

Dear Mr Farmer,

I am a very concerned Australian who has been watching the amazing events that followed the 4 Corners footage showing poor treatment of slaughter cattle in Indonesia.

I do also happen to be a farmer but probably have a financially neutral position in the issue as although we do breed cattle in SW Australia we probably would be better off in our feedlotting business with cheap northern cattle coming south.

On the cessation of the Indonesian trade

1. Shutting the trade overnight caused major disruption and hardship, plus it left the Indonesian industry short and gave Australia no more influence in improving conditions for ALL cattle in Indonesia.
2. Not talking to them before the cessation smacked of arrogance and has set back relations with our most important, numerous and potential neighbour as it has confirmed many of the suspicions they have had about us.
3. Not investigating the report before acting created a very dangerous precedent for how we can be ruled by publicity whether it be correct/incorrect , very biased and/or against our national interest!!
4. Antagonistic forces to the trade come in many guises and might include the likes of those terrorists who wrecked CSIRO GM trials, and meat processors who see economic advantage in it's cessation.
5. Making it too hard or potentially damaging to deal with Australia will cost our Nation dearly in times to come when the finite resources that drive our economy now, have all been sold.
6. Anything or anyone can be made to look bad if a story is very one sided – how would we like it if Indonesia's national broadcaster aired a report that showed us in a very bad light to the world!!! DANGEROUS STUFF FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH AN IMPORTANT NEIGHBOUR!!!

Why the Live trade should continue for the foreseeable future

1. Livestock farming will drift into oblivion if this option is denied to producers because;
 - Livestock slaughter is uncompetitive in Australia on World standards because of our high wage structure and bureaucratic impositions
 - Northern producers of especially cattle have few options as there are no abattoirs available.
 - A long truck trip south that would be required without the live shipping option would be a bigger animal welfare concern than a relatively short sea trip where they are fed and watered very well
 - Abattoirs in the north are even more expensive to run than their southern counterparts as they are very seasonal and remote
 - For environmental reasons northern cattle are not well suited to come south for fattening because of their breed type, and their value as an economic export item.

- Many livestock producers will go broke or not get bank finance to continue which will lead to much hardship and loss of export earnings
- Making the northern cattle industry uneconomic will see a depopulation of vast areas of Australia making us more vulnerable in a bio-security and strategic defence way.
- Surely a better way to give aid to less affluent countries (especially near neighbours) is to foster industries in their country by feeding our cattle, processing them and marketing the meat in their wet markets.
- The competition of the live trade makes local processors find more lucrative markets for both sheep and cattle, instead of accepting an easy option at a lower price forcing southern producers to be uneconomic

I do implore this inquiry to take notice of those who support a strong, innovative live-shipping industry that has the potential to forge closer economic and strategic alliances with countries who in general need our help to improve conditions in their country.

Yours sincerely

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