



AAVs and stockpersons on livestock voyages by sea under ASEL

Live Animal Export Branch

1 Purpose

This policy outlines the on-board personnel requirements for livestock exports by sea in accordance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL). It also provides a guide for alternative arrangement applications that can be made under a consignment's notice of intention to export (NOI).

2 Scope

This policy applies to exporters, accredited veterinarians (AAVs) and accredited stockpersons.

In accordance with ASEL standards 4.1.9, 4.1.10, 4.1.11 and 4.1.12, the department will consider on-board personnel arrangements as part of an NOI application. In considering the approval of an NOI, the department will consider whether the international transport arrangements for the livestock are adequate for their health and welfare.

This policy outlines the:

- requirements for an AAV to accompany a consignment in accordance with ASEL standard 4.1.9.
- process exporters must follow when applying for an alternative arrangement as provided for under ASEL standards 4.1.10 and 4.1.12, and the criteria the department would consider for any applications made.

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant export legislation and standards listed under [related material](#).

3 Requirements

Where the department may require an AAV to accompany a consignment

ASEL standard 4.1.9 requires that unless an exporter has an approved application under ASEL standard 4.1.10, an AAV must accompany each consignment of livestock and must remain with the consignment until the last animal has been unloaded at the final port of disembarkation in these circumstances:

- if the voyage is expected to be an extended long haul voyage
- on voyages with pregnant livestock
- any other voyage when directed by the department.

In accordance with ASEL standard 4.1.9 (c), the department may direct an exporter to have an AAV on any voyage when required. This may be required as part of the basis of an NOI approval, so that the department can be satisfied that the international transport arrangements for the livestock are adequate for their health and welfare.

If the department requires an exporter to engage an AAV for a consignment, we will notify the exporter in writing prior to approval of the NOI. If the exporter wishes to comment on the notice or provide the department with evidence as to why the requirement to engage an AAV cannot be met, the exporter may respond to the notice in writing, and within the timeframe stipulated in the notice.

Examples of where an AAV may be required include:

- the exporter has had a recent or previous notifiable incident
- the vessel is new or has had a significant structural change or re-fit, or a change of ownership or management
- previous voyage reports or independent observer (IO) reports have noted concerns on the health and welfare of animals exported by that exporter or on a given vessel
- where the route of the consignment, time of year, destination port, or species/class of livestock present a cumulative higher risk to animal health and welfare (see [factors relevant to determining if a consignment is lower or higher risk](#))
- for a new exporter or a new market for an existing exporter
- where a vessel has previously had a notifiable incident and the cause is unknown, or known to be from a vessel/structural concern.

4 Alternative arrangements

At the time of NOI submission, an exporter may apply for an alternative arrangement as provided for under ASEL standards 4.1.10 and 4.1.12. The department will consider applications where an exporter requests to:

- not require an AAV to accompany a consignment where they would have otherwise been required (see [application process for alternative arrangements to having AAV on a voyage](#))
- allow an AAV to be the same person as the accredited stockperson (see [application process to allow AAV and stockperson to be the same person](#)).

Application process for alternative arrangements to having AAV on a voyage

In accordance with ASEL standard 4.1.10, to apply for an alternative arrangement an exporter must make a written application to the department at the time of submitting an NOI for any particular consignment. The application must be uploaded to TRACE or emailed to livestockexp@aff.gov.au, and must include:

- the consignment LNC number
- the reasons or grounds in which the application is being made
- details on how the exporter intends to manage the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage without the presence of an AAV

- details of the number of accredited and competent stockpersons that will accompany the animals, and their level of knowledge (including any qualifications), skill and experience to appropriately carry and use veterinary medications, such as drugs for sedation and pain relief, without an AAV present
- details of how the stockpersons' additional workload of providing AAV functions will be managed
- details of a communication plan that will allow the stockperson to make contact with the exporter at any time during the voyage
- a written contingency plan for circumstances where a significant animal health or welfare issue occurs during the voyage, and how arrangements will be made for the prompt and humane handling, care, treatment, separation, euthanasia and/or disposal of the livestock in compliance with ASEL and all relevant and applicable legislation.

The department will consider any applications made against the criteria outlined in this guideline and provide a written outcome of decision to the exporter. In making the decision, the department may also consider the latest information, advice and research relevant to the application.

Unless otherwise approved in writing, the exporter must have an AAV accompany any consignment that is required to have an AAV, as per ASEL standard 4.1.9.

Assessment of applications received by the department

All applications are considered on an individual consignment basis. In deciding whether to approve an application, the department will consider:

- the reasons or grounds for the application being made by the exporter
- the risk of the proposed voyage and whether the proposal to not have an AAV on board would compromise animal health and welfare (see [factors relevant to determining if a consignment is lower or higher risk](#))
- if the number, knowledge (including any qualifications), skill and experience of the stockperson(s) on board can appropriately manage the health and welfare of the livestock, without the presence of an AAV
- any other matters that the department considers relevant to the application.

If an application is approved and any circumstances of the consignment change, this may affect the approval. Any changes will be reviewed by the department when an exporter amends a previously approved NOI. Exporters will be notified if the changes impact any previous approvals given.

Application process to allow AAV and stockperson to be the same person

In accordance with ASEL standard 4.1.12, to apply for an alternative arrangement an exporter must make a written application to the department at the time of submitting an NOI for any particular consignment. The application must be uploaded to TRACE or emailed to livestockexp@aff.gov.au, and must include:

- the consignment LNC number
- the reasons or grounds in which the application is being made

- details on how the exporter intends to manage the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage, taking into consideration the number, species and class of livestock on the voyage, including
 - the number of accredited and competent stockpersons (if any) that will accompany the animals, and their level of knowledge (including any qualifications), skill and experience in the management and handling of livestock on voyages
 - details of how the AAV/stockperson will manage the additional workload to ensure that their ability to provide both AAV and stockperson functions will not be affected (such as the employment of additional suitable crew to assist with stockperson functions)
- a written contingency plan for circumstances where a significant animal health or welfare issue occurs during the voyage, and how arrangements will be made for the prompt and humane handling, care, treatment, separation, euthanasia and/or disposal of the livestock in compliance with ASEL and all relevant and applicable legislation.

The department will consider any applications made against the criteria outlined in this guideline and provide a written outcome of decision to the exporter. In making the decision, the department may also consider the latest information, advice and research relevant to the application.

Unless otherwise approved in writing, the exporter must ensure that an AAV and stockperson are not the same person, as per ASEL standard 4.1.11.

Assessment of applications received by the department

All applications are considered on an individual consignment basis. In deciding whether to grant an application for an AAV and stockperson to be the same person, the department will consider:

- the reasons or grounds for the application being made by the exporter
- whether the proposed voyage is of lower risk, and that by having an AAV as the same person as a stockperson would not comprise animal health and welfare (see [factors relevant to determining if a consignment is lower or higher risk](#))
- whether the workload of the AAV/stockperson can be managed in a manner that is appropriate to achieve best animal health and welfare outcomes throughout the voyage
- any other matters that the department considers relevant to the application.

If an application is approved and any circumstances of the consignment change, this may affect the approval. Any changes will be reviewed by the department when an exporter amends a previously approved NOI. Exporters will be notified if the changes impact any previous approvals given.

Factors relevant to determining if a consignment is lower or higher risk

Risk factors in each category will be considered to determine a cumulative overall risk level (see Table 1). Having one or more higher risk factors may not necessarily mean that an application will not be approved, as they will be considered in conjunction with lower risk factors which may reduce the total risk level.

Table 1 Determining consignment risk factors

Category	Lower risk factors	Higher risk factors
Route and destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the market and route of travel is of close proximity to Australia voyage length is short haul or consignment does not cross the equator voyage will not travel through waters known to be of higher risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consignment is going to a new market consignment is going to multiple ports of call voyage is travelling to or through the Middle East, Russia, China, Japan, the Suez Canal, Cape of Good Hope, Cape Horn or the Panama Canal voyage length is long haul or extended long haul, or the voyage crosses the equator
Climatic difference of ports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> travel between ports of similar climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> livestock sourced or exported from ports in Australia below 26°S that will cross the equator travel between ports with differing climate conditions (i.e. travelling from an Australian winter to the destination country's summer, or vice versa)
Vessel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vessel has been regularly used to carry Australian livestock vessel has not had a notifiable incident in the last 12 months (for any exporter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exporter is using a vessel that has been reported through the IO program to have structural concerns (for example, flooring or ageing vessel) vessel has had a notifiable incident in the last 12 months (for any exporter). Consideration may be given to the likely cause of any notifiable incident vessel has undergone a recent dry dock repair, or has had recent mechanical issues, which has the potential to impact animal welfare or cause delays vessel is new (or recently renovated)
Species and class of livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> smaller consignments of cattle or sheep that are not considered heavy, long horned or pregnant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buffalo camels/camelids cattle weighing more than 500 kg deer goats long horned animals pregnant livestock any animals exported under an approved management plan
Previous exporter performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exporter has not had a notifiable incident in the last 12 months exporter has proven compliance, based on regional veterinary officer, IO, mortality and audit reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exporter has had a notifiable incident in that species in the last 12 months exporter has received a non-compliance in the last 12 months (this could be through Livestock Export Consignment Reports (LECR) or through auditing of an exporter's approved arrangement)

5 Related material

- [Approved arrangement guidelines for the export of livestock](#)
- [Approved export program guidelines for the export of livestock](#)
- [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock \(ASEL\)](#)
- [Export Control Act 2020](#)
- [Export Control \(Animals\) Rules 2021](#)
- [Regulating live animal exports](#)
- [TRACE](#)

Version control

Version	Date of issue	Author	Reason for change
1.0	May 2020	Live Animal Export Branch	First publication
2.0	July 2023	Live Animal Export Branch	Updates to department branding and document formatting Updates to clarify the scope of the policy

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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