

SUBMISSION

I make this submission in support of the Australian live export industry for consideration in the 'Animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets' Senate Inquiry being conducted by the Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee.

I refer directly to the Terms of Reference that the Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee will inquire and report on and my opinion in relation to each Term of Reference is as follows:-

1. Investigate and report into the role and effectiveness of Government, Meat and Livestock Australia, Livecorp and relevant industry bodies in improving animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets, including:

- a)** The level, nature and effectiveness of expenditure and efforts to promote or improve animal welfare standards with respect to all Australian live export market countries;
- i)** expenditure and efforts on marketing and promoting live export to Australian producers;
- ii)** ongoing monitoring of the subscription to, and practise of, animal welfare standards in all live export market countries;
- iii)** actions to improve animal welfare outcomes in all other live export market countries and the evidence base for these actions.

When Australia started sending cattle to Indonesia it became apparent that the larger Australian animal was physically difficult for the slaughterman to handle, so began the process to assist Indonesia to improve the way they handled our Australian Animals. To change is not easy or accept.

The benefits of cattle being killed humanely should be explained, reduced bruising , reduction in dark cutting meat resulting in better eating quality, slaughterman welfare. It is obvious progress hasn't happened fast enough, to address this, we need to accelerate the education and on ground training procedures already in place and as targets are reached a monitoring program set up with all parties, Government, Vets and importers to insure the welfare of the cattle up to and including slaughter have input.

- b)** The extent of knowledge of animal welfare practices in Australia's live export markets including:
- i)** formal and informal monitoring and reporting structures;
- ii)** formal and informal processes for reporting and addressing poor animal welfare practices.

Animal Welfare along the export journey is well documented from the producer's gate to loading onto the export ship. On board conditions are clear and the Ship's Master is required to report if mortality trigger levels are reached. Once animals leave our ownership, their welfare becomes a diplomatic issue in the sense that we need to consider the culture involved, does not necessarily have our values on human or animal life. The Cattle Veterinary Association would be the most qualified body to comment on the procedures needed to assist Indonesia or other export customers on the standards Australians require for the humane slaughtering of our animals.

2. Investigate and report on the domestic economic impact of the live export trade within Australia including:

- a) Impact on regional and remote employment especially in northern Australia;
- b) Impact and role of the industry on local livestock production and prices;
- c) Impact on the processing of live stock within Australia.

The Northern beef industry structure employs a cross-section on industries that make up the stable population of northern Australia. In 2010; 521002 head of cattle left Northern Australian for the live trade with Indonesia providing families and companies enterprises with a solid future, the chain of business leaving the property of origin include:, transport companies, fuel suppliers, supermarkets, stock and station agents, AQIS Vets, yard contractors ,feed suppliers, mechanics, exporters, and government departmental staff to name a few.

Already the impact on livestock production is being felt. Bull breeders have had their northern orders cancelled, bull breeding takes years to produce the required sires for commercial herds.

At a property Auction last week, in the Flinders Shire the vendors failed to get a bid and the reserve was well below the 2010 prices.

There is a genuine reluctance to invest in an unsure future when decisions are being made by those with no understanding or investment in the Industry.

As the middleclass Indonesian population increases so is our chilled trade; 51815 tones were exported in 2009. The live trade addresses the poorer section of the population, giving them access to protein and employment.

Townsville has a large exporting meatworks (which frequently has waiting periods of up to 6 weeks to have cattle processed), the live trade is a competitor in QLD. Cattle are sourced by feed-lotters in the central highlands or when seasonal conditions are favourable the channel country fatteners. Competition in business is essential.

3. Other related matters.

The cattle bred in Northern Australia have a high Bos Indus content which suits the tropical environments in which they are bred and later finished in Indonesia or the Middle East. The maximum weight of feeder cattle going in to Indonesia is 350kg live weight., cattle at this weight are not yet big enough to kill and will spend 3 or months being fed and finished, this allows the importer to value add, and in the case of Northern Australia the climate is not suited to finishing these cattle economically. The export trade compliments both countries.

The Indonesian government is working towards a self sufficiency target, at this stage they lack the land mass to breed large numbers required and they lack the breeding expertise, both of these we do very well.

Signed:

Leonnies harrington