

## **SUBMISSION - ASEL REVIEW**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit. I am a very concerned member of the public. I spent 20 years on our family dairy/beef farm. I thus have hands-on experience of farming practices. Some years ago some of our prime dairy heifers were exported alive. After reading media revelations over many years about live exporters and the total lack of regulation, I fear about our heifers' fate, as I do about all farm animals exported live, because it is clear from media footage and mortality and other reports that animals are still suffering on live export voyages. I believe live export has no future economic viability because of growing farmer and community concerns - both here and overseas - about its unsolvable animal welfare problems.

### **RESPONSE TO ISSUES PAPER STAGE 2**

On page 9 the Issues Paper quotes from the 2016 Productivity Commission report on the Regulation of Agriculture. I made a submission to the PC and appeared at its Melbourne public hearing to back up my submission and make further points and answer questions asked of me, including about live export.

The PC report recommended that rather than the current system, an independent statutory authority be established to formulate standards for farm animals and for live export as well. The PC report also concluded that standards must be based on peer-reviewed science. For the public to grant a social licence I believe the live export industry should not fund research. Similarly DAWR should not commission research. DAWR has been the subject of the Moss review into its culture - and any review the dept commissions could be viewed by the community as being biased, given DAWR's conflicted role as both the regulator and promoter of live export over many years.

My response to all the Issues Paper questions is that I fully support the recommendations that I presume will be put forward by the RSPCA, Animals Australia and the experts in VALE. I support the views of the latter in particular on heat stress in the ME summer; need for independent AAV vet/s on every voyage, and 2 AAVs on ships to Middle East; space allowances; inanition/salmonellosis complex; and providing adequate bedding, medical supplies and equipment to vets. No live exports to the Middle East should occur between May and October. I have made many submissions about problems with live exports. In 2013 I read on the department website the report to ASEL of Dr Lynn Simpson, an expert AAV with experience of 57 long haul voyages. I saw her photographs. I believe her recommendations should be adopted into ASEL. This year's 60 Minutes footage convinced me that ASEL standards have not been met let alone strengthened as they should have been and that very little has improved in the industry. The aforementioned images showed routine voyages with cattle with untended wounds and caked in fecal matter, standing in slurry and in the latter sheep virtually cooking alive.

These images and reports of routine voyages are readily accessed on the internet for all the world to see. I believe the relatively small live export industry - compared to the much larger chilled and frozen sector - continues to damage Australia's clean, green international reputation. Please bear this in mind when formulating ASEL.

I believe the claims that Australia, the world's largest live exporter, has the highest welfare standards are untrue. It is a national disgrace that reflects poorly on all farmers.

I emphasize the following points after reading the Issues Paper and accompanying documents.

### 3.1 Reporting and Investigations

The McCarthy review caused the reportable mortality events to be reduced to 1% for sheep . On a voyage of 70,000 sheep, that is 700 dead sheep that must be disposed of. It is a lot of sheep. But the 1% figure is only one measure; it takes no account of the morbidity or suffering endured or subsequent deaths of livestock in feedlots after arrival. This suffering must be acknowledged and reported on as well.

Santurton. E and Phillips CJC (2018)'Regularity of ship motions on the behaviour and physiology of sheep' concluded that unpredictable simulated ship motions had a negative impact on sheep welfare. Anyone who has suffered seasickness will attest to this. Sentient animals are no different from humans in their ability to suffer.

The Issues Paper states that over the past 3 years 0.75 % of 5.4 million sheep died on ships. On my reckoning 13,500 dead sheep a year and the suffering of thousands more is not acceptable and reflects adversely on Australia's international agricultural reputation.

### 3.2 Voyage reporting

The RSPCA has offered to put its independent observers on LE ships. This would alleviate community concern rather than having dept-appointed observers, especially in light of question 3 below.

Voyage reporting question (3). It is concerning that the question indicates that some stakeholders consider the call to make voyage reports publicly available may limit candour. To me this suggests that the live export industry has something to hide. There is no point having voyage reports that mask the truth or are inaccurate. The facts must be stated — no matter how unpleasant or damning. An industry that benefits from taxpayers' money to help support it is duty bound to be transparent. The public and farmers have a right to know the truth about what occurs on these voyages. Voyage reports must be made by trusted observers and made public.

### 5. Sourcing and preparation of animals.

If welfare is paramount, vulnerable animals of any kind should not be loaded in the first place - obviously livestock will become even more vulnerable and placed at higher risk on voyages. No animal with wounds should be loaded. (OIE 7.2.7.3)

Maximum ASEL weight sizes for all cattle species should be lowered. Large animals are not designed for hard deck surfaces, even with bedding. Hoof and leg damage will result in downers. (Hoof deck syndrome seems to be a common but preventable problem)

5.2 Shearing - common sense dictates that sheep going into hot weather must be shorn. But I have heard reports of newly shorn sheep in our winter dying of the cold while in feed lots awaiting export. This must be regulated.

5.5 Shy feeders those with inanition need to be easily and quickly identified and dealt with appropriately to avoid health problems.

5.6 I do not believe pregnant animals should be put on export ships - period. It leads to myriad problems including staff morale. See below 8.1.

### 6.1 Stocking densities on board

The AVA science caused that organisation to conclude that exporting livestock to the ME between May and October could not be recommended——irrespective of stocking densities.

What further science or discussion is needed? No shipments should take place at this time due to overwhelming welfare concerns.

6.1 Stocking densities should be sufficient to enable all animals to be able to lie down and rest at the same time and must be able to perform natural behaviours and make postural changes, including sitting. (OIE 7.1.4.3) They must have easy access to food and water; and to move freely so that shy feeders and sick animals can be seen and dealt with by vets.

Animals must have sufficient space to avoid being stepped on, resulting in injuries. Photos of expensive breeder cattle with more space are notably cleaner, more rested and appear in better health. All animals deserve this.

## 7. On board resources and management

### 7.1 Management of bedding and ammonia levels. (Cleanliness)

It is inhumane to expect sheep to have the fecal pad as bedding. Animals should not be forced to stand, sleep and eat for 4 weeks on what is in effect a dung heap during an already arduous voyage.

I have seen footage of cattle arriving in Israel with their hides and hair contaminated by fecal matter.

Many Israelis and rabbis have spoken out against live animal imports and the Israeli parliament is shortly to debate a bill to phase out such imports.

I believe animals should not have to endure feces and urine flowing from upper decks over them and their food and water throughout voyages.

I do not believe cattle can be adequately kept clean on board. My farming experience taught me that dung that is lagged on cattles' hides sets like concrete and is very hard to remove.

Cattle must be washed regularly so that any wounds are detectable.

Bedding, which should be changed every 3-4 days on voyages, is especially important for cattle. Cattle will not lie on dirty surfaces and rest is important for health.

The hard ship decking is not suitable for cattle. Without ample bedding and thick sawdust cattle damage themselves getting up and down. Their hooves suffer and if their injuries are not seen and dealt with promptly, they will not get up and that is how they die.

Cattle with hoof injuries like to lie down with their legs outstretched to relieve the pressure; that is, they need more space and clean bedding if they are to recover.

Ample sawdust should be on board for loading and unloading to prevent slippage and injuries. Animals become very frightened when they slip on hard surfaces.

### 7.2 Water fodder and chaff

Fodder - 7.2 - I read that AAVs in 2012-13 noted that pellets are designed for ship delivery systems and not nutrition and digestibility. Further, their grain starches predispose animals to salmonellosis etc. I find it incredible that ineffective food is delivered on voyages.

More successful fodder like hay and cubes from bails and bags would have room to be stored if stocking densities were reduced. A much larger percentage of chaff and hay must be a requirement for food and bedding.

Water -

Automated water systems should be mandatory on all voyages (with trained staff to service the systems in case of breakdown). This should be paid for by live exporters and/or farmers - definitely not taxpayers.

Water should not be withheld prior to unloading. Animals should always have water access. That should be a given and a standard in ASEL.

A higher proportion of more appropriate fodder should be loaded rather than pellets.

Even more extra fodder like hay and chaff should be loaded for voyages longer than 10 days.

The rationale for the above is that it is fundamental animal welfare that livestock should be fed appropriately nutritious food rather than inadequate food just because it is convenient for the ships' design.

#### 8.1 On board personnel - animal management and care

There must be 2 AAVs on all ME voyages with appropriate drugs and euthanasia equipment.

AAVs should have necessary medicines/ sedatives/bandages and surgical equipment, and drugs for medical euthanasia. It is bad for morale and inhumane if animals and/or lambs and calves have to have their throats cut.

All shipboard stockmen, vets and crew should be trained to identify and treat injuries as they occur.

See my comments under item 5 for vulnerable animals.

Jan Kendall  
September 2018