

2011 Senate Inquiry – Improvements in animal welfare for Australian live exports for inquiry and report by the Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee

From Mr Jim and Mrs Pam McGregor, – grass and beef farmers
in the Great Southern area of Western Australia

We appreciate the opportunity to make an additional submission to this inquiry.

Some further points in addition to our submission sent yesterday on-line to the Senate Inquiry:

1. No action should be taken by the Federal Government on an emotive issue raised by a pressure group without a proper investigation by government people – Members of Parliament and relevant Departments AND everyone involved in the issue should be party to discussions to resolve the issue before any action is decided and implemented.
2. Consideration needs to be given as to how receptive people in other countries are to advice from Australia on running their business and how change to our standards (assuming this is desirable and acceptable to the other countries) can be achieved. We must remember that probably 100% of Australian cattle producers viewing the footage on the Four Corners programme shown on 30th May 2011 would have been appalled at what was shown.
3. If animal welfare is the purpose of the Bills currently before the House which led to this Senate Inquiry, consideration must be given to the possibility that animals may have to be trucked extremely long distances until the study into the feasibility of abattoirs in the north, and markets for that product, is completed and even longer for any findings to be implemented. While trucking in Australia is extremely efficient over long distances with major care for the animals concerned, we need to also consider the requirements of overseas markets. Incidentally, we sold and the buyer trucked cows and calves, and cows, from our property just south of Kojonup in October 2010 to Holbrook in NSW. The buyer was happy with the condition of the cattle when they arrived. (For your information, the first leg was 26 hours straight to Wudina on the Eyre Peninsula where the cattle were offloaded for a minimum of eight hours, then loaded again for the 20 hours to Holbrook. We had ensured the cattle were in good physical condition and had given them a magnesium supplement before they left our property.) The RSPCA were concerned about adverse reports, set up a monitoring point on the Eyre Highway and found no problems which is testament to the care that farmers here took over cattle (and sheep) sent east because of the seasonal conditions in Western Australia.
4. In addition the live export markets are for live cattle not processed beef (and sheep) and if our customers cannot buy the live animals from us, they will purchase them from other countries. Given that some of those possible alternative countries have animal health issues, and given that Indonesia is not very far from our country, producers here have every right to be concerned about the future of animal health here should live exports from Australia be stopped completely.

Signed Jim and Pam McGregor 13th July 2011