

CHAPTER 15

RESEARCH

15.1 In a large number of submissions to the Committee there has been a recognition of the need for continuing and further research into the trade.

15.2 The Victorian Department of Agriculture indicated that, in the late 1970s, exporters were reluctant to participate in government research, preferring to do research within their individual companies, but recently they have become more amenable to university and government research.¹ The Brennan report commented that the exporters' reluctance was due to their concern that the results derived from the use of their facilities might confer a commercial advantage on their competitors.² This was confirmed by a number of other sources, including the AAHQs which added that the industry was also apprehensive of the exposure of deficiencies.³

15.3 Dr Batey of the ALTV told the Committee that between 1977 and 1980, while on the staff of Murdoch University, he received funding from the Reserve Bank to investigate mortalities in the live sheep export trade. He had some difficulty in 'getting the co-operation of certain sections of the industry ... it highlights the need for any research project to be a co-operative one. I think it needs to be one which involves the industry as well as the research institution.'⁴ Dr Batey believed the industry attitude had changed, that the industry has become more aware of its problems, possibly because of external pressure. Dr Franklin of the ALTV added that industry attitude had changed 'dramatically', as demonstrated by

the formation of the ALEIAC and its adoption of research priorities.⁵ Dr Arnold of the ALTV advanced the reason for the increase in co-operation as being the fact that profitability was down:

'The research must help them be commercially sound, otherwise they will not be here.'⁶

15.4 The ALEA told the Committee that:

'A majority of the research has been done within the company itself, as opposed to co-ordinated multi company research. Most of the research really is a matter of trials where there is a new product out, or you are trialling a new pellet.'⁷

15.5 The AMLC added that it must be recognised that the bulk of the research has been done by exporters and this is demonstrated in the bibliography in the Brennan Report. 'Austiran originally and certainly the companies today have put a lot of effort and cost into research programs.'⁸ The AAHQs commented that without the participation of the industry, major research projects would be 'useless'.⁹

15.6 The Brennan Report also stated that exporters had adapted new husbandry techniques for shipboard operations as a result of 'trial and error' rather than scientific experimentation.¹⁰ The ALEA agreed with this assessment.¹¹

15.7 State Government authorities have not had the resources to do much research into the live sheep export trade. It has been argued that those that benefit most from research should pay for it. There is an export levy on live sheep, part of which is allocated to research. Up to the end of 1984, \$1.26 million has been generated by research levies, which has been matched dollar for dollar by the Commonwealth through the AMRC. The

research levy was originally 3.33 cents per head for sheep and lambs out of a total levy of 71.73 cents per head for sheep and 81.73 cents for lambs. It was increased to 5 cents as from 1 September 1984.¹² The AMLC advised that in 1984 at a meeting of the ALEIAC, the ALEA submitted its own research programme in which it offered some of its own research funding. This was perceived as a genuine desire to be involved in funding or research and to help direct that research.¹³

15.8 The ALEA believed that the ALEIAC should have all research and research priorities referred to it. It should also be the body through which general funding capacity could be, if not directed, at least commented upon.¹⁴ At present the ALEA is not represented on the body which disburses funds, the AMRC, or its advisory committee. It told the Committee:

'We are paying into funds which the Government is then matching, and yet we have no say in the priorities that we want those funds used for.'¹⁵

Table 15.1: Livestock Export Charge Collections for Research

Year Ended June	Sheep and Lambs	Total All Livestock
	\$	\$
1979	84 409	97 720
1980	198 428	209 913
1981	179 644	212 762
1982	201 082	228 425
1983	229 851	263 876
TOTAL	893 414	1 012 696

Source: AMRC Annual Report 1982-83

15.9 The AMRC has been replaced by the AMLRDC. On 2 July 1985, the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr John Kerin announced the appointment of the eight members of the new Corporation. He commented that this finalised the reorganisation of meat and livestock industry research. The AMLRDC was established specifically 'to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of meat and livestock research and development in Australia'.

15.10 The Wool Council of Australia recommended that:

'Industry and government funds be directed to research on priority issues in the livestock export trade, with priorities to be determined by the Livestock Export Industry Advisory Committee.'¹⁶

15.11 One industry source believed that the universities, the State Departments of Agriculture and the AAHQs were best equipped to undertake research into aspects of the live sheep trade and that the AMRC should allocate funds.

15.12 The ALEA saw the need for accurate recording systems for the range of data that applied to live sheep exports such as mortalities, live weights and age groupings and had discussed it with the AAHQs to try to design requirements for all sections of the industry.¹⁷ The ALEA believed that AAHQs was the best placed organisation to act as a central clearing house of industry data that could be used for the benefit of the industry.¹⁸

15.13 The question of research priorities and areas of research has attracted considerable attention. The obvious areas of research have been commented upon in the body of the report. Over the last decade several lists of research priorities have been circulated:

- . Perth 1976, Department of Agriculture, Western Australia (Truscott and Wrath 1976)
- . Adelaide 1980, ABAH
- . Adelaide 1981, ABAH
- . Brennan Report ABAH 1984.

15.14 The ALEIAC at its meeting on 29 February 1984 identified the following as important future research areas.

High Priority

- . Determination of the extent and causes of mortality and weight loss on-farm, at assembly, in transport and during shipping.
- . Definition of the nutritional requirements of sheep undergoing export.
- . Investigation of the influences of regional sources of sheep on subsequent performance.

Priority

- . Definition of the benefits of therapeutic substances and feed additives to export sheep.
- . Investigation of assembly area design and management practice.
- . Development of suitable biochemical and physiological parameters of stress.

15.15 The Committee has made a number of recommendations for the conduct of research into various aspects of the trade in this report. Both the industry and governments should ensure that funding is available for this research and other research projects which are being or need to be done.