



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

# Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System Regulatory Performance Report

1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022



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### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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# Overview

The Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) requires exporters to have arrangements with supply chain partners (i.e. importers, feedlots, abattoirs) in importing countries to provide humane treatment and handling of feeder and slaughter livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, deer, buffalo and camelids) from arrival through to point of slaughter. As ESCAS only applies to feeder and slaughter livestock, the statistics in the report refer only to feeder and slaughter exports. ESCAS does not apply to the export of breeder livestock. ESCAS is underpinned by the following key principles – control, traceability and animal welfare – whereby the exporter must demonstrate, through a system of reporting and independent auditing of their supply chains:

- the exporter has control of all supply chain arrangements (including having agreements in place with supply chain partners) for the transport, management and slaughter of livestock, and that all livestock remain in the supply chain (control)
- the exporter can account for all livestock through the supply chain (traceability)
- animal handling and slaughter meets World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) animal welfare standards (animal welfare).

If issues arise, ESCAS requires exporters to address any non-compliance matters within their supply chains. This may be managed by undertaking additional steps or corrective actions at facilities (for example delivering training or upgrading infrastructure), removing non-compliant facilities from a supply chain, or not exporting any further livestock to a supply chain.

Additionally, the ESCAS regulatory framework enables the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to assess information about reported non-compliances with ESCAS requirements and take regulatory action where appropriate. Reports are generally received through one of four pathways: self-reported by exporters, reported by third parties (for example animal welfare organisations or private citizens in an importing country), reported by industry, or identified by the department itself. Reports are assessed by the department using the [guideline for the management of non-compliance](#).

In response to ESCAS non-compliance, the department may apply regulatory actions to an ESCAS, or in more serious instances to an exporter or an entire market. This may include revoking an ESCAS, varying an ESCAS to remove facilities or apply additional conditions, or suspending or cancelling an exporter's licence. Regulatory action is applied based on the nature of the non-compliance, and any corrective actions implemented by the exporter is taken into consideration.

# 1 Period summary: 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022

Below is a summary of the number of feeder and/or slaughter livestock exported, number of reports received, and number of assessments completed during this period (1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022).

## 1.1 Livestock exported

During this period 351,293 livestock were exported under ESCAS arrangements to 13 countries. The number by species exported to each country is presented in (Table 1).

**Table 1 Summary of livestock exported – 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022**

Country	Buffalo	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Total
Brunei Darussalam	534	857	–	–	1391
Indonesia	1726	106142	–	–	107868
Israel	–	14449	–	31200	45649
Japan	–	1014	–	–	1014
Jordan	–	–	–	16521	16521
Kuwait	–	338	–	111041	111379
Malaysia	–	–	300	2229	2529
Oman	–	–	–	10000	10000
Philippines	–	2516	–	–	2516
Qatar	–	100	–	25000	25100
Sarawak	–	500	–	–	500
United Arab Emirates	–	383	–	17500	17883
Vietnam	–	8943	–	–	8943
<b>Total</b>	<b>2260</b>	<b>135242</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>213491</b>	<b>351293</b>

## 1.2 Reports received and completed

No reports of non-compliance with ESCAS requirements were received during this period. A summary of reports received and completed is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Summary of reports received and completed – 1 October to 31 December 2022**

Report type	Outstanding reports as at 1 October 2022	Reports received in current period	Assessments completed in current period	Assessments remaining in progress as at 31 December 2022 <sup>a</sup>
ESCAS	2	0	1	1
Self-reports	3	0	3	0
<b>Total</b>	5	0	4	1

<sup>a</sup> A summary of assessments in progress is provided in Section 5 of this report.

## 2 Summary of ESCAS non-compliance assessments

An overview of findings for ESCAS assessments completed in this period is provided in Table 3. A detailed summary for each assessment is provided in Section 3 of this report.

**Table 3 Assessments completed – 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022**

Report #	Date reported	Source	Market	Species	Australian animals involved	Exporter	Summary of issues	Non-compliance finding
190	Jul 2022	Third party	United Arab Emirates	Sheep	25	RETWA	Non-compliance with ESCAS animal welfare and infrastructure standards	Minor non-compliance

## 3 ESCAS Regulatory Performance Assessments

### 3.1 United Arab Emirates

ESCAS was implemented in United Arab Emirates on 1 September 2012.

As at 30 June 2022, there is one Australian exporter with approved supply chains to export livestock to United Arab Emirates.

Since 2011, the department has previously completed assessments of 8 reports relating to non-compliance in United Arab Emirates. The assessments can be found at [ESCAS investigations](#). As at 31 December 2022, no reports of non-compliance are under assessment for United Arab Emirates.

#### 3.1.1 Report #190: Sheep exported to United Arab Emirates – Minor non-compliance

##### Incident report

On 18 July 2022, Animals Australia submitted a report to the department, alleging non-compliance with Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) animal welfare requirements. Animals Australia provided photographs and video footage collected on 9 July 2022 – 11 July 2022 (inclusive), during Eid al-Adha (the Islamic festival of sacrifice), showing around 20 Australian sheep unloaded from vehicles and handled at an ESCAS approved facility in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

##### Department assessment and actions

At the time of the report, one exporter had an approved ESCAS for sheep in UAE - Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd (RETWA).

On 18 July 2022, the department provided RETWA with access to all photographs and video footage submitted by Animals Australia and requested they work through their in-country representatives to ensure ongoing compliance with ESCAS requirements for any sheep remaining in the facility.

The department assessed the photographs and video footage provided by Animals Australia and confirmed instances of Australian sheep not handled in accordance with ESCAS animal welfare standards:

- 7 sheep were caught by one leg and dragged short distances

The footage also showed that the infrastructure and processes at loading/unloading from vehicles presented a risk of injury to the sheep:

- Sheep were forced to unload from pickup trucks under a low gate which presented a risk of injury to their back.
- There was a gap between the tail gate of a pickup truck and the unloading ramp which presented a risk of leg injuries if they got caught in the gap.



On 25 July 2022, the department required that RETWA apply corrective measures to prevent further non-compliances relating to deficiencies in loading/unloading infrastructure and animal handling.

### **Exporter findings**

RETWA did not dispute the allegations made by Animals Australia. They accepted that the photographs and footage showed a breach of ESCAS animal welfare requirements.

RETWA's investigations indicated that the market pen worker identified in the footage was in breach of the ESCAS Animal Welfare Standards and that the pen worker was employed on a casual basis by the market pen operator for Eid al-Adha only.

### **Exporter actions**

RETWA acknowledged the handling and infrastructure issues identified in the footage at Al Ain Public Livestock Market and implemented the required corrective actions.

On 24 August 2022, RETWA advised the department that the remedial training provided by the importer's supply chain officer (SCO) and infrastructure modifications had improved the operation of the approved market pen operator at Al Ain Livestock Complex. RETWA advised that their SCO would conduct regular visits to the market pen to ensure ongoing compliance with the ESCAS Animal Welfare Standards.

Furthermore, RETWA will arrange for an independent auditor to assess the effectiveness of training and infrastructure modifications and continued compliance as part of its next independent performance audit in December 2022.

### **Department conclusions**

Based on evidence and information provided by Animals Australia and RETWA, the department determined that non-compliance with ESCAS animal welfare requirements had occurred for 27 sheep. The video footage showed handling of sheep that did not meet ESCAS animal welfare requirements – catching by the front or hind leg and forcing sheep to drop and crawl underneath the top gate at the rear of a pick-up vehicle.

The department accepted RETWA's response to the non-compliance and further regulatory action was not required.

The department will require RETWA to review and update their management plan for Eid al-Adha 2023, including a thorough risk assessment in the months leading up to the festival, that addresses the issues identified in this report. Continued supply to the implicated facility is subject to a strict management plan that addresses gaps in RETWA's handling and animal welfare arrangements identified through this investigation.

In assessing this matter against the [guideline for the management of non-compliance](#), the department recorded *minor* non-compliance with ESCAS animal welfare standards against the RETWA UAE sheep supply chain.

## 4 ESCAS issues identified and addressed by exporters

No ESCAS issues were identified and addressed by exporters during this period.

## 5 Summary of assessments in progress as at 31 December 2022

Table 4 provides an overview of all regulatory performance assessments in progress as at 31 December 2022. The status of all reviews can be found at [ESCAS Investigations](#).

**Table 4 Summary of ESCAS investigations in progress as at 31 December 2022**

#	Date reported	Type	Market	Species	Report
186	June 2021	Third party report	Indonesia	Cattle	Animal welfare concerns