

This submission is from the point of view of our depot. We have quarantined 326340 sheep on behalf of AQIS since September 2006.

- If we are removed from the market animal welfare concerns will not be addressed. I have personally spoken with vets involved in the trade who swear the Bassateen abattoir whose footage suspended the trade to Egypt is still operating as per normal, just not on Australian stock, which are sent to the Sohkna feedlot and abattoir. Nobody is allowed near the Bassateen facility now, destroying any chance of making improvements.
- Standard 3 of the ASEL is the standard most relevant to our operation. It is extremely comprehensive and very workable in a practical sense. Record keeping required is clearly outlined, as is procedures for stock rejection, treatment, feeding, watering, handling and monitoring. Furthermore, it has been updated twice since we started our business, giving me confidence that the standards are constantly being reviewed and improved.
- The trade is heavily regulated. We receive an Approved Export Program (AEP), a Notice of Intent (NOI) and a Consignment Risk Management Plan (CRMP) prior to each shipment being received. We also receive a list of vendors displaying the type of stock, area of sourcing and property brand for NLIS compliance monitoring. No animal can leave the depot until an AQIS vet and an independent 3rd party vet has inspected the sheep within 48 hours of the planned departure. No Leave for Loading Permit is issued until the vessel has been approved and the vets have signed off on the stock.
- We predominately deal with sheep, so I shall comment on them. We receive a wide range of sheep into our yards, such as wether lambs, ewes, ram lambs, wethers, rams and breeds including merinos, british breeds and exotic breeds such as dorpers and damaras, a breed especially grown for the live trade. Upon receipt of the stock, any stock not meeting the specifications of the exporter is rejected as per the Rejection criteria of the ASEL. The farmers are not paid for these rejects, nor are they returned. They are forfeited to the exporter and placed in the reject pen. Once the unloading counts have been verified a receipt docket is issued outlining gross numbers delivered, any rejects or deaths on arrival and a net number the producer is paid on. Once the docket has been issued the count is final and ownership is transferred to the exporter. During the processing of consignments any sheep that have become unsuitable for export are removed from the consignment prior to loading. We are under strict instructions from the exporters and AQIS to remove any animal we deem unsuitable. Contrary to popular belief, the exporters are not trying to get every last animal they can on the boat. We have removed up to 400 animals from a consignment due to eye infections from a very windy and dusty week. These animals were treated and the majority healed and

were kept for the next shipment. Those that didn't were destroyed. Once the animals arrive at the wharf they are again inspected by AQIS officials and any rejects missed by the depots or animal injured in transport are removed. I would like to make the point that many of the animals delivered for export are not yet ready for local processing, or are types that are not wanted, such as heavy Damara rams and ram lambs. Crossbred lambs, which are wanted by processors, are often not at the killable weight they require at the time of delivery, meaning the producer has to pay more to feed and house the animals until they are ready. Often what we find is the producer has sold his top lambs to processors at a premium and sold his smaller younger animals to the exporters.

- We are audited every year to ensure we are complying with the regulations. Each day that we are quarantining stock we are required to submit a detailed report outlining numbers received, loaded, deaths and any ill. Before each shipment is due to leave we are required to sign declarations stating the time in the depot, any treatments given, numbers of stock and compliance with the importing countries requirements.
- The company we service has built extensive feedlots and abattoirs in Jordan, Egypt and currently building in Turkey. The implementation of the NLIS system for both sheep and cattle will make tracking much easier. Every industry has bad operators. Instead of punishing the entire industry for the actions of a few, the bad operators need to be identified and persuaded to improve.
- Until we became involved in the depoting I admit we had no idea just how many people are involved in this industry. We are only registered for 20 000 head, but that alone takes 28 truck movements in and 28 movements out, about 20 tonne per day of locally grown hay and pellets, and 6 casual staff, plus myself and my wife. That doesn't include any shearers required, the vets and AQIS officials, people looking after the paperwork, the wharf workers, the feed that is needed for the ships or a multitude of other people involved. And that's for 20 000 sheep. 4 million sheep were exported last year alone. With the exception of one movement of trucks, these people would not be required if the same sheep were sent to a processor, as the depots are purely for live export welfare checks and quarantine. And the argument that more local jobs would be created with processing is a fallacy. If it were not for the overseas workers on the 457 visas processors would not have staff.

I urge you and your colleagues to see past the distressing footage we have all seen and condemned, and try to see the bigger picture. I shall end this submission with a question I have put to many people on both sides of the argument for the last two weeks and as yet no one has been able to give me an answer.

*“ Finally, I'm sure Animals Australia will find some more footage of mistreated animals somewhere. But I ask you this. Name me one industry that is expected to have a 100% pass rate or face total closure. No stuff ups - **at all**. We still ship oil despite the tanker grounding near the Barrier reef. We still mine uranium despite Japan's mess and nuclear weapons. We still mine iron ore and coal, regardless of the pollution it causes. We still sell cars despite the 100s killed and thousands injured. Planes fall from the sky and we still fly. Boats sink and we still sail. Footballers break their legs, arms, heads and we still play on. Doctors make mistakes and people die but we still go to hospital. Lawyers mess up, people go to jail wrongfully yet the legal profession exists. Catholic priests have been accused and proven guilty of the most despicable acts, yet the church flourishes. Do not stand there and tell me my industry must have absolutely no failings or face total shutdown. And if you come up with asbestos, slavery or whaling you lose points. Because comparing an industry that has led or will lead to a slow and painful death of thousands of people, or an industry that stole people from one country and whipped them until they baled cotton in another, or an industry which was closed in most nations due to extinction concerns, to live export, just makes you look stupid.”*

Thank you for your time.

Michael Trant