

THIS IS A SUBMISSION FOR LIVE EXPORT

Live Export must be maintained because:

Processing plants can not process cattle available now. We could not book cattle into Townsville meatworks for 10 weeks in 2010. By 10 weeks the cattle are no longer fat because the pasture in Northern Territory depletes very quickly.

WORKS HAVE PROVED UNVIABLE BECAUSE-

1. Northern Australia pastures do not suit fattening
2. Northern Australia only has a short season not only because of the wet season which makes our dirt roads impassable and mustering impossible, but also because cattle if they fatten, stay fat only for April-September.

THEREFORE CANNOT KEEP MEATWORKS GOING FOR ANY VIABLE AMOUNT OF TIME

Live export keeps money in Australia whereas the Meat processors are >80% foreign owned and because they are engaging overseas workers on work visas, most of this money must go overseas. Some meatworks are not even working at capacity because of the labour shortages

Preban days the live export

1. underpinned the value on cattle - if Indonesia can pay \$2 for so called inferior cattle, then the good cattle must be worth more
2. gave us money to develop our businesses
3. allowed us to carry out animal welfare practices we so badly want to do so we
4. have female cattle to sell instead of them dying in the paddock because we cannot afford the welfare practices such as mustering twice in the year.
5. allows us to grow the type of cattle best suited to these ticky tropical poor quality northern pastures. These cattle are not welcomed to Coles, Woolworths or southern butchers.
6. was cheaper by approx \$200 for us to send a yearling to Darwin than to Qld AND quicker since we did not have to hold cattle while they clear
7. meant our cattle are worth money

Live export meant we can spend money on cattle welfare - for example I will tell you about my day to day life - a day which usually starts at 5am and usually finishes after 9pm.

In order to keep our cows and heifers alive and in fair condition so that they live through the dry each year, we have to early wean their calves when we muster even if small. As well as these young weaners, each year we get poddies - orphans. These are from cows which have died because their uteri have fallen out and eaten off by crows or they were too poor to survive or calves abandoned because they are very ill from dingo bites or navel infections.

Part of my job is to look after these babies. I get hundreds of them and they have to be fed special food in order to recover and grow on. We usually name these babies but not silly names like Brian - no we use special names like Glamour girl or Wobbly or Wishful with his mate Hopeful.

Some of them have done feats - like Wobbly who came out of the scrub by himself and then walked another 20kms. He rode home in the front of the truck and was lifted into the poddy yard by 3 big hearted softies called ringers. Sometimes calves like Wobbly can not even get up by themselves and have to be lifted each day for weeks and then one day we find they can rise to their feet by themselves. All the ringers know this day and they follow their lives as they travel from one health paddock to another until they gain freedom in the bush as viable weaners and their bodies change from hairballs to sleek animals.

A poddie like Wobbly will need at least 2 months of feed - that is at least \$60 and even up to \$100. But we do these things because we care for the babies and indeed all our cattle. It isn't really economical but it is babies like Wobbly who help ringers grow straight. When they see these calves struggle to live and survive, it seems to give these problem kids both black and white, a purpose and hope in this world.

You see our ringers are a mixture of Aboriginal ringers and usually Australian problems. We give jobs to kids who have \$16000 or more of fines to pay off - and they usually come bush driven by desperate parents - they are in gangs and been on drugs and did robbery and driven cars while drunk and been in jail. The aboriginal kids come to us with dull skins and dull eyes.

We give them all hope and a future. They can leave behind their past and start again if they want too. We teach them skills and they often go on to good jobs and make futures from it.

They need long term jobs to keep them on track but we can't keep them employed for the time they need out in the bush without enough money.

So we need the live export.

Without this money we could not afford to keep the ringers on for the whole year. It would just be piece work and then the aboriginal ringers would be back on drugs and drink and the Australian problems are back in your country on a one way path to jail.

Without this money we could not afford to keep the poddies and we would have huge cattle losses. Before the live export days, most of the cows died and they don't die easy - crows pick their eyes and bums out and other cows stand by to eat them too sometimes even before they die. It usually takes them 2 days to die if we do not kill them and believe me it is not easy seeing a cow which has worked well vainly trying to keep crows off herself and know that the crows will win or finding them blinded and totally exhausted.

We are both old and we have worked long hours all our life. We started with nothing but a dream and we have fought all our lives to have this dream of running a large cattle station. We have lived in sheds for years on dirt and upgraded to cement and even to indoor loos and hot water on tap, just for the chance of developing this station.

You see when people paint the picture of sitting on verandahs in moleskins and pearls, they aren't dealing with reality. Our reality is sunburnt skins and lack of medical and dental attention.

Our children were home taught in amongst a lot of work and their first holiday indeed our first holiday (no honeymoon) was expo some 15 years or so up the track. Even when ill or hurt we have no choice but to work. Right now I am sitting at this desk with broken ribs courtesy of a bike accident and no I haven't been to a doctor either. I can't afford the time or money it takes. Even before I worked hard now I have to work even harder just to try to cover the things needing to be done. The exhaustion is a worry to me - how long before someone is seriously hurt. It isn't greed which drives us but necessity - the animals need feeding, a turkey nest pumped or something fixed. I went to town once in 6 months whereas David is on record or doing 18 months before getting off the place and another 18 months after that but yes we do have a large wagon in the shed. One of the cheapest ones and believe me, all the hurt staff have found it pretty good to have the 4-5 hour 1 way trip to hospital in it. You have ambulances but we mostly have to drive our own vehicles. One staff when I got her to the nearest clinic desperate because she could not breathe and was bringing bright blood up, was given back to me to drive on to the Katherine hospital. The ambulance could not leave the clinic. The staff nearly died.

The dollars of live export gave us hope and a chance of fulfilling of our dream, it gave us a future. To have no live export means we virtually lose this future. Big transport costs of \$200 per animal and not having the right cattle mean we cannot go south. The cattle are of little value to sell south.

There is no plan B for us in the north. We need our live export. The decision of the government to stop the export to Indonesia was a terrible irresponsible decision with no consideration to the needs of businesses or the animals in Australia or the communities of Northern Australia. To think we can run our place on \$5000 is as ridiculous as the decision to stop it. Both show absolute ignorance of the needs of running a business.

Our business reels from this. How many are going to go broke and have to sell up losing their future and no super for them as they could not afford it too. It doesn't even feed my poddies.

So I ask "Who is going to feed my Poddies?"

David and Jenny James