



<b>EXPORT ADVISORY NOTICE – 2015-05</b>		<b>20 March 2015</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>ESCAS animal welfare audit standards and auditor checklist</b>	
<b>Species:</b>	<b>Feeder and slaughter cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats</b>	
<b>Country:</b>	<b>All export destinations</b>	
<b>Relevant to:</b>	<b>[1] Livestock exporters [2] Livecorp / ALEC / MLA [3] Department of Agriculture Live Animal Exports Officers</b>	

### **P u r p o s e**

To advise livestock exporters of revised guidance for independent auditors for use during audits of Exporter Supply Chain Assurance Scheme (ESCAS) supply chains.

### **I n s t r u c t i o n s**

This EAN provides advice on revised documents for exporters and auditors to use during audits of ESCAS supply chains, the documents are:

- Updated ESCAS animal welfare standards
- Guidance to auditors on conducting animal welfare audits
- Template for use during the audit
- Updated summary audit report template

These documents, developed in close consultation between industry and the Department of Agriculture (the department), replace the previous audit guidance and checklists for cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats provided on the department website.

- i. The standards are consistent with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health code for improvement of animal health and welfare (2014) ([www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/](http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/)). The standards document is applicable for all livestock (cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats) exported for feeder or slaughter purposes. It includes general guidance to auditors regarding standards for livestock welfare, and details of animal welfare outcomes during handling of livestock, discharge, land transport, feedlots/holding facilities, abattoir lairage and slaughter with and without stunning. The standards also include criteria for assessing animal restraint boxes.
- ii. Additional guidance to auditors on conducting ESCAS animal welfare audits is also provided. The guidance document outlines general expectations regarding ESCAS animal welfare audits, including suggested sample sizes and information to gather during the audit. Beyond this guidance, the independent auditor determines the appropriate methodology for making an assessment in accordance with standard audit practice.

- iii. The audit template (checklist) provides a convenient template that auditors may use when assessing the supply chain elements against relevant standards, and includes space for auditors to detail their observations of animals and facility infrastructure. The template has been revised to cover all species.
- iv. The revised summary audit report template includes minor changes to clarify expectations so that the information provided to the department is more consistent.

The standards, guidance, auditor checklist and summary audit report may be used for both types of independent audits undertaken under ESCAS – initial audit of the supply chain to verify that it meets ESCAS requirements for handling Australian exported livestock, and ongoing performance audits. The Initial Independent Audit Report (IIAR) is submitted as part of an exporter’s application for ESCAS approval for new supply chains, and for variations to existing supply chains. The Independent Performance Audit Report (IPAR) is submitted to the department to describe the ongoing performance of the supply chain.

Exporters can also access these forms from the Livecorp website at [www.livecorp.com](http://www.livecorp.com)

As a result of the updated ESCAS animal welfare audit documents, and changes to the ESCAS audit policy, three previous EANs are being replaced: EAN2013-05, 2013-06 and 2013-03.

This EAN replaces the OIE checklist and guidance on the animal welfare checklist provided in EAN2013-05 and 2013-06. For audits conducted during the period 1 January to 30 April 2015, auditors may use either the previous checklist or the new standards and summary audit report template. For audits conducted after 30 April 2015, exporters are expected to use the new standards, and to submit the new summary audit report template to the department according to the prescribed audit schedule (refer EAN2015-06).

This EAN also replaces the supplementary checklist for Mark IV type restraint boxes in EAN2013-03 (audit of Mark IV type restraint boxes). Exporters should note that where a facility includes a Mark IV type box, the box must be audited as part of initial and ongoing performance audits. Consistent with the Mark IV restraint box review in 2013, the expectation is that Mark IV type boxes are maintained and operated according to the manufacturer’s instructions, and that livestock restraint and slaughter is humane.

Further detail on audit requirements (except for animal welfare guidance) is available in:

- EAN2015-06 – Revised risk-based auditing requirements for ESCAS
- EAN2013-13 – updated information on requirements for audit reporting to the department.

## **Background**

To comply with ESCAS requirements, exporters must demonstrate that they have a supply chain assurance system that meets OIE standards for animal welfare. The exporter's ESCAS assurance system must also effectively control movement of individual livestock within the supply chain, be able to trace livestock through to and including slaughter, and be independently verified and audited against these requirements.

The department has previously provided checklists for welfare of Australian cattle/buffalo and sheep/goats to help auditors assess compliance with OIE animal welfare standards. A separate checklist was also required for Mark IV type restraint boxes used for unstunned slaughter. Industry has requested that the guidance material be revised to a more streamlined and user-friendly format that is less repetitive. The aim is to facilitate more time-effective audits with a greater focus on animal welfare outcomes.

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