

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today to assist with some ideas to improve the welfare and regulation for live export for the Department of Agriculture & Water Resources and provide suggestions with factual information for alternative measures.

Here are my suggestions as follows:

1) Improving staff training/capacity. This can only be strengthened by utilising thorough training packages. Having veterinary staff, audit staff and any other staff involved in the live export trade need to be aware of what is acceptable, what is not acceptable, what to look for, question crew members of the ship of their understanding of animal husbandry, view the stables/temporary living conditions for the animals, limit the amount of animals to an acceptable number (less travelling in hot weather conditions); and provide better circulation of air. This might mean more windows, better air conditioning systems, more vents on board, etc. Checks of food, water, animal equipment need to be sufficient for the amount of animals on board.

2) Audit Functions within the department do include conducting checks for animal welfare, however this is left to the department veterinary officer (VO). Is it possible to utilise two VO's to cover each vessel as this will increase the number of livestock assessed at audit? In the Performance Management & Compliance Guidelines on page 11 under Section 6.3.1 indicates that 'mortality rates on board a vessel or aircraft can provide an indication of how well the livestock were prepared for export.' By providing more hands on deck (more livestock observed for any husbandry issues) this could help prevent mortalities on the vessel.

Also department audits for live animal export include records that include the daily livestock feed log sheet where information regarding stock reconciliation, location, weather, feeding and water equipment is checked daily. Is this information available to the veterinarians on board the vessels? If not, it should be to ensure temperature, food, water and cleanliness is maintained.

3) In relation to audit functions; is it possible to have department auditors audit and set standards for: The Australian Government's Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS)? The ESCAS does not currently have standards for stunning livestock, veterinary oversight during slaughter, laws to prevent animal cruelty and does not require the livestock to be treated in accordance with the Australian Standard. Between 2012 and 2014 the government investigated 35 incidents of ESCAS breaches, the majority of which were reported by animal welfare organisations or third parties (source: Department of Agriculture 2013-2015). By working together with the ESCAS we can increase their standards of animal welfare and assist in bringing them into alignment with the Australian Standard AND have department auditors audit the ESCAS against these newly developed competencies.

4) I understand that the live export trade brings in millions of dollars to the Australian economy, but have we considered other cost efficient options that the country can still profit from whilst improving animal welfare and creating more jobs within Australia? Here are some interesting facts from the Pegasus Economics Executive Summary (an independent group) which would definitely be worth investigating and trialling with countries that only import a small amount of Australian livestock:

- WA specialist sheep farmers who breed sheep predominantly for the live export trade have only a minor part of their enterprise in the live trade – 11.7% of sheep sales by volume in 2015-2016
- WA mixed enterprise sheep farms generate around 70 per cent of their receipts from crops. Since 2010 have generated less than 5% of their receipts from the sale of sheep
- The cessation of the live sheep export trade would translate to a loss of just under \$2,000 per sheep farmer – around 0.5% of total cash receipts for specialist sheep farms and 0.17% of total cash receipts for mixed enterprise sheep farms

Some other factual information from the Pegasus Economics Executive Summary:

- Live sheep export to the Middle East has diminished by 60% in just over a decade
- 95% of sheep killed in Australia each year are processed domestically for export and domestic markets
- Fresh bagged lamb and mutton carcasses are flown in daily to Middle Eastern countries – so there is capacity to increase this.
- There is enough spare processing capacity in Australia to absorb the 1.6 million sheep exported from WA (last year), with more room to spare. This was admitted by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to the Senate recently
- \$2 billion in structural adjustment assistance has been provided to the dairy, sugar and tobacco industries, to name only a few. Should this not extend to sheep farmers to assist them from exiting the live trade?
- The WA Farmers Federation suggests an \$80-150 million loss, however this does not take into account the alternative market for the sheep. The true figure would be an adjustment between the premium received from exporters and local prices (which are historically quite high). This true figure is reflected in the independent review undertaken by Pegasus Economics.

Other information provided to me by the RSPCA (Sourced from: Images for RSPCA LIVE EXPORT vs meat export infographics):

- Meat from Australian abattoirs is exported frozen or chilled to over 50 countries globally: \$6.8 billion for frozen meat compared to \$901 million live export (source: ABS & DAFWA 2004-14. Based on a 10 year average).
- Meat exports (frozen) have increase by 34% since 2009 and are still growing (source: ABS & DAFWA 2009-14); whilst live exports have decreased by 41% and are continuing to decrease (source: Department of Agriculture 2009-13).
- In Queensland, meat exports are worth more to the economy than live exports (source: QLD Govt. 2015. Includes goats) – nearly \$4 billion compared to less than \$500 million.

It is worth considering these innovative ideas and to think this could help increase the Australian economy, increase animal welfare standards and increase jobs within Australia. Here I have provided you with both options to help increase the welfare of livestock with the current live export trade work instructions, audits, training and guidelines we currently have; plus considering options to increase the frozen meat trade whilst still increasing the Australian economy. Australia could be the leading forefront to set an international standard for animal welfare here. It would be worth investigating and trialling.

Thank you for your time.