

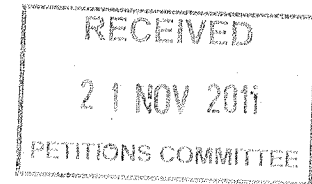


Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland

REF: MNMC2011-09705

The Hon. John Murphy MP
Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2011 enclosing a petition submitted for the consideration of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions about opposition to live animal export from Australia to the Middle East. I regret the delay in responding.

I understand the expectation that, as minister responsible for the matters raised in the petition, under standing order 209(b) I will lodge a written response with the petitions committee. Please accept the following as my response for consideration by the committee, presentation to the House, recording in *Hansard* and posting on the committee's website.

Anyone who watched the footage aired on the ABC's *Four Corners* program on 30 May 2011 would have been shocked by the treatment of the animals it showed.

It was clear from this footage that the live export industry cannot safeguard the animals it sells without strong government regulation.

The Australian Government had to act. To fix the problems raised in the footage, the government introduced a strict new framework for livestock exports to Indonesia that ensures animals will be treated in a way that meets or exceeds international animal welfare standards.

On 21 October 2011 the government announced that it would be extending this framework to all other markets for Australian feeder and slaughter livestock. The new framework will be phased in with 75 per cent of trade covered by the end of February 2012, 99 per cent by the end of August 2012 and all markets covered by the end of 2012. The decision was informed by an independent review of Australia's livestock export trade by Mr Bill Farmer AO, as well as reports from two industry-government working groups on live cattle, and live sheep and goat exports.

These changes fundamentally reform the way the live export trade works. Before, there were no rules to cover what happened after an animal arrived in an export market. Once the new framework is rolled out, the way Australian livestock are treated in all markets must meet or exceed international standards.

I thank you and the committee for your interest in this important issue. To read the Farmer review and industry–government working group reports as well as the government response to these reports, or for more information about government action on live exports, including details of assistance available for people affected by the suspension of trade to Indonesia, please go to www.liveexports.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Joe Ludwig

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November 2011