



Quick Reference Card

Animal Welfare Regulatory Management



**“Livestock animal welfare – it’s everyone’s responsibility
including farmers, truck drivers, abattoir workers and government officers”**

Legislation

In Australia, animal welfare legislation is a state/territory responsibility which means they have the legal jurisdiction to prosecute on animal welfare cases.

Export abattoirs are regulated by the Commonwealth government through us. We have regulatory safeguards to ensure that animal welfare legislative requirements are maintained in accordance with the relevant state/territory animal welfare regulatory authorities.

Under Commonwealth legislation (i.e. the Export Control Act and subordinate legislation), export abattoirs are bound to comply with their approved arrangement (including animal welfare standard operating procedures) which is verified and audited by our veterinarians.

Standards and Guidelines

Australian abattoirs (both domestic and export registered) are well supported by standards and guidelines which enable them to meet their legal responsibilities for livestock animal welfare requirements. The Australian Meat Standard (i.e. AS4696:2007) has a requirement that *livestock are handled in a manner that minimises any pain and suffering*. The Land Transport Standards ensure animal welfare compliance from the farm gate to abattoir lairage. Meat and Livestock Australia has produced a *fit to load* guideline to support farmers, transport operators and processors with the land transport requirements. Australian Pork Limited has also produced *the fit for intended journey guide* to assist producers and stock people handling pigs to make informed decisions concerning the fitness of stock prior to and during loading. The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) supports the livestock processing sector with its voluntary Industry Animal Welfare Standards which set out targets and best practice for ensuring animal welfare compliance from livestock receipt through to slaughter.

Department Verification

Our on-plant veterinarians (OPVs) verify animal welfare compliance during *daily ante-mortem inspection* whereby animals are physically examined for suitability for slaughter. If a *welfare non-compliance* is observed and the abattoir has not taken action, the OPV will issue a Corrective Action Request (CAR), directing management to immediately alleviate the animal’s pain and/or suffering and address the factors that led to the non-conformity.

We also undertake additional *monthly verification* of the abattoir’s animal handling practices prior to slaughter as well as the humane slaughter procedures to ensure compliance with the approved arrangement animal welfare requirements. A CAR will be issued if management fails to ensure that animals are treated in a way that minimises stress, pain or suffering prior to or during slaughter operations.

Department Audit

Our veterinary auditors undertake a further level of animal welfare compliance monitoring whereby abattoirs are regularly audited in accordance with the our *Audit Guidelines*. Non-compliance with animal welfare legislative requirements will result in the auditor issuing a CAR with the requirement for management to immediately alleviate the animal’s pain and/or suffering and address the factors that lead to the non-conformity. Critical animal welfare non-compliance has the power to affect the audit outcome whereby a marginal or unacceptable audit would trigger us to instigate an independent *Critical Incident Response Audit* in accordance with our *Critical Incident Response Guidelines*.

Animal Welfare Incident Reporting

Under the *Land Transport Standards* abattoirs, including export registered abattoirs, are required to monitor *fit to load* conditions for livestock being sent for slaughter. Management is required to monitor animals upon receipt and if any arrive in what may be an unfit condition, then management is required to raise an *Animal Welfare Incident Report* (AWIR). The purpose of the AWIR is to notify the relevant state/territory animal welfare regulatory authority who has the jurisdictional power where necessary to prosecute. Our OPVs can also issue AWIRs.

Approved arrangement sanctions

In relation to animal welfare breaches whereby abattoir management does not adequately address a CAR or fails an audit due to critical animal welfare non-compliance, then we have the legal power to apply further sanctions. For example, the approved arrangement (either in part or whole) can be suspended whereby the abattoir would be unable to continue its export operations until management had demonstrated full compliance of the approved arrangement and Australian legislation.

Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines

- ✓ Australian Meat Standard (AS4696:2007) Section 7
<http://www.publish.csiro.au/book/5553/>
- ✓ Land Transport of Livestock
<http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/land-transport/>
- ✓ AMIC Industry Animal Welfare Standards
http://www.amic.org.au/content_common/pg-amics-animal-welfare-standards-for-processing-establishments.seo
- ✓ Meat and Livestock Australia – Is it fit to load?
<https://www.mla.com.au/CustomControls/PaymentGateway/ViewFile.aspx?8znoiE22IEXXkZNN6z/ht+RHdGsB+0+ryJnxjWa16FYe/D/C8aTPH5hN2i29hr4r3EYMKKAfsht7d1Tnt3BqiA>
- ✓ Australian Pork Limited – Fit for the intended journey guide
<http://australianpork.com.au/library-resources/publications/fit-for-the-intended-journey-guide/>