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Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland

REF: MNMC2011-10162

The Hon. John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 26 August 2011 referring a petition submitted for consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding suspension of livestock being delivered to Indonesian abattoirs that do not conform to Australian standards.

I understand the expectation that under Standing Order 209(b) I will lodge a written response with the Petitions Committee as Minister responsible for the matters raised in the petition. Please accept the following as my response for consideration by the committee, presentation to the House, recording in Hansard and posting on the committee's website.

Anyone who watched the footage aired on the ABC's *Four Corners* program on 30 May 2011 would have been shocked by the treatment of the animals it showed.

It was clear from this footage that the live export industry cannot safeguard the animals it sells without government regulation.

The Australian Government had to act. To fix the problem, the government introduced strict new rules and suspended the trade to Indonesia for a month to put them in place.

These new rules mean animals will only be exported if it can be independently shown that they will be treated in a way that meets or exceeds international welfare standards.

Exporters will also have to publish the outcomes of independent audit reports that show they are continuing to meet these standards.

These rules now apply to all cattle exports to Indonesia.

These changes fundamentally reform the way the live export trade works. Before these changes there were no rules to cover what happened after an animal arrived in an export market. Now, how they are treated in those markets must meet international standards.

These rules are now in place for Indonesia, and I have asked Mr Bill Farmer AO to look at what changes need to be made for other places Australia sends animals.

I am carefully considering Mr Farmer's report and will be responding soon.

Thank you for your interest in this important issue. More information about government action on live exports, including details of assistance available for people affected by the suspension of trade to Indonesia, is available at www.liveexports.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Joe Ludwig

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland

10 October 2011