

## **Submission to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources**

### **ASEL Stage 2 Draft Standards**

**23 November 2018**

Dear Committee

Over the years, I've remained committed in doing my part to end the barbaric live export trade. I've written countless emails and letters to my political representatives imploring them to take the necessary action to stop the cruel trade and give suffering animals a voice. I'm saddened and angry that it's still such a significant issue.

How many more horrific images and videos do we need to endure before proper action is taken? If we can't bear to see the images, imagine the suffering an animal feels enduring it physically?

It's not acceptable and it's not something we should stand by and continue to let happen when there are many good and humane solutions that will NOT affect the economy or the farmers in any way. A boxed meat export future is a reality. Just takes a commitment from the Australian Government to make it happen. In the interim, if exports are going to continue, standards MUST improve!

Extending compassion to these innocent animals who unknowingly sacrifice their lives for humans is the least we can do for them.

This year, we've yet again seen the failure of the live export industry to protect Australian animals from abject cruelty on board ships. We've seen animals subjected to cramped, filthy environments, bogged down in their own faeces and without clear access to food and water.

The proposed ASEL Standards must do better for animal welfare – Australians will not stand for the cruelty of this industry to continue unchecked, and I'm writing to you to voice my concerns and my expectations for better treatment of animals within the new standards.

Below are the changes I am calling for to be made to the recommended Standards. Detailed evidence to support these changes is provided in the submissions put forward by RSPCA Australia and the Australian Veterinary Association.

#### **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.

Along with hundreds and thousands of Australians and Animal Welfare organisations I'm calling for these changes to be made. The Australian Government needs to address community expectations and animal welfare concerns in the review of the ASEL standards and I pray that good, compassionate judgement prevails in this regard.

Yours sincerely,