



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System Regulatory Performance Report

1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023



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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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Overview

The Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) requires exporters to have arrangements with supply chain partners (i.e. importers, feedlots, abattoirs) in importing countries to provide humane treatment and handling of feeder and slaughter livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, deer, buffalo and camelids) from arrival through to point of slaughter. As ESCAS only applies to feeder and slaughter livestock, the statistics in the report refer only to feeder and slaughter exports. ESCAS does not apply to the export of breeder livestock. ESCAS is underpinned by the following key principles – control, traceability and animal welfare – whereby the exporter must demonstrate, through a system of reporting and independent auditing of their supply chains:

- the exporter has control of all supply chain arrangements (including having agreements in place with supply chain partners) for the transport, management and slaughter of livestock, and that all livestock remain in the supply chain (control)
- the exporter can account for all livestock through the supply chain (traceability)
- animal handling and slaughter meets World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) animal welfare standards (animal welfare).

If issues arise, ESCAS requires exporters to address any non-compliance matters within their supply chains. This may be managed by undertaking additional steps or corrective actions at facilities (for example delivering training or upgrading infrastructure), removing non-compliant facilities from a supply chain, or not exporting any further livestock to a supply chain.

Additionally, the ESCAS regulatory framework enables the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (department) to assess information about reported non-compliances with ESCAS requirements and take regulatory action where appropriate. Reports are generally received through one of four pathways: self-reported by exporters, reported by third parties (for example, animal welfare organisations or private citizens in an importing country), reported by industry, or identified by the department itself. Reports are assessed by the department using the [guideline for the management of non-compliance](#).

In response to ESCAS non-compliance, the department may apply regulatory actions to an ESCAS, or in more serious instances, to an exporter or an entire market. This may include revoking an ESCAS, varying an ESCAS to remove facilities or apply additional conditions, or suspending or cancelling an exporter's licence. Regulatory action is applied based on the nature of the non-compliance, and any corrective actions implemented by the exporter are taken into consideration.

1 Period summary: 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023

Below is a summary of the number of feeder and/or slaughter livestock exported, number of reports received, and number of assessments completed during this period (1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023).

1.1 Livestock exported

During this period 348,507 livestock were exported under ESCAS arrangements to 11 countries. The number by species exported to each country is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of livestock exported – 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023

Country	Buffalo	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Total
Brunei	70	674	–	–	744
Indonesia	1631	113000	–	–	114631
Israel	–	26029	–	23000	49029
Jordan	–	933	–	35827	36760
Kuwait	–	143	–	64157	64300
Malaysia	45	2186	1713	1205	5149
Oman				4930	4930
Qatar	–		–	16000	16000
Saudi Arabia	–	-	–	5000	5000
United Arab Emirates	–	97	–	19000	19097
Vietnam	-	32867	–	–	32867
Total	1746	175929	1713	169119	348507

1.2 Reports received and completed

No reports of non-compliance with ESCAS requirements were received during this period. A summary of notifications received and completed is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of reports received and completed – 1 October to 31 December 2023

Report type	Outstanding reports as at 1 October 2023	Reports received in current period	Assessments completed in current period	Assessments remaining in progress as at 31 December 2023 ^a
ESCAS	1	0	1	0
Exporter notifications ^b	0	2	0	2
Total	1	2	1	2

^a A summary of assessments in progress is provided in Section 4 of this report.

^b Exporter notifications are detailed in section 5 of this report.

2 Summary of ESCAS non-compliance assessments

2.1 Overview of findings

An overview of findings for the ESCAS assessment completed in this period is provided in Table 3. A detailed summary for the assessment is provided in Section 4 of this report.

Table 3 Assessments completed – 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023

#	Date reported	Source	Market	Species	Australian animals involved	Summary of issues	Non-compliance finding
193	Sept 2023	Third party report	Jordan	Sheep	4	Animal welfare concerns	Major non-compliance

3 ESCAS Regulatory Performance Assessments

3.1 Jordan

Background

ESCAS was implemented in Jordan on 1 September 2012.

As at 31 December 2023, there is one Australian exporter with approved supply chains to export livestock to Jordan.

Since 2011, the department has previously completed assessments of 11 reports relating to non-compliance in Jordan. From these reports, 17 findings of non-compliance have been recorded against exporter supply chains and facilities. The assessments can be found at [ESCAS investigations](#).

As at 31 December 2023, no reports of non-compliance are under assessment for Jordan.

3.1.1 Report #193: Sheep exported to Jordan – Major non-compliance

Incident report

On 5 September 2023, the department received video footage, provided by Animals Australia, allegedly showing animal handling and slaughter at an abattoir in Jordan during Eid al-Adha 2023. The footage appeared to show handling and slaughter of Australian sheep in a manner not compliant with ESCAS Animal Welfare standards. The non-compliant handling and slaughter appeared to be due, in part, to infrastructure that did not consistently allow for compliant restraint and slaughter of sheep.

Department assessment and actions

The department determined, through assessment of metadata, that the video footage was authentic and captured at the time and location claimed by Animals Australia. Assessment of the footage determined that ESCAS non-compliance had occurred at the abattoir in Jordan. At the time the footage was collected one exporter had the implicated abattoir approved in its Jordan supply chain.

The department provided the relevant footage to the exporter on 6 September 2023, and on 12 September 2023 gave notice of an intention to direct that slaughter cease at the relevant abattoir. The department assessed the video footage provided by Animals Australia and confirmed the following instances of Australian sheep being handled in a manner not consistent with ESCAS animal welfare standards:

- Inappropriate infrastructure, resulting in sheep slipping off the slaughter table.
- Non-compliant handling of a sheep by picking it up by its limbs after it slipped off the slaughter table.
- Non-compliant slaughter with multiple knife movements.
- No evidence that unconsciousness was confirmed prior to movement of the animal, with one sheep being moved from the slaughter table immediately after slaughter and prior to confirming unconsciousness.

Exporter actions

On 14 September 2023, the exporter provided a submission to the department identifying corrective actions it proposed to undertake in order to address the ESCAS non-compliances in Jordan. These corrective actions included:

- Key point of slaughter (POS) workers will be provided with additional training in the best practice technique for positioning sheep in lateral recumbency.
- A training video and standard operating procedures will be developed for the POS workers to use as a reference.
- Additional training on slaughter technique will be provided to the slaughterman to ensure continued compliance with ESCAS.
- The slaughter table will be extended to enable restraint during bleed out time with death/unconsciousness to be confirmed before moving animal.

Department actions

On 3 October 2023, the department directed the exporter to:

- Implement its proposed corrective actions.
- Arrange for independent auditing of the implementation and effectiveness of the exporter's corrective actions.

The independent auditing was completed and reported that all of the exporter's corrective measures had been implemented, were effective and that there were no further non-compliances identified during slaughter.

Department conclusions

Based on the evidence provided by Animals Australia, the department determined that non-compliance with ESCAS animal welfare requirements had occurred during the slaughter of sheep during Eid al-Adha 2023 at an abattoir approved in the exporter's ESCAS in Jordan. The video footage showed that the slaughter table in the abattoir did not consistently allow for compliant handling and slaughter of sheep as it was too short resulting in sheep slipping off. The non-compliant handling and slaughter included picking up a sheep by its limbs after slipping off the slaughter table, multiple knife movements during slaughter and one sheep being moved from the slaughter table immediately after cut, prior to unconsciousness being confirmed. To address ongoing risks associated and to provide adequate assurances that livestock will be handled and dealt with in accordance with ESCAS standards, the department issued directions to the exporter on 3 October 2023. The directions included that the exporter implement corrective actions and undertake additional independent auditing to confirm implementation and effectiveness.

In assessing this matter against the [Guideline for the Management of Non-compliance](#), the department recorded major non-compliance with ESCAS animal welfare standards against the exporter's Jordan sheep supply chain.

4 Exporter notifications: issues identified and addressed by exporters

Two issues were identified by an exporter during this period and are still under investigation.

5 Summary of assessments in progress as at 31 December 2023

Table 4 provides an overview of all regulatory performance assessments in progress as at 31 December 2023. The status of all reviews can be found at [ESCAS Investigations](#).

Table 4 Summary of ESCAS investigations in progress as at 31 December 2023

#	Date reported	Type	Market	Species	Report
-	November 2023	Self-report	Israel	Cattle	-
-	November 2023	Self-report	Israel	Cattle	-