

The Australian Senate's Rural and Regional Legislation Committee,

In relation to the National Animal Welfare Bill, I wish to point out that the tremendous inequality in law and treatment between companion animals and farm animals is abhorrent and unacceptable.

Caged egg-laying hens must be banned. Debeaking must be banned as it causes birds' lifelong pain, as do the wire floors of their cages. Broiler chicks are packed into sheds in their thousands and all these fowls never see daylight. They are fed antibiotics to keep them from dying and growth hormones that make them so deformed that many cannot even stand up.

The live export trade is self-regulated. This trade is horrifically barbaric. I was dumb-struck when I watched the "Sixty Minutes" session on the treatment of sheep on the "Al Kuwait" in March, 2004. Their treatment of the sheep was shocking. I discovered, however, that the "lucky" ones died on the ship compared to what happened to these poor animals at their destination. The cruelty they endured was unbelievable. It made me cry all night and I was physically sick for some weeks after. I am an 88 year old woman and, up to this time, have been a very proud Australian. After seeing this, I am ashamed of being an Australian. How can this country sink so low as to make money on the blood of tortured animals? Where is compassion? It is a well documented fact that cruelty to animals leads to serial murderers and serial rapists. What kind of an example does the Federal Government give to our children?

From the Four Corners session on the ABC on or about 21/6/04 I learnt that the Federal Government abrogates its responsibilities to animals and their treatment. Animal matters are supposed to be enforced by the RSPCA. However 'vested interests' in intensive farming and the live export trade are taking part in the areas of management and on the Board of Directors. Dr H. Wirth, the National President, stated he has no control over any of the States and, therefore, the States are able to continue serving the 'vested interests' in contravention of the National RSPCA policy.

Our animals are subject to transport across different States with no checks and balances on their welfare. They are crammed in trucks for over 40 hours or more.

All animals are sentient beings: this includes farm animals. Farm animals are also subject to dreadful mutilation without any anaesthetics or analgesia whatsoever to stop their horrific pain and suffering.

Mulesing – slicing off flesh around the breech of lambs is done with shearing sheers. Large wounds are inflicted on them without any pain relief. Over sixty years ago men were put on the moon, yet this barbaric torture is still practiced on lambs. This is unbelievable!

Tail docking is done on all lambs – no pain relief.

Castration on male sheep – no pain relief.

Cattle – they are branded with hot irons that burn through the skin – no pain relief.

Disbudding of 'bobby' calves – no pain relief.

Dehorning of mature cattle. Horns are an extension of the animals' skulls containing many nerves and blood vessels. This causes extensive bleeding and leads to tremendous suffering. This is an extremely cruel practice in light of the fact that NO pain relief is given.

Female cattle are spayed and no pain relief is given. This is a major operation and it is illegal to do this to a companion animal. Again, this is torture.

There is a vaccine (Vaxstrate) which immunizes cattle, both male and female, from conception. Why is this not used? Costs too much? Too much trouble? This torture on animals must be outlawed.

Pigs are castrated, suffer tail docking and ear notching as well as tail docking – all this is done without any pain relief whatsoever. Pigs are very intelligent and sensitive animals. I know because when I was young I also farmed animals.

Sows are confined to concrete and metal cages barely larger than their own bodies. They also never see daylight until being loaded on to the trucks for slaughter. When sows are about to give birth they are moved to an even smaller structure to a farrowing crate and they cannot even reach out to touch their babies. This torture should be stopped.

The cruelty and torture involved in intensive “factory” farming of animals should be banned.

Experiments on Animals – Australia does not have a national database of what experiments are undertaken on what animals nor on how many animals. Consequently the same tests can be carried out over and over again in different States and Territories and institutions. Tests can also be carried out to validate existing knowledge and I find this quite shocking in the extreme. Very many scientists have proved that enormous amounts of animal testing are flawed. A good example of this is Vioxx. Any testing of cosmetic or household cleaning products must be outlawed. People breeding animals for experiments must be strictly controlled with specific checks and balances in place and everything in relation to this must be transparent and accountable.

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