

## ASEL Review Technical Advisory Committee 2018

### *Stage 2: draft report,*

#### SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

As a member of the community I am very concerned that the proposed standards in the draft report will not bring about much needed reforms to the live export industry.

I have followed the litany of atrocities committed by the live export industry over many decades. The Department of Agriculture has failed to fix the problems in the industry. There have been many inquiries – going back to the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare report in 1985 and more recently the Keniry Review (2004); and the Farmer review (2011). This year we have had the McCarthy review and the Moss review. But nothing has changed. Animals still suffer and for live exporters it is business as usual.

This year I saw the *60 Minutes* program that confirmed my worst fears about the live trade. Had it not been for a brave whistle-blower who took over 395 videos of the outrageous conditions on board the *Awassi Express*, Australians would not know the true horror of what these animals endure in the name of profit. The ship's name has been changed to *Anna Marra*, but that changes nothing. Everyone knows that is the horror ship that is still exporting Australian livestock.

I have also read the recommendations of the Moss report. It was damning about the failures of the department, which is supposed to regulate the live export trade. I have no faith in the department to follow through with those recommendations. The latest scandal is that seven former staff members in the department allege that their seniors discouraged them from reporting welfare breaches because there would be repercussions. The Minister, Mr Littleproud, has asked a former head of the Australian Crime Commission, John Lawler, to investigate. However, I am concerned that the department has a conflict of interest because it is both regulator and promoter of live export. I fear that nothing will change because these senior staff members are still employed by the department.

Animals on ships battle to survive in cramped, filthy environments. They are bogged down in their own faeces – a faecal pad is their bedding for a month or more. We have seen what happens when this pad breaks down in high temperatures and sheep wallow in filth and die in the most horrible way. Sheep are too crowded and do not have easy access to food and water.

The government says Australia has the best animal welfare protections in the world; yet the proposed standards do not even meet the OIE standards, which are meant to apply to developing nations.

The cruelty of live export cannot go unchecked. The proposed ASEL Standards must be tightened up to ensure that animals do not suffer.

I have read the earlier submissions on the Issues Paper. I ask that the TAC adopt the recommendations of the Australian Veterinary Association, Vets Against Live Export, the RSPCA, and Animals Australia.

My main areas of concern are listed below:

#### SOURCING AND PREPARATION OF ANIMALS

- No cattle should be exported from southern ports across the equator during the high risk May to October period.
- The upper weight limit for all cattle being exported should be set at 500 kg, not at 650 kg, with no exemptions.
- Sheep must be rested for at least two clear days after shearing and prior to loading, to overcome the cumulative stress of road transport, handling and shearing and to ensure all shearing wounds are healed.
- No sheep, whatever the breed, should be allowed on board a ship with more than 25mm of wool or hair.

#### SPACE ALLOWANCE FOR SHEEP AND CATTLE

- The space allowances proposed in the draft Standards are still far too small and will force animals to 'time share' their space.
- Space allowances must be increased to ensure all animals in a group are able to lie down comfortably at the same time and easily access feed and water, whether they are in a registered premises or on-board ship.

#### HEAT STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT (HSRA)

- The heat stress risk assessment (HSRA) model should be applied to all voyages crossing the equator, at all times of year, from all ports.

#### VOYAGE REPORTING

- Voyage reporting requirements should be increased to include more detailed daily welfare monitoring at the pen level, with monitored pens chosen independently of exporters to ensure transparency and accuracy.
- Voyage reports should be made publicly available to demonstrate that exporters have nothing to hide.

#### ONBOARD MANAGEMENT

- Ammonia levels must be tracked using ammonia meters, and action taken when they reach harmful levels.

## ONBOARD PERSONNEL

- There must be at least one accredited stockperson per 2,500 head of cattle and 10,000 head of sheep (not 3,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep), to allow effective monitoring of stock.
- A qualified Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) must be on board every live export voyage, for supervision and monitoring, as well as an independent auditor with ultimate responsibility for reporting requirements.

## SPECIES PERMITTED TO BE EXPORTED

- Live export of sheep to the Middle East during the May to October high risk period must cease immediately.
- The live export of feral buffalo should be prohibited, as they are unused to human contact and clearly do not tolerate handling and transport without serious welfare compromise.
- The export of feral goats, camels and deer should be prohibited, based on previous extreme mortality events and serious concerns over the handling and care of these species.

## Conclusion

I ask that the TAC consider the above and incorporate these changes into the standards as soon as possible. I believe that live export should end as soon as possible, because there is no humane way to export animals from our shores.

Charles Davis  
November 2018