



Contingency plans for livestock consignments to the Middle East

Live Animal Export Branch

1 Purpose

This policy outlines the contingency plan requirements for livestock consignments exported by sea to or through the Middle East.

2 Scope

The policy applies to exporters preparing livestock for export by sea where the livestock vessel is intended to travel:

- to or through the Red Sea
- to any Middle Eastern port.

This policy may be varied urgently to apply to exporters preparing livestock for export to other ports or markets, if there are changes to the security situation in those markets. The department will notify exporters of any variations to this policy if required.

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

3 Requirements

Contingency plans

In accordance with standard 4.1.18 of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL), exporters are required to prepare written contingency plans that address various potential scenarios for all livestock consignments exported by sea.

During assessment of a notice of intention to export a consignment of livestock (NOI), the department considers relevant information from a range of sources. When considering the approval of an NOI, the delegate must be satisfied (among other things) that:

- the arrangements for the transport of the livestock to their final overseas destination are appropriate to ensure their health and welfare (Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021, paragraph 8-6 (3)(d) (the Animals Rules))
- an approved exporter supply chain assurance system (ESCAS) is in force for consignments containing feeder or slaughter livestock (Animals Rules, subsection 8-6 (4)).

To support this assessment, exporters must prepare a contingency plan for all consignments covered by this policy. The contingency plan must be provided to the department at the time of NOI submission, within the relevant timeframe (Animals Rules, subsection 8-3 (1)).

Contingency plans will be reviewed during NOI assessment on a consignment-by-consignment basis. During NOI assessment, the delegate may, to the extent it is relevant, also consider the security situation at the time and the potential for heightened risks to animal health and welfare during the voyage, relating to the:

- proposed vessel route to the destination port(s)
- destination port(s) and surrounding areas which may impact the discharge of livestock and transport to quarantine or feedlot facilities
- operation of the exporter's ESCAS in the importing country (where relevant).

These considerations are in addition to the contingency plan requirements that must be met under ASEL standard 4.1.18. Exporters must also continue to report notifiable incidents to the department for consignments exported by sea (ASEL standard 5.6.5).

Requests from the department

Under paragraph 8-6 (5)(a) of the Animals Rules, when making a decision on an NOI the delegate may request in writing that the exporter:

- gives the delegate further specified information or documents
- varies the NOI in a specified way.

Revoking approval of an NOI

At any time following NOI approval, if the delegate is no longer satisfied that the arrangements for the transport of the livestock to their final overseas destination are appropriate to ensure their health and welfare, the delegate may revoke the approval of the consignment's NOI (see Animals Rules, paragraph 8-9 (1)(a)).

NOI assessment charges will apply in accordance with the department's [cost recovery arrangements for live animal exports](#).

4 Instructions

At the time of NOI submission, or when otherwise requested by the department, exporters must provide a detailed and demonstrably viable contingency plan for all livestock consignments travelling to the Middle East as outlined in the [scope](#).

The plan must detail the steps that will be taken if the contingency plan is required to be activated and must include details of:

- arrangements for the consignment to be discharged in a [contingency market](#), and/or
- [alternative contingency plan arrangements](#).

The arrangements need to be realistic and able to be implemented. If requested by the department, exporters should provide additional information or documents to support assessment of the proposed contingency arrangements.

The delegate's consideration of the NOI may be impacted if they are not satisfied the contingency plan is demonstrably viable, or if it is not provided upon request.

Contingency market

An exporter's contingency plan may propose discharge in a market other than the intended destination market. To ensure the plan addresses the outcomes of this policy, the exporter must have a sufficient number of contingency markets available to them, based on the particular circumstances of the proposed export.

For each proposed contingency market, the exporter must provide:

- written confirmation the livestock will be prepared for export to meet the importing country requirements of the contingency market. This includes confirmation
 - of arrangements for additional testing, treatments, inspections, vaccinations and examinations that must be undertaken prior to departure from Australia
 - there is sufficient quarantine space available and approved in the contingency market (if relevant)
- written confirmation ASEL pen space requirements will be met for the livestock throughout the voyage, including if a diversion to the contingency market increases the voyage length
- details of additional bedding, feed, water, veterinary medicines or equipment that will be loaded on to the vessel prior to departure from Australia. This must be sufficient to ensure the livestock will continue to be managed in accordance with ASEL until they are able to be unloaded from the vessel at the contingency market
- written confirmation no additional bedding, water, veterinary medicines or equipment will be loaded onto the vessel after departure from Australia, unless in exceptional circumstances and with approval from the department

The loading of additional feed following departure from Australia may be permitted, but only in exceptional circumstances and with approval from the department (ASEL standard 5.1.14 (d)) and as per the [Loading foreign sourced fodder onto a vessel carrying Australian livestock](#) policy.

- details on the exporter's monitoring and management of the security situation in the Middle East, including the immediate steps (including notifying the department if the contingency plan has been, or will be, activated) and ongoing steps to be taken if it is identified that
 - the vessel is unable to proceed on its intended route
 - the consignment may be unable to reach the intended destination market
 - the livestock may not be permitted to discharge from the vessel

- details on the exporter's communications with relevant parties, additional to ASEL requirements. This includes details of how and when an adverse event will be notified, and the frequency and method (written or verbal) of ongoing communications with the
 - department
 - accredited veterinarian or accredited stockperson
 - importing country authority, importer, vessel master or operator
- any other information relevant to the ongoing security situation.

For consignments containing slaughter or feeder livestock, the exporter must also provide:

- a valid ESCAS in the contingency market for the relevant species in the consignment, and confirmation the ESCAS has sufficient capacity to receive the livestock, or
- written confirmation from another exporter they will accept the livestock into their approved ESCAS, and the ESCAS has sufficient capacity to receive the livestock.

Alternative contingency plan arrangements

An exporter may propose an alternative arrangement that does not involve a contingency market.

Where an alternative contingency plan arrangement is proposed, the exporter must provide sufficient detail to the department outlining how importing country requirements and livestock health and welfare will be maintained. An approved extended long haul management plan may also be required, in line with the [Approved arrangement guidelines for the export of livestock](#).

Examples of an alternative arrangement may include:

- slowing or pausing the vessel's progression (if direct passage is temporarily unavailable)
- using an alternative route to travel to the intended destination market
- using an alternative option to load approved supplies including fuel, water, feed, bedding, or veterinary medicines and equipment.

5 Related material

- [Approved arrangement guidelines for the export of livestock](#)
- [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock \(ASEL\)](#)
- [Cost recovery arrangements \(exports\)](#)
- [Export advisory notices](#)
- [Export Control Act 2020](#)
- [Export Control \(Animals\) Rules 2021](#)
- [Exporter supply chain assurance system \(ESCAS\)](#)
- [Loading foreign sourced fodder onto a vessel carrying Australian livestock](#)
- [Regulating live animal exports](#)

6 Version control

Version	Date of issue	Author	Reason for change
1.0	April 2024	Live Animal Export Branch	First publication
2.0	March 2026	Live Animal Export Branch	Updated to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • widen the policy scope to address security situation changes in the Middle Eastern region • clarify the importance of timely provision of information to support NOI assessment, or when requested by the department • include information about NOI revocation.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2026

Unless otherwise noted, copyright (and any other intellectual property rights) in this publication is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia (referred to as the Commonwealth).

All material in this publication is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence](#) except content supplied by third parties, logos and the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

The Australian Government acting through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has exercised due care and skill in preparing and compiling the information and data in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence and for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying on any of the information or data in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by law.