

Australian Senate Inquiry

Live Cattle Exports – Submission

To whom it may concern.

In relation to the terms of reference.

1. I believe that government and our peak industry bodies have failed terribly in protecting the producer's interests in our live cattle exports to firstly Egypt the Philippines then Indonesia and they are only the ones I know of. We have had our income drastically reduced then cut off entirely by weight restrictions and bans. MLA has only recently opened an office in Jakarta! There is no question that our levy money has been spent elsewhere, multimillions of our hard earned dollars which we pay in good faith so problems such as animal welfare are looked after properly. Not ignored because they are deemed too hard, that is not the way of the northern pioneers, in fact, it is exactly the opposite. People have been too busy doing deals rather than looking after the industry interests.
 - a) These failings are unforgivable and I believe that the NTCA should be given the funding and the mandate to take over these operations giving the producers more say in what actions take place in the marketplace. They are OUR cattle and we are the best people with the necessary skills to follow them through the chain to make sure they are handled properly. Cattle that are exported should have their levy payed to the body representing and promoting export, cattle that are killed domestically have their levy payed to the body representing and promoting their product. That is the only way to take away the conflict of interest that is happening now. Private Producers need to play a more active role in the marketplace. We should be making direct sales to feedloters and abattoirs in Indonesia. That way it will be only the best facilities that will stay in business because Private Producers will not tolerate bad handling practices and that is why we need to be more active in the marketplace. At the end of the day producers need to be receiving a top price for their product so we can afford to put necessary infrastructure and procedures in place not only here in Australia but in the countries

that we do business. There are more jobs here and there than you can poke a stick at but we cannot afford it and the current system is not giving us a fair representation. Our obligations as Australians should be to point of slaughter, once the animal is dead then it is up to the market place to decide what product they wish to buy (in relation to hygiene, presentation and type of product.) Private Producers can make this happen given the resources, we do not want to see any small business here in Australia or Indonesia put at a disadvantage. The smaller abattoirs in Indonesia help to keep it a free market and they need the support in the form of correct procedures and training with the promotion of stunning critical. The last thing we need is a monopoly of corporate companies controlling the beef trade. That is not the Australia we want to live in and is not the Australia our servicemen fought for. This problem has arisen because of the failures of a few individuals, not the producers or the production industry. Expenditure in the marketplace needs to be followed through thoroughly with a head bail put on the mark 1 boxes being standard and stun guns. With some other minor changes to yards such as blocking out line of sight of animals waiting for slaughter and stock handling training this will fix animal welfare lapses. Also an exchange program of stockman to help relations and exchange ideas.

- i) Marketing and promotion of live export to Australian producers is adequate.
 - ii) There needs to be more monitoring by Australian and Client country representatives. Standards must be set and met. Again producers in the marketplace are our best eyes and ears on the ground with regular visits by NTCA members.
 - iii) It all comes down to individual actions, education and training and funding to put best practice in place.
- b)
- i) Formal monitoring should be done by the Australian exporters reporting back to their industry body. Informal monitoring should be carried out by NTCA members reporting back to the NTCA executive and the live exporter's industry body.
 - ii) Addressing any poor animal welfare should be done informally by anyone associated with the beef supply chain, i.e. if you see something that is not right say something to whoever is in charge at the time, also make a note to be passed on to the exporter. To address poor animal welfare practices formally should be a joint party of producer and exporter industry reps.
- 2.
- a) Live export is the backbone of the whole of the North Australian Beef Industry and all associated businesses. Without this market we will be set back 20 years and regional communities will fail.

- b) We have a great market with live export it helps keep the Domestic price of beef received by the producer up because of the competition. Livestock production systems have improved dramatically because of this good market.
 - c) It has not impacted the domestic processors because they do not want Brahman bred cattle; we breed Brahmans for the live trade.
3. Australian Private Primary Producers often feel let down and forgotten by Government policy, farmers need more support, it is the farmer who feeds the population of the world. Maybe it is the people who live in the cities who need some more education and training.

Sincerely

Justin Dyer

Director

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