

Submission,

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Animal Welfare standards in Australia's live export markets.

This submission is based on sensible arguments about the current Cattle trade from and within Australia. Firstly, there still are too many Slaughter houses here in Australia that does not follow the humane treatment of animals before they are used for meat. In South Australia there have been many reports on radio where approximately over 10 Slaughter houses have "license" to cut the throat of the cattle and immediately stun them afterwards to conform to the religious beliefs of their clients. "Approximately over 10" is over 10 too many. On this information, how do we expect to get respect for our push to have our animals to be treated humanely in other countries?

Yes we can preach to Indonesia about how to treat Australia's live-stock and so we should, to help minimize the actions of the undesirable, but we have to clean up our own backyards first.

Why is this issue important? Many out there are not extremists or activists in our cause, but we deserve fair consideration on how other species are treated with respect, especially for those that are taken for our benefit to feed and clothe us. Most in power consider the issues based on their own ideas about animals and the political ramifications if nothing is done about it. Some "distance" themselves from the animals we do not see or hear and do nothing until it is a big issue. I am happy the Greens Party has made a commitment to deal with this issue, taking the steps forward to help sanction a result of some kind.

The Emotional side on this matter is one where common-sense does prevail which concerns other species, where Asian countries have food dishes that revolt most of us here in Australia. These are the animals they see as a convenience where our families here love them. Yes, we are talking about our dogs and cats as pets which most are loved and cared for. Visualise the disgust of a hungry family in another county slaughtering dogs and cats for food and the methods they use to do it – how would you feel if your loved pet was caught and used for food – Does it happen here? Yes it probably does. But you may say that is "different" because we don't personally have to take care for the other species, like cattle and sheep which are not considered pets. Why it is so different simply because we adopted only a few of the species of animals to be our loved companions? What makes the rest not so important?

RSPA procedures can only do so much and usually investigates any animal cruelty after the damage has been done. It should be made clear that a central body or state bodies should have policy to engage in immediate investigation where a penalty can be applied. These actions can be regulated and assessed by authority of the government without taking the culprits to court – but the court is to be used as a last measure.

The cost to farms and slaughter houses is an initial cost to upgrade to a system of killing which is more humane for the animal and with the regulations updated and renewed to ensure conformity of their operations under law.

Occasionally, we hear about the environment and the conditions of chickens and pigs in their pens where many are “crushed” together to save space and revoke the need to build bigger shelters, but rarely do we hear how successful about any changes that may have been made to make it better but it’s the killing part that currently invades our thoughts. At all locations using religious requirements as their excuse, must come second where the first should ensure that the animal will feel no pain in the process. We are not restricting religious freedom, they should just conform to the requirements of the land we live in called Australia where a majority here have a consensus to stop this problem. Unfortunately it won’t change governments but with many it will leave a nasty taste and be important enough to vote for another party if they were first undecided on voting day.

Since this seems to be one of the hard cases to settle considering it infringes on other countries lack of regulations. In regard to our imports for our local consumption, one “out-of-many” solutions would be the introduction of labelling on goods where meat is bought. This should at least enable the everyday shopper to choose to select certain meats whether it is in cans or wrapped goods etc; based on a label Logo approved by a governing body. This will let the public make a decision on their purchase based on a logo that exhibits “humane treatment” . This would give a good overall indication of how Australians feel about the slaughtering process of animals they eat. We do this already in deciding which eggs to buy where many buy the free-range if the budget allows. Those people usually are the types who want to make a difference, and they are voters too, to consider when the parties are struggling for every vote to get ahead. We have had Government parties who depend on having a huge lead in votes and over the following years, complacency allows them to not be so fulfilling to the society’s needs where animal rights seem not so important to the party – it is not excusable to wait for “a balance of power” scenario where the leading party has to listen to the people while being afraid of losing vote power for their party in future. Animal cruelty rectification should not be used as a balancing act but be pursued actively and keep on working at it, especially when events like the Indonesia slaughter scenario pops up again.

Conclusion

Most of us eat meat and we enjoy a big steak; we enjoy our hamburgers and so on and most distance themselves from how it got there before it is cooked. Predators out in the wild have to kill their prey in their way to ensure their food source but they don’t have a choice about it.

Caring families, get angry when their cat brings in a bird from the outside where they are not always dead. We don’t want to see those animals suffer by the bite of a cat but they bring it in as a present to the owner in most cases – that’s their excuse... we try to feed them enough to not only quench their hunger but to limit those killings

which sometimes are slow and cruel. We impose limits on our cats but strangely we do not with some areas within the human race.

We once saw the news coverage on TV where two kids on cycles ran over a kitten at a train station. This kitten was injured and nearly fell on the tracks resulting in a huge uproar over it by the public – would cattle destined for food get the same response if it was deliberately injured by individuals and shown on TV? There is this barrier we put up and we don't want to hear about our meat food processing; that should say enough that the public does not want to experience such animal suffering in their lives. The outbursts in response occur when media reveals such inhumane treatment and goes quietly soon afterwards where it is buried and not be reminded of. So why not have an effort by the bigger parties to do something so it's not so troubling in the future. We try to stop the Japanese whaling industry and we note the cruelty that is imposed to those incredible animals; can't we do that for other species regardless if we use them for food consumption or not?

Allen Crisell

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