

Submission: Mrs Sonya Prinsloo

13 July 2011

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Secretary

Re: Live Animal Export

I wish to submit my concerns regarding the resumption of trade, without total enforcement of stunning each animal prior to slaughter.

I understand there is a protocol in the slaughter, due to Halal restrictions, but cannot believe any religion would require such torturous methods and agony for the animal, prior to death. I am a science teacher and attempt to read as much as I can about latest findings in science. I do recall research indicating that reducing stress on animals is an advantage to the taste of the meat.

Following the footage that was aired, I can assume that many people, have probably become vegetarians. This would be another catastrophe for our meat farmers.

I preface all my concerns with the thought that, like these animals reared for slaughter and consumption, we, ourselves, are all animals.

Finally, I would add that in 1973 I was involved, in Perth, with the beginning of the live sheep trade. I actually applied for a job, to take sheep to Abu Dhabi. A friend of mine from New Zealand was looking for work in WA and I wrote the letter of application for him. He got the job.

This was the very beginning of the live sheep trade. Sheep were trucked down to sit on the wharf at Fremantle, and wait to be loaded on the very early sheep carriers. Often high temperatures prevailed on the wharf and during movement and so on opening the carriages, there were many dead carcasses. Sheep were loaded and taken on the long voyage. Many died and were thrown over, body organ samples were taken for pathology. At the other end, the sheep were inhumanely killed – I believe the throat was cut, again to conform with the particular religious belief. I stand to be corrected, but I think the method involves bleeding to death. It was distressing to witness and my friend, who was from a very large sheep and cattle farm, in North Canterbury, New Zealand mentioned this to me.

I believe the ships are more purpose-built now and so companies don't suffer the loss of thousands of sheep, like they lost in 1973. Which is of no consequence to the poor sheep, as more survive the journey, only to die a slow death. However, it does show that this cruelty has been happening for almost 40 years and must be known by many hundreds of people. On board the early sheep carriers was one veterinary surgeon and I can imagine there are many more, who have eye-witnessed the inhumane slaughtering of both sheep and cattle exported from Perth, WA.

With all the knowledge we have in 2011 regarding humane methods I do believe that we cannot in all conscience allow any animals to not be stunned prior to death. I would also hope that the 'stunning method' is fail-proof and that operators are trained in this technique and there is a check on the industry by persons without a vested interest.

I personally feel the only way to safeguard non-cruelty to all animals being killed for meat consumption, is to process the animals in Australia and perhaps the Meat and Livestock Association could set up State abattoirs for this purpose. Due to vast distances in WA, these would need to be strategically placed to avoid the road transport over long distances in extreme heat.

I hope you are able to sense my sincerity in supporting any effort to ensure the prevention of cruelty to all animals.

Yours faithfully

Sonya Prinsloo

Western Australia