

Live Export Submission for Jacqueline Curley

(A)

The 4 corners expose, as well stage managed as it was to achieve the maximum impact on Australian viewers was, I agree, horrific. The fact is these images were gained over many months and some of the animals filmed in pens as the Australian animals being slaughtered, were I believe traced back by their identification tags to being in Indonesia years previously, and therefore would definitely not have been the animals being slaughtered.

This in line with the fact that there is evidence accumulating that the Indonesian slaughter-men may have been paid or encouraged to put on a good show for the cameras does not sit well with the ethics of the people who have made it their mission to decimate the live export industry by any means possible. The fact that these groups were content to take months and possibly years to achieve this footage says that this cruelty is not as prevalent as they would have us all believe.

However it in no way excuses the treatment these animals received , either Australian or Indonesian animals being slaughtered for the filming process.

This whole sorry process can in the end achieve a much more humane slaughter method for a huge percentage of animals born in Indonesia as well as a 100% OIE standard for all Australian livestock processed on Indonesian shores.

(B)

Please note that OIE standards are used in abattoirs in Europe, Australia and many other countries where stunning is not necessarily mandatory, this practice is not only in Asian countries. If carried out correctly the process is not as gruesome as depicted.

Stunning will become more prevalent – fast tracked particularly with the safeguards that will be put in place where all Australian cattle are slaughtered in Indonesia. As many more slaughter-men see how stunning makes the whole process easier for them as well as for the animals I have no doubts that a shorter timeframe for initiating stunning in many Indonesian abattoirs will occur. This is the good initiative achieved out of this mess, that will end a lot of suffering for all animals slaughtered in Indonesia, not only Australian animals.

At the end of the day if all the people who are protesting against live exports from Australia choose to close their eyes to this improvement – they will have to live their lives knowing that they chose to put millions of off shore animals through a possibly cruel death which will now be avoided if the Live Export Industry works forward instead of closing down.

The List of traceability and slaughter safeguards that MLA have compiled over time I believe will now finally have the full backing from the Australian

Government and the Indonesian Government necessary for them to be implemented in abattoirs that will be accredited for Australian livestock to be slaughtered in.

(C)

The mandatory NLIS cattle tagging system currently in place in Queensland which at great cost to Queensland producers and most producers in other states, can now finally be put to some credible use by being used as a tool within the Indonesian traceability system.

The Australian Live export transport system is to be commended for the upgrades achieved in transit of livestock. They are penned in well ventilated areas, with supplies of consistent taste fresh water and a well managed supply of high quality fodder. The fact that these animals gain more weight during the sea voyage than they do in most pasture related situations is evidence of this.

The comfort of animals during sea voyages to Indonesia is short and excellent compared to the great distances that livestock will have to travel for many days by Road Trains, much of this distance on hot dusty dirt roads without water and feed during actual transit times. It is not physically possible to water and feed livestock during road transportation. They must wait until off loaded at rest periods where the quality of water and fodder is so different at each stop often they do not eat or drink properly when they do have the chance. During Road Transport they are unable to lie down and rest when they are tired (for fear of being trodden on by other animals constantly moving during transit) as they are able to do on sea voyages.

(D)

The types of livestock suitable for transit during live export is already well documented and properly implemented by associated Live Export Bodies and Australian government departments. This does not need any change to my knowledge.

The downgrade in the weights imported from Australia via the Indonesian permit system during 2010 was a commercial decision, which will change as the importing countries requirements for beef change.

(E) and (F)

A system similar to the current NLIS requirements for livestock slaughtered in Australia can be implemented. It has been working in Australia for some time and can readily be used in Indonesia. The accredited abattoirs in Indonesia will be able to implement this system easily.

Australia has built 35 km of sealed roads in the Java province recently where additionally Australia has also signed a Joint Indonesian Forest Carbon

Partnership agreement in a long term co-operation through the UN REDD scheme, which has so far cost the Australian taxpayer \$70 million dollars with at least another \$130 million to be put into this scheme. This is where a large feedlot industry existed, so I am sure they can organize to have a small number of in comparison, relatively cheap electronic tagging readers installed to secure the viability of billions of dollars of international trade which was abruptly disrupted without proper consultation of industry members in Australia or Indonesia beforehand.

(G)

The Gillard government handling of the slaughter methods of the live export trade as a reaction to one well devised Australian TV documentary was inept to say the least. The Indonesian people may have lost the trust that has taken 35 years to build up in this industry with Australia.

It would be hoped that Indonesia will take our culture into consideration (or our lack of consideration of the Indonesian people who may be equally appalled at the images shown) and work together with us to upgrade the whole process to the benefit of all cattle slaughtered for food.

This will benefit the families of both countries who rely on this industry, Australians for their family business and homes on cattle stations, the thousands of families who rely on servicing the beef industry, and Indonesian families who need the food and work for survival.

Do not be fooled by the “statistics” that the live export sector is threatening the viability of the meat processors in Australia. These studies have been commissioned by the meat processors – if the live export industry is disbanded – which the processing sector has also been trying to achieve for many years it eliminates the only real competition to the processing industry and removes the “floor price” which has kept some stability in the beef industry since it’s inception. Do remember that Australia’s beef prices are now “fixed” by the third largest beef processor in the world - a foreign owned company whose best interests are of course not necessarily in the best interests of Australian farmers.

I know through experience. My family business survived the 4 year beef crash of the seventies when Australia lost the chilled export market to Japan due to bad packing practice. Many family businesses did not survive and a number of beef industry family members also did not survive the trauma. If the current crisis continues, the seventies will be a walk in the park compared to the devastation which will occur within the whole beef industry of Australia and the industries which service it.

Our domestic beef prices quoted from these Australian abattoirs fell by up to 25cents per kilogram of live beef (approximately 50 cents per kg of retail beef) within 24 hours of the live export ban being announced. That was just the beginning, it will continue to fall without competition. One producer who had

his previous shipment of livestock processed at \$3.95 per kilogram was recently quoted \$2.95 per kilogram for the same article.

The current high value of the Australian \$ against the US \$ amplifies these effects.

If the Australian population want their meat imported from other countries, and are prepared to accept the raised risks of importing Foot and Mouth disease, Mad cow disease, and outbreaks of E Coli which will kill Australian residents, continue on the ill-informed course of action to ban live export, because that is what will eventuate with this action.

Australian farmers are living on very borderline profit margins but we continue to produce this protein because we actually like the hard work that goes with raising these animals and we do care for them.

The beef industry farming numbers will be reduced by the current action, as many have already been placed in a position of bank-ruptcy due to an absence of 12 months income.

When those livestock that are able to be maintained in their current areas (many will not have the pastures or resources for livestock to survive to the next market weight level) the freight costs now (and which will increase again with the carbon tax) will make sending these stock to the nearest southern markets a non profitable action. Those that do end up in southern markets will also be penalized by processors at least 20 cents a kilogram live-weight because of their brahman genetics. (This is not warranted but it will happen because they can) It will also have the effect of flooding the market (an additional 500,000 livestock when processing capacity at mid year is already full.

The current "shortage" claimed by processors is in fact an inability to sell the meat on the global market due to our high dollar. There is no actual shortage of cattle for slaughter. Currently, we are unable to get "kill space" for livestock at an abattoir without some weeks advance notice.

The live export industry began and expanded to become what can now be a very well regulated and viable industry for all concerned. Please do not totally decimate Australia's beef industry.

If you eat red meat, or care about Australian farming families, then I suggest you help to upgrade the only industry which is practical for the beef farmers of the whole of Northern Queensland, the Northern Territory and the top end of Western Australia.

Support The live export Industry, which after much trial and error has been found to be the most suitable for raising Bos Indicus or Brahman cattle in the very harsh conditions of this part of Australia which in turn supplies protein to our neighboring country Indonesia.

You will also be supporting the rest of Australia's beef farmers to stay in business and therefore continue to access healthy grass-fed or grain-fed Australian beef on your supermarket shelf, instead of only grain-fed beef from other countries which will not have the same quality assurance program Australia has put in place for your beef eating safety.

Signature

Jacqueline Curley