

ASEL submission regarding export of Australian animals overseas

September 2nd 2018

As a member of the Australian public, an animal lover and a vegan I wish to submit my views on the suggested changes to laws concerning export of live animals from Australia.

As many reports over decades have shown, the export of live animals overseas is impractical for various reasons:

1. Confining animals in a ship for long voyages is distressing and sometimes injurious so safe transportation over long distances cannot be guaranteed;
2. For the workers who look after animals on these voyages there are both health and safety risks while moving around these areas where both people and animals can lose their footing;
3. The death toll on these ships is, while 'acceptable' by industry standards, unnecessary and unreasonable. The majority of exported meat is slaughtered within Australia and flown to other countries;
4. From an economic point of view these new regulations substantially cut the profit margins on exporting live animals. It seems obvious that exporters will therefore try to cut corners and, given the history of the live export trade, regulation of all exporting of all animals will not be sufficient to stop further cruelty and suffering;
5. Even for the animals which survive these voyages there is no guarantee, once they arrive at their destinations, that any animal welfare standards will be in place for them;
6. Where independent observers are present for these voyages to oversee animal welfare, history shows that whoever pays for these observers will have control over what they report and to what they turn a blind eye, again no guarantees for these animals that animal welfare standards will be met.

Finally, I feel that it is naïve in the extreme to expect to put living beings in a big tin box and expect to send them into a change of temperature from 20 degrees to 40-50 degrees and keep them cool enough not to suffer. This is true of both sheep and cattle although of course sheep are smaller and also carry thicker coats so will suffer more. Being confined on a ship knee deep in their own excrement would seem to have no relation to animal welfare and more to profits for exporters.

In order to really regulate the export industry you would have to plan to move the current trade to packaged meat and discontinue the movement of live animals by sea. This would ensure that we have control over the treatment of our animals from birth to the point of slaughter. Further measures such as CCTV cameras in all Australian slaughterhouses would mean animal welfare standards can be guaranteed in the future.