time until your men are competent enough to do it themselves.

ii) formal and informal processes for reporting and addressing poor animal welfare practices.

It is of utmost importance to sort out the bad slaughter places from the good. Keep a record of the good ones as well as the bad ones for further references.

The good slaughter-places following Australian Animal Welfare Standards if not OIE`s, can slaughter one animal at a time without

the slaughtered animal seeing his mates - and use stun-guns should get all the work until others follow suit and upgrade and/or invest in their slaughterhouses - so they can keep up with the demand.

The lower the living standards of the 3rd world countries are- the lower and more primitive the slaughter facilities will be.

One can not supervise hundreds of primitive slaughterhouses but can supervise and educate the best run meat processors to Australians satisfaction and use it a pilot program to educate all the other slaughter men and perhaps go beyond the safe guards which ends at the "point of slaughter".

If it is possible to introduce the "most humane point of slaughter" to overseas slaughtermen with a more upgraded restrainer box that rolls the stunned animal on its back instead on its side and the technique is properly shown to the slaughter men than this would help the animals and slaughter-men immensely.

If people can see that this particular way of slaughter is much quicker, more humane and is a more efficient one then what they are currently using - it ought to have a positive impact.

This would eliminate over time the poorer makeshift slaughter places with no animal welfare respects to be shut down and banned. If they are not already.

2. Investigate and report on the domestic economic impact of the live export trade within Australia including:

a) Impact on regional and remote employment especially in northern Australia;

In the first half of Year 2010 Indonesia announced that they are reducing their livestock intake by 90% in 2014 as they have planned to be self efficient by then. So Australia or at least the live exporters would have to find another way in supporting their income.

A week ago a Talk show host mentioned the closure of 2 more Abattoirs one in Young NSW, the other near Toowoomba in Qld. In most places the meat processing plant is the sole income providing job.

The impact the closure has on the immediate affected Town or regional area is running in the millions. The meat processing workers in return provided hundreds more jobs in their area and businesses depended on these workers to make a living. With the closure of the meat processing plant(s) goes their lively-hood as well as their possessions.

There are hundreds more jobs involved with slaughtering the animals here in Australia humanely then just sending them live to other countries. The jobs for sending animals live are only temporary jobs. and are only available for a few weeks anyway.

Therefore these people really lose nothing... but with slaughtering the animals here they have something to gain.

If the animals are being slaughtered here means that all the value adding jobs are being kept in Australia and bring more income to more people who would not have a job otherwise.

b) Impact and role of the industry on local livestock production and prices;

Production of livestock depends on our harsh Australian climate as well as the demand for a certain product. If the market is being flooded with a product then naturally the prices fall until such a point that if the demand is high and the product is not readily available the prices are going to be high.

If there is a continuous ongoing supply that never dries up the price might go up first becomes stable for a while and then gets cheaper as suppliers compete for the increased amount of business until prices are steady.

c) Impact on the processing of live stock within Australia.

There is a chain of jobs involved in the processing of animals here in Australia.

The abattoir is firstly only interested in providing food to the nation and other countries by killing, processing, packaging and distributing the end product like cattle, sheep, pigs and other livestock.

It also receives a lot of by-products like hides and or feathers, dried blood, and through processes accumulates tallow and bone meal etc.

There are plumbers, fitters, electricians, packaging manufactures, truckies, etc just to name a few. Many other jobs are associated with the meat processing industry as it is a chain of employment opportunities created by opening an abattoir in the remote areas or regional areas. There would be Jobs for all works of live including the indigenous communities, new refugees, migrants and other people living in remote regional areas or towns.

It is common knowledge that where abattoirs closed down the areas turned into ghost towns. Live exports can never replace the loss of income and jobs in Australia nor can it make up for all the misery that followed the closure of the only income in that particular area.

3. Other related matters

I am disappointed to see that MLA had so many years to improve animal welfare in poorer countries and did so little so late.

I do not approve of MLA receiving all the funding while our own Meat Processors struggle to stay open. Running an abattoir is not cheap and the red tape they have to go through is not fair either.

"There ought to be a level playing field which is not there".

If live exports is to be kept alive it would be only too fair that some of MLA`s funding and some of the wealthy Live Exporters put some money back into the country by contributing into reopening abattoirs after all we consumers pay for it with our 900.00 Dollar per year tax levy.

The Funding should be used to re-invested in reopening abattoirs, train slaughter-men, provide jobs and keep our country fed at the same time with cheaper meat products.

It is appalling that Australian meat eaters have to compensate with high prices what the live exporter gives away cheaply.

A live Exporter is said to receive 1.80 to 3.00 dollars for a kilo. We pay 3 times as much for the same product if not more at the butchers or grocery.

I would like to see at least 50 % of the live exports business redirected into Australian abattoirs so that there is a healthy competition both within Australia and overseas market be it Halal or not.

Australia cannot afford to close purposely all remaining open abattoirs to suit the MLA to live exports only. And then say we cannot process animals here because we do not have the abattoirs to handle the large number of animals.

Australians need jobs too.

(MLA & others have become too dependened on this sole trade of income and have to rethink their position rather sooner than later).

Overseas people *should not be forced only* to be dependent on the live exports market if they also agree and prefer to have their meat in carcass form, boxed or chilled for their own convenience.

All the people and jobs that go with once the livestock is on ships finishes anyway. Who loses a job if they are able to work for the Australian abattoirs instead?

The jobs that would have to miss out are only overseas loading on to vessel as all the other jobs are not being done on Australian soil. They would have to be in temp free range paddocks until they are going to be processes.

I also would like to mention that I personally do not like to see in any case any animal be is cattle, sheep or goat being slaughtered at

home. All animals have to be processed at a plant. No more home slaughter in backyards, walkways etc..

Regards

Antje Struthmann