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Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport  
P.O. Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Secretary

**Unusual behaviour in a steer in Indonesia shown in the Four Corners program 'A Bloody Business'**

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) notes the unusual behaviour in a steer depicted in the Four Corners program 'A Bloody Business'. The steer displays some shivering and shaking and this has been attributed to a fear response in various testimony and submissions to the Committee.

Shivering or shaking are not known to be associated with fear in cattle.

We have conducted searches of the scientific literature and they have not revealed any links between "stress", "fear" and "distress" and "shaking", "shivering" or "trembling" in cattle. Nor are they related to searches for "emergency reactions". Shivering and shaking are not among the parameters measured when undertaking experimental work on fearful reactions in cattle. Those signs of shivering or shaking can be consistent with clinical tetany and hypomagnesaemia.

The treatment of the steer is certainly unacceptable from an animal welfare perspective. However without the history of what has happened to the steer, a clinical physical examination or laboratory data, any proposals about the cause for the behaviour displayed can only be speculative at best.

AVA trusts this has been of value to the Committee in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely

G Barry Smyth  
President