



Australia's premier livestock export conference

26-27 November 2025 - Perth, WA  
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(almost) 50 years of The Western  
Australian Livestock Exporters  
Association





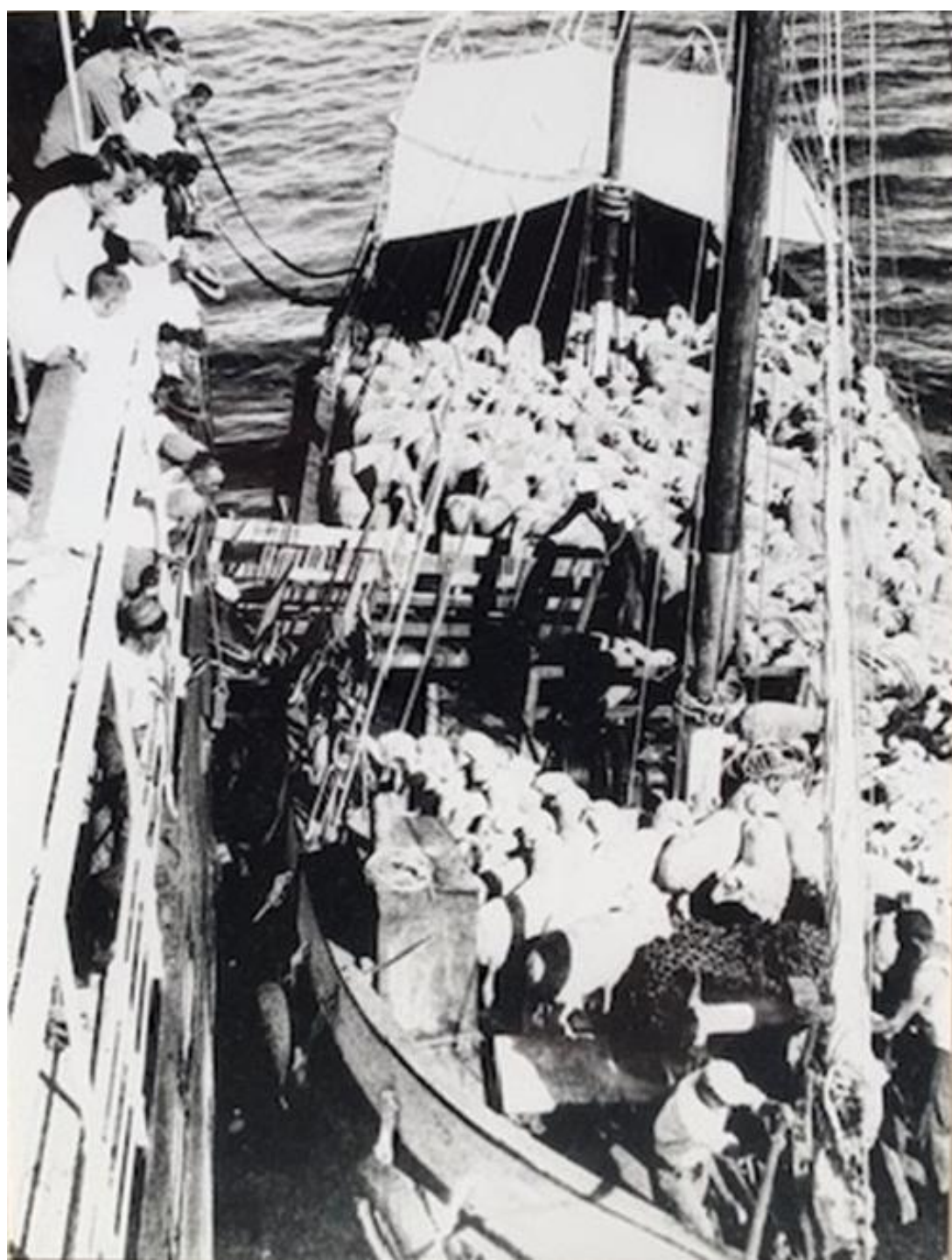
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*Facilitator* Dr Peter Barnard  
*Panel*

John Cunningham, Chairman WALEA 2018 -  
John Edwards, Chairman WALEA 2003 – 2013  
Steve Meerwald, Chairman WALEA 1991- 1998













THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LIVESTOCK SHIPPERS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of special meeting of the above Committee held in the  
Wesfarmers Meat Division, Board Room, Grain Pool Building on  
Wednesday 27th July 1977 commencing at 3.00pm.

1. ATTENDANCE

M.A.J. Cameron  
J. Rowan  
C. Burbury  
R.B. Oliver  
G.W. Pearce  
G.R. Daws  
A.P. Wells  
J. Ware  
N. Hall  
Sue Dease  
T.R. Eastwood  
I.R. Howie

Independent Chairman  
Livestock Exports  
Amatco Australia  
Amatco Australia  
Mindalong Traders  
Emanuel Exports  
Intergulf Export Pty Ltd  
Metro Meat Ltd  
Clausen Steamship Co  
Global Commodity Traders  
Westralian Farmers Co-op Ltd.  
Westralian Farmers Co-op Ltd. (Acting Secretary)

2. APOLOGIES

The Chairman read apologies from Mr. Kearnan who introduced Miss Sue Dease to represent Global Commodity Traders at the meeting, and from Mr. G. Savell who was unable to attend due to prior commitments.

Mr. Hall queried the fact that Elders G.M. were not invited to attend the meeting. It was agreed Mr. Maisey should be telephoned that a meeting was taking place. This was done but neither Mr. Maisey nor Mr. Bongers could be contacted.

3. BUSINESS

Mr. M.A.J. Cameron informed the Committee a special meeting had been called to discuss the constitution of a Livestock Shippers Association put forward by the elected Steering Committee.

A draft copy of the proposed rules was tabled at the meeting for discussion.

It was moved Mr. T. Eastwood, seconded Mr. J. Ware.

"That the name of the association be called THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LIVESTOCK EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION".

Carried

The draft copy of the rules was discussed at length and finally referred back to the Steering Committee for consideration of the following amendments.

Ref: OBJECTS: Paragraph (2) amended to read -

"To ensure that the export of livestock from Western Australia is conducted in the best interests of the industry."

Ref: MEMBERSHIP: Paragraph (1) amended to read -

"Persons, firms, or companies who satisfy a general meeting and who are currently actively engaged in trading in livestock for export from Western Australia and who have obtained and are still entitled to obtain export permits for such livestock."



# Union ban on sheep carrier continues

The union ban on the stock carrier Atlas Pioneer, berthed at Fremantle, continued yesterday.

The WA Meat Commission rejected a proposal by the Trades and Labor Council to end the dispute and the TLC in turn rejected a counter-offer from the commission.

The dispute spread to the Midland Abattoirs yesterday when slaughtermen imposed an overtime ban there and agreed to limit their daily quota of slaughtered sheep to 70 a man instead of 77.

The assistant secretary of the TLC, Mr Ron Reid, said the ban on the Atlas Pioneer was mainly over the dismissal of 62 workers at the Robb

Jetty meatworks a week ago.

However, the ban also applied to the failure of Kuwait to observe a trade agreement relating to the export of live sheep from WA.

The Atlas Pioneer was bound for Kuwait with a cargo of live sheep.

The men were dismissed by the Meat Commission after they refused to increase their daily slaughter quota of 77 sheep a day.

The commission had wanted them to slaughter on an unrestricted basis.

The commission yesterday

rejected the TLC's proposal that the men return to work and continue to slaughter only 77 sheep a day.

A proposal from the commission that the men be reinstated without a restriction on the kill was rejected by the TLC.

Mr Reid said Kuwait had broken an agreement which bound that country to import two sheep carcasses for every live sheep imported from WA.

"In fact, they have been importing only about 32 per cent of their quota of carcasses," Mr Reid said.

"This puts the jobs of WA meatworkers at risk, especially when you consider that there will be a shortage of sheep next year because of the drought."

The chief executive officer of the Meat Commission, Mr Brian Wilson, said that the quota of 77 sheep slaughtered each day applied to the Midland Abattoir but not at Robb Jetty.

"There is a special agreement signed by the Meat Industry Employees' Union which al-

lows an unrestricted kill at Robb Jetty," he said.

The Minister for Agriculture, Mr Old, described the ban as totally unjust.

"The workers' case had been taken to the Industrial Commission where Commissioner G. G. Johnson told them that their claim was spurious and without merit," he said.

"The people likely to suffer most if this action continues are the livestock producers, who provide the very means of employment for these men.

"Primary producers have suffered far too much already."

## SWAN RIVER

In another development yesterday, the Maritime Workers Union decided at Fremantle not to black ban the Japanese sheep carrier Swan River.

The ban was put on the ship when it left port for the open sea so that her Korean crew could clean out the sheep pens. This was ordered by the Quarantine Department. The Maritime Workers' Union claimed its members should have been given this work.

# Live exports a multi-million dollar industry

By DON SCOTT

The export of live sheep has been built into a thriving multi-million dollar trade in Western Australia.

Exporters claim that farmers, many of whom have been hit by drought and rising costs, receive about \$8 for exported live sheep, which would return them only about \$3 if slaughtered locally.

The Meat Industry Employees' Union has tolerated the export of about a million live sheep a year on the understanding that two frozen carcasses are exported for each live sheep.

The industry has little industrial power on its own and would have to rely on support from maritime unions if it wanted to enforce an export ban on live sheep. This would be by no means certain as a long-term or permanent measure.

Firms with a wide experience in exporting both live and frozen sheep claim that a ban on the export of live sheep would not mean more work for local abattoirs because Moslem countries prefer live sheep.

## CONGESTION

They point out that apart from farmers, the State's railways and transport operators benefit from this industry.

Most Middle East ports suffer some degree of congestion and some ships meet long delays.

Ships carrying live sheep receive preference.

Fremantle had a boom in the export of frozen meat in September.

It was made necessary

to some degree by overcrowded cold storage facilities.

But the exports amounting to thousands of tonnes did not all go smoothly. One ship, the Harvest Gold, sailed without completing loading because slow deliveries resulted in some of the meat beginning to deteriorate when hatches had to be kept open too long.

Another ship had trouble with holds not clean enough and another was held by union action.

Meanwhile, the Atlas Pioneer is waiting at Fremantle to see whether she will eventually be allowed to load her full cargo of 51,000 sheep.

Her operators have the difficult and costly task of trying to find fodder for more than 80,000 sheep they have in holding paddocks for this and other ships.

WEST AUSTRALIAN  
2.10.1976







## ACTU seeks one-for-one limit on live-sheep export trade

By LIN ENRIGHT

Australia's \$200-million live-sheep export trade could be severely restricted — or halted — after support by the ACTU congress for a motion opposing aspects of the trade.

The ACTU has demanded that the Federal Government impose a ratio of one slaughtered sheep to every live sheep exported by January 1.

If the Government does not act, the ACTU executive has been empowered to take whatever action is necessary to support Australian meatworkers.

A motion against the trade, sponsored by the Australian Meat Employees Industry Union, was adopted by the congress on Wednesday. The union says the trade is costing jobs of its members.

The two-page motion includes a call for action by the ACTU to halt the

development of new live-sheep markets, the introduction of the one-for-one ratio on a country-by-country basis, a limit on the age of sheep to be exported, action to promote carcass-meat export and the January 1 deadline.

The ban could affect the movement of between five million and six million sheep to the Middle East market.

The AMIEU, with the ACTU president, Mr Cliff Dolan, had had talks about the live-sheep trade with the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Nixon, before the congress. They had tried to get government agreement to the one-for-one formula.

A spokesman for Mr Nixon said yesterday that the minister was disappointed with the resolution. Mr Nixon had undertaken to get a reply to the union's arguments about the trade. These were still being prepared and would be forwarded to the union "short-

ly". There had been no change in government policy.

The president of the Sheepmeat Council of Australia, Mr Ralph James, has criticised the ACTU resolution.

The most controversial aspect of the motion, the one-for-one formula, would mean an immediate reduction in live trade from around 5.5 million to less than two million animals a year, Mr James said. This would be a loss of \$110 million in export income.

He said the decision demonstrated a narrow attitude toward the trade and a lack of understanding of relativities between mutton and live-sheep export.

Mr James said the move against the development of new live-sheep markets was based on the "already discredited" premise that frozen mutton and lamb could be substituted for live-sheep exports. ACTU insistence on this policy

would result in reductions in both trades and losses of jobs.

The ACTU said the existing trade should be reviewed to protect the flock by declaring that export sheep be limited to wethers that are at least four years old. Mr James replied that the export trade had had a major positive influence on the sheep industry by reducing the age of the flock while also leading to sheep-number increases.

Graziers generally agree that aged sheep, particularly wethers which were no longer economic for wool or meat production, were the first animals to go to the live-sheep trade.

Mr James added that most wethers in Australia were now under four years old and the ACTU policy would effectively prevent producers from selling sheep when they were best suited to the trade.

## Live exports vital to WA

WA'S LIVESTOCK producers are right to be angry over the misguided campaign by local and national union and animal welfare groups to ban the export of live sheep and cattle.

After years of taking industrial action in support of out-of-date work practices, meat-works unions have themselves to blame for producers taking advantage of other ways to sell their stock.

The wage campaigns and union opposition to enterprise bargaining put pressure on local processing costs and helped to close abattoirs in the north and other parts of Australia.

It is not the producer's fault that local processors have found it hard to compete with the live export market.

Farmers have been told for years that they must supply what the customer wants — and that's what they are doing.

Many Middle East countries cannot handle big shipments of refrigerated meat and prefer to kill live sheep in their own way.

And the booming cattle markets of South-East Asia are learning how to use their own feedlots to fatten cattle to their local requirements.

This has resulted in an expanding export trade estimated to be worth more than \$150 million a year to WA — a valuable contribution to Australia's balance of trade figures.

The reality is that producers must get a fair return for their product.

At this stage, the live export market is a key part of the financial equation on the farm.

Meat workers should be putting their energies into making their industry more competitive in the harsh world of economic reality.

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# RSPCA aims to end live-sheep trade

By PHILIP HOBBS

The RSPCA holds its annual meeting in Canberra this week and among its main tasks is to try to stop live-sheep export.

The society's executive director, Charles Wright, said yesterday that the RSPCA and every other animal-welfare group would not ease their campaigns until common sense prevailed.

There was no way the society would budge from its carcass-trade-only position.

The latest debacle involving an Australian shipment of sheep to the Middle East continued to be a tragic indictment on Australia's attitude towards animals.

"It appears that the rural community as a whole has no real concerns about the welfare of its animals," Mr Wright said. "They are simply a marketing commodity that has not, and should not have, any feeling."

When the ship *Al Gazeem* left Australia about four months ago with 82,000 sheep on board, it had no chance of selling its cargo.

"The end result is that two-thirds of the shipment have been marketed to who knows where, and the remaining 25,000 are still on board, after being unloaded and reloaded again, with nowhere to go," he said.

Mr Wright said he had asked the Australian Meat and Live

Stock Council to stop the trade and asked the Senate to request an urgent meeting of the Senate Select Committee for Animal Welfare to investigate what he called the *Al Gazeem* affair.

Another major concern of the association is electro-immobilisation — a technique in which animals are immobilised with electricity for certain veterinary procedures.

A probe is inserted near the tail of the animal and another is attached to its tongue and an electric current is passed through the body.

Although the procedure has its applications, such as for spaying cattle, some veterinarians are concerned that it does not permit monitoring of the animal's pain threshold. There is a view that animals immobilised by electricity feel pain, but because they are frozen they cannot bellow or bark.

There is also a concern that the method may induce people to attempt veterinary and surgical procedures on their animals at home, with disastrous and unintended consequences.

Mr Wright also said the RSPCA would prosecute the owners of Queensland feedlots at which more than 200 cattle died recently, apparently from heat stress.



An overview of  
Western Australia's  
\$177 million live  
sheep export market  
to the Middle East  
and the requirements  
of that market.



AUSTRALIAN  
MEAT & LIVE-STOCK  
CORPORATION



# SCRATCH TO CATCH THE MARKET



Scabby Mouth in Sheep



# One million live cattle exported

By PETER HENDERSON

THE Australian live export industry had broken another record with new figures showing more than one million cattle were exported in the 2002-03 year.

The cattle were valued at a record high of \$607m.

South East Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines accounted for 69pc of the live cattle exports.

Indonesia took nearly half, or 489,000 head, assisted by a decline in cattle prices and a stable Indonesian economy.

The latest monthly figures for June showed exports to Indonesia fell by 22pc, which was expected due to full feedlots and large consignments sent in May.

High numbers of domestic cattle also boosted feedlots.

## AT A GLANCE

Live exports 2002/03  
5.9 million sheep  
(66pc from WA)  
Value \$420m  
1 million head of cattle  
Value \$607m

Meanwhile the 97,000 head of cattle exported to Malaysia was worth \$44.8m, with cattle numbers up by 25pc on 2001-02. WA is the major supplier of cattle to Malaysia.

The Philippines had increased to 108,000 head in 2002-03 but its value of \$57m was down by about 7pc on the previous year.

Egypt continued to be a weak market for live cattle due to increased competition from cheap South American beef and according to Meat and Livestock Australia no

cattle had been sent to this market since January.

Meanwhile, the tight supply of sheep resulting in higher prices last year ensured the value of sheep exports rose to a record \$420m.

Livecorp chief executive officer Kevin Shiell said it had been a big exporting year with combined sheep and cattle exports valued at above \$1 billion.

"It emphasises the important contribution the live export industry makes," he said.

Last year's sheep exports were down in numbers by about 9pc to 5.9m head compared to 6.5m in 2001-02. WA accounted for 66pc of all live sheep exports in 2002-03.

The average price per head of sheep this financial year had risen \$10 to \$71 per head.

Saudi Arabia, to which exports had been suspended,

had taken nearly a third of Australia's live sheep exports in 2002-03 with Kuwait next on 1.5m head.

MLA says higher prices had been having a negative impact on live sheep export volumes to all other markets with United Arab Emirates (UAE) dropping 46pc to 306,000 head.



□ Kevin Shiell

FW 4/9/03

# Asian growth boost for sheep, cattle demand

AM 3/12/15



■ Jenne Brammer

A rosy long-term picture was outlined for the sheep and cattle industries at last week's Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants WA conference.

Elders general manager of live exports Cameron Hall told delegates that there would be challenges in meeting demand and Australian farmers faced stiff competition from other countries such as the US, Brazil and other South American countries as their herds expand.

The key driver of demand for cattle and sheep meat was Asia's growing population and rising middle class, particularly in China but also across south-east and central Asia, Mr Hall said.

With an estimated 2.4 billion more people by 2050, the majority in Asia, this population increase would have a significant impact on the demand for animal proteins.

"There is a rising population, and as people move from lower-class subsistence to middle class, one of the things they do purchase more of is protein," he said.

"They improve their diet and improve it rapidly. That is important from a red meat, grain and dairy sense."

Mr Hall said to keep up the supply to cater for this demand would require a 1.4 per cent annual increase in livestock numbers and carcass weights.

"Australia certainly isn't in the process of significantly increasing livestock numbers at this stage," he said.

For instance, adverse seasonal conditions and strong export demand had driven a significant rise in sheep turn-off over the past three years, but assuming a return to average seasonal conditions, the national sheep flock is expected to gradually rebuild from 71.8 million head in 2015-16 before reaching 76 million head by 2019-20, Mr Hall said.

Meanwhile, the Australian cattle herd is estimated to have fallen from a high of 29.3 million in 2013 to 27 million in 2015, before declining a further 2 per cent to 26.5 million head in 2016.

Mr Hall said the growth in exports from Australia would hinge on the nation's global competitiveness.

"It is three times more expensive to process and pack a beast in Australia than Brazil and twice that of the US," he said.

"Our operating costs, labour costs, regulatory costs are all significantly more expensive than our competitors."

"Those comparisons are getting worse, not better. There needs to be significant structural change if we are going to be able to remain globally competitive, particularly at a commodity level."

Mr Hall said over the next few years, because of high demand and lack of supply, it was possible a couple of live exporters or meat exporters could fold, which was not in anyone's long-term interests.

Supply would be redistributed

back among the remaining players.

He said processors, compared to global models, had room to become more efficient.

"We (processors) generally don't work two shifts in Australia," he said.

"That's not necessarily a great return on that capital investment in such large assets."

"Many of our competitors in Europe and the US all work two or two-and-a-half shifts, with the half shift being maintenance."

Mr Hall forecast strong beef export demand because of the lower Australian dollar and tariff reductions in some big markets as a result of recent free-trade agreements.

He said the US was likely to remain Australia's largest beef export market until 2019.

Beef exports to Japan would lift 7 per cent in the 2016-17 financial year as a result of the FTA and appreciation of the US dollar against the yen, compared to the Australian dollar, according to ABARES.

Mr Hall said although beef exports to China would fall by about 25 per cent in the 2016 financial year because of higher prices for Australian beef and greater competition from South America, this would steadily regain ground until 2019 as the FTA came into effect.

Live cattle exports would also remain high, though Australian feeder and slaughter cattle exports were forecast to fall 14 per cent to 1.1 million head from a record 1.3 million head in 2014-15, reflecting the reduced cattle supply suitable for live export, Mr Hall said.

He said there could be additional



Elders International's Cameron Hall delivers an optimistic outlook for Australia's cattle and sheep industries at last week's AAAC conference.

Picture: Jenne Brammer

demand for feeder and slaughter cattle this financial year from China if supply chains were developed and approved.

Mr Hall said about 31 million live cattle were now being exported and there was potential for that to grow further.

"There is still potential in the markets we supply at the moment," he said. "Indonesia will probably come back to having a more structured approach to the release of permits."

"Whether it's 600,000 cattle or 900,000 cattle per year doesn't matter so much, as long as there's confidence and consistency around how it's going to be done."

Mr Hall said sheep and lamb prices were forecast to increase by 10 per cent this financial year in response to strong export demand.

Meanwhile, he expected wool prices to rise because of falling production and a lower Australian dollar. He expected the Eastern Market Indicator would average about 1200c/kg clean during 2015-16.

Mr Hall said wool production was expected to slip 5 per cent in 2015-16 to 408,000t greasy, driven by a smaller sheep flock of 71.3 million head and lower fleece weights. Production would rebound to 418,000 tonnes in 2019-20 in response to expected flock rebuilding.

Mr Hall said although it faced competition challenges, Australia had many advantages.

"Among our advantages is our geography and diversified product," he said. "The fact we can run northern cattle, southern cattle and a whole range of different production systems gives us a great deal of flexibility."

"A further reason why China likes us so much is they have confidence in our food and production systems."

"And while at times it would seem there has been some political instability at prime minister level over the last couple of terms, we still have a very stable political platform — unlike some of the other major producing zones."









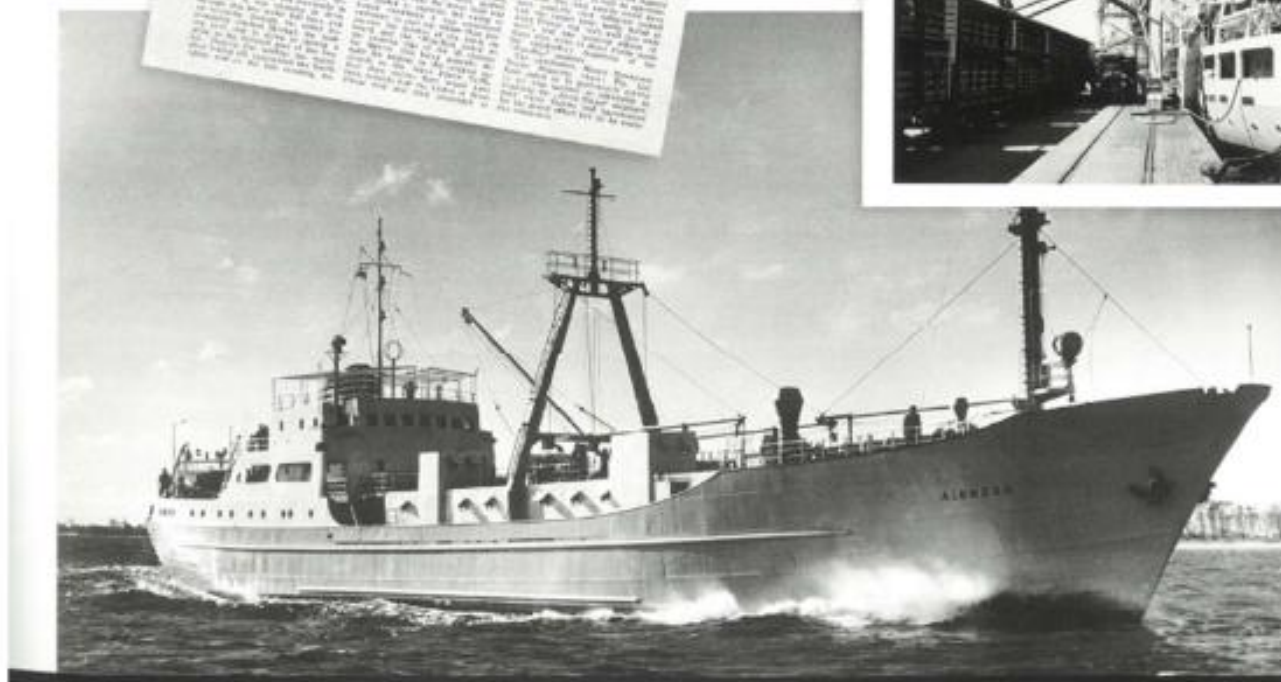




LEFT: Tom Dews and Arthur Milard, pictured in Elders Weekly, 1954.

BELOW: The Alouha (number one), loading hay bales at Fremantle.

OPPOSITE PAGE: When the first load of sheep was unloaded from the Alouha onto the open wharf at Kuwait Harbour, the only "fence" was a ring of unblockers, 1951.











# ABOARD THE AWASSI EXPRESS...

RIGHT... LIGHTS...  
CAMERA... ACTION....  
I WANT EVERYONE  
LOOKING HOT AND  
BOTHERED!





# Exporters embrace new code

By PETER HENDERSON

WA LIVESTOCK exporters have welcomed Federal Government's intention to set up a new standards code for the export of Australian livestock.

Work has already begun on an interim code which is expected to be presented to the Primary Industries Ministerial Council next month.

Wellard Rural Exports general manager Steve Meerwald said a new standards code would allow the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) to operate under a more modern standards system.

He said exporters had been asking AQIS to modernise its standards in line with revised standards under industry's Livestock Export Accreditation

Program (LEAP). He said AQIS used some aspects of LEAP in the area of competency for exporter licencees but it was still using codes of practices drawn up in the 1980s.

"We will actually welcome AQIS moving into the 21st century to pick up this revised code," he said.

The proposed new codes of practice are part of Federal Government's \$11m response to the Keniry inquiry held after the Cormo Express incident.

Mr Meerwald said any extra costs to the live export industry through increased regulation would not be known until after a new regulatory system was in place.

Of the Keniry inquiry's eight recommendations three were opposed by exporters.

One recommendation was

FU 8/4/04

## \$11M PACKAGE

- ❑ \$4m to improve facilities and animal welfare overseas
- ❑ \$2.2m to start up new regulatory system
- ❑ \$500,000 in AQIS subsidies
- ❑ \$3.3m for veterinary counsellor in Middle East
- ❑ \$1m for research and development

that Portland and Adelaide should be closed in winter and another was that third party vets should be contracted through AQIS.

Neither of these recommendations were adopted but all veterinarians working in the trade would report to AQIS and be sanctioned for false reporting.

The third recommendation opposed by exporters, but

adopted by government, was that veterinarians be placed on all ships to the Middle East.

Mr Meerwald said having vets on all ships to the Middle East was a waste of resources and a cosmetic gesture to appease critics of the trade.

Stockmen were seen as more practical and more useful than vets.

Veterinarians have been placed on all livestock ships to the Middle East since December 5.

Mr Meerwald said the government's decision to make a voluntary levy for research and development compulsory was a good move as companies not paying the levy had a commercial advantage.

Animal activists have vowed to continue their campaign against the live export trade, despite the new proposal.

# SLAUGHTERED

\$100m cattle ban threatens to ruin WA families

WEST AUSTRALIA 7/6/11



Livelihood at risk: Matt James, of Woolbar Station in the Goldfields, with his wife Katrina and daughters Charlotte and Ziva, are worried about the impact of the ban.

Picture: Kyra Lewis

JAYNE RICKARD AND SHANE WRIGHT

WA farmers are warning that the \$100 million live cattle export trade to Indonesia will be devastated unless the Federal Government lifts its suspension on exports as soon as possible.

Farmers across regional WA were stunned yesterday and still piecing together what the ban meant for their livelihoods in an industry that employs 9000 people across Australia.

The Federal Government responded quickly to a public outcry after damning footage showing brutal treatment of Australian cattle in Indonesian slaughterhouses was made

public last week. Federal Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig said the ban on sending live cattle to Indonesia could last up to six months or until systems were put in place to ensure Australian cattle were treated properly.

"I didn't want to put a timeframe on it but the current suspension is up to six months," he said.

The State Government and the cattle industry are furious that Senator Ludwig gave them no warning of the ban.

Thousands of WA cattle are now stranded in ships, holding pens and pastoral stations at what is the peak time for livestock to be loaded on to boats for Indonesia.

Another 150,000 cattle from Australia are already in Indonesian feedlots ready to be slaughtered.

Senator Ludwig said there would be an independent review of the entire sector but did not reveal its terms of reference.

It is understood stakeholders were told yesterday that the scope of the review would include investigating cattle and sheep live exports to all international markets.

It is unclear what will happen to the thousands of livestock waiting to be exported.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard moved to reassure the industry last night that the ban was only temporary. It came as Indonesia

threatened to take Australia to the World Trade Organisation.

Senator Ludwig would not be drawn on whether farmers and affected communities would be given compensation.

The Australian Beef Association said the Government should make available money from the \$40 million Industry Reserve Fund to compensate cattle producers "who face bankruptcy".

Industry leaders and cattle farmers claimed a six-month ban would cripple northern Australia, leaving many out of pocket and questioning their future on the land.

## INSIDE

Animal activists push for full ban on live exports

P4

Redman says WA Government was snubbed

P5

How the ban has threatened livelihoods

P6-7



# Govt ignores “impeccable” record

FW 30.5.24

## COMMENT

By ALLAN PIGGOTT

Illoura White Suffolk sheep stud  
Tailem Bend, South Australia

I AM not normally one to criticise our politicians in public, it is a tough job, and we need to work with our leaders to ensure they have the correct information to make informed decisions.

However, recent comments from the Federal Minister of Agriculture Murray Watt have compelled me to put pen to paper.

I was president of Sheep Producers Australia in 2018 and understand how the Australian Labor Party find themselves in the position they are in.

Unfortunately for Federal Agriculture Minister Watt, most people in Australia have little understanding about the sheep live export trade, their only knowledge comes from the images they saw on 60 Minutes in 2018.

We all agree that the conditions on the Awassi Express were horrific, inexcusable and should not have happened, and that 30 seconds of footage continues to haunt Australian sheep producers and the Australian public.

However the recent decision by Mr Watt to ban sheep live export has not been based on current science and current evidence, it is based on an

out-of-date policy and political expediency.

This should be of concern to all Australians, not just agriculture.

Mr Watt knows that in 2018 there were three independent inquiries with dozens of recommendations which have all been adopted by the industry, including no trade during the hot summer months, reducing the stocking densities in pens, and increasing minimum airflow throughout the ships.

Since these recommendations have been adopted, the sheep live export industry has had an impeccable record.

Mr Watt also knows that processing all sheep in Australia is not feasible.

Processing plants require long-term continual supply of sheep to manage their labour needs and marketing options.

They are not agile enough to quickly increase capacity when there is a sudden increase in supply due to seasonal or market uncertainty.

The industry (particularly in WA) needs options to get sheep off-farm quickly and live export has been a successful risk management option.

Shooting and burying unsaleable sheep to ensure the welfare of core breeding stock is not a suitable option.

Phillip Glyde (chairman of the Independent Panel charged with formulating a strategy to assist the phase out of live exports) conceded in a

Landline interview that the WA sheep industry was unique and poorly understood by people in the Eastern States.

WA has a very seasonal supply of sheep and needs a pressure release valve to quickly move sheep when necessary.

The minister also knows that this live export ban does not just affect WA, it is a national issue affecting thousands of jobs.

The consequence of not having an adequate pressure release valve was apparent last year when concerns about political interference and seasonal conditions led to a lack of confidence by sheep producers across Australia, and a consequent oversupply in the national market.

Many sheep had nowhere to go.

The anti-agriculture groups are already gloating over their “success” and are asking the question “what next?”

Mr Watt, I ask you – what will be next?

We need political decisions that are based on current advice and current evidence, not ideology and appealing poorly-informed voters.

□ Allan Piggott, principal of Illoura White Suffolk, sheep stud, Tailem Bend, South Australia, is a former Sheep Producers Australia president who condemns the Federal government's live sheep exports by sea ban.



## Report reveals progress of export industry

By AIDAN SMITH

THE live export industry continued to improve its performance throughout 2017 with a new record low mortality level for cattle and a 11 per cent fall in sheep mortalities.

The figures were released in the comprehensive National Livestock Export Industry Sheep, Cattle and Goat Transport Performance Report 2017, which was prepared by The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and published by Meat and Livestock Australia in October 2018.

The summary report provides the only comprehensive breakdown by species, time of year, ships, load ports and major destinations over the calendar year, along with summary analyses of trends over time.

The report revealed that the overall mortality rate for cattle during sea transport to all destinations during 2017 was 0.10pc (867 mortalities in 857,765 cattle exported), which was a 24pc fall compared to the mortality rate of 0.13pc observed in 2016, and "represents a new record low," according to report author Greg J Norman of DPIRD.

The report also highlights that "the overall mortality rate for sheep during sea transport to all destinations during 2017 was 0.71pc (13,183 mortalities in 1.85 million sheep exported)" - which was "an 11pc fall compared to the mortality rate of 0.80pc observed in 2016".

While there was an argument that mortality rate levels did not adequately represent the animal welfare issues experienced on board the vessels in transit and when offloading, the figures showed that if it wasn't for the "isolated incident" (of the *Awassi Express*, as former Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce pointed out) which cast

the spotlight on the industry, the industry would be improving itself.

The conclusion is that if the numbers of mortalities were dropping then something must have changed in the practice of exporters and with on-board stockmen in order to achieve that improvement, because the vessels being used were still the same - although improvements have also been made.

With greater standards for exporters and vessel requirements for the future it is likely the situation will improve further.

This flies in the face of all the activist and political rhetoric surrounding the live export industry in the past eight months.

With the recent three-month moratorium put in place by Australian Live Exporters' Council during the northern summer months the industry would have removed a high risk of heat stress related mortality events.

During its conclusion the report said the Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) model was said to have had some impact since its implementation, in "a meaningful reduction in livestock mortality rates during export by sea".

"The introduction of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASBEL), improvements in vessels and changes to the types of livestock exported are all likely to have played a part," the report said.

"Livestock mortality rates for cattle and sheep have consistently remained below 1pc and 2pc, respectively, for over 10 years.

"Industry research has also identified that heat stress is not the primary cause of mortality in livestock exported to the Middle East.

"However, heat stress remains an animal welfare risk and HSRA continues to be a tool in its management."

The report warned that as



□ A report into the live export industry highlighted reductions in mortality rates for both sheep and cattle last year.

the Islamic calendar tracked forward from September by approximately 11 days each year, into the June-September months, along with the requirement for suitable numbers and classes of sheep, there was the possibility that "overall mortalities will rise significantly" if that trade had continued to meet the Islamic festival period.

While the report said that "the trend for numbers of sheep exported and annual mortality continues downward" with 1.78 million sheep exported in 2016, as "the lowest number exported since records began in 1985" the figures were up last year by 2.7pc to 1,887,432 head in 2017.

WA saw 1.59 million sheep exported out of Fremantle last year with a 64.4pc rise in adult ewes put on boats.

All weaner and ram types saw a reduction in numbers. The main importing countries of sheep were Qatar (32pc of all exports), followed by Kuwait (32pc) and Turkey (11pc) which re-entered the market after a four-year hiatus, taking 198,303 head.

During 2017 air transport

accounted for 2.23pc of live sheep exports.

"The 42,144 sheep exported by air in 2017 represents a fall of 33pc compared to 2016, but remains the third highest figure recorded over the 2008 to 2016 period," the report said.

"Air transport of live sheep comprises a mix of breeding and slaughter types.

"In 2017, 82pc of air transported sheep were for slaughter."

Perth saw the largest number of air freighted sheep exports at 47.5pc, while Adelaide saw 42.5pc and Sydney and Melbourne airports accounted for the remainder.

The main importing countries for Australian sheep exported by air were Malaysia (82.1pc), Singapore (9.3pc) and China (6.9pc).

There was also a 52.8pc rise in the number of cattle exported by air in 2017, compared to 2016 figures.

During 2017 air transport accounted for 1.07pc of live cattle exports at 9261 head and was almost exclusively confined to breeding types.



# Live exporters cleaned up act

JENNE BRAMMER

Vegetarian vigilantes staged major protests across Australia against livestock farming yesterday, to mark the first anniversary of the anti-farming film *Domestic*.

The co-ordinated action — billed by activists as the biggest animal rights protest in the world — included blocking traffic and storming showrooms.

Meanwhile, another first year anniversary on the *Ararat* wildlife front slipped by with few fanfares — that of the release of 40 *Minotaur* kangaroos and other sheep aboard the *Ararat Express* vessel, en route to the Middle East in the height of the northern hemisphere summer.

Twelve months after that horrific footage shocked the world and put the industry under intense scrutiny, there is no doubt animal welfare standards have improved drastically.

Government, farmers and live exporters have taken major steps to implement sweeping change, which have transformed the industry for the better.

In the past 12 months there has been the McCarthy review, *Minotaur* review, Heat Stress Risk Assessment Review and Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock Review, and the industry has adopted new rules and regulations.

These include a three-month ban on shipments during the northern hemisphere summer from June to August, allowing 17.2 per cent more space for sheep during November to April (the northern hemisphere winter), carrying an independent observer on every voyage, and independent auditing of ventilation systems.

There are early signs to show this is working.

The average mortality rate so far this year is a low 0.4 per cent, though there are still voyages on the water.

Last year, the average mortality was 0.6 per cent, but that included voyages pre and post the new regulations.



Sheep on an *Emmanuel* ship in Fremantle port. Picture: Sharon Smith.

JESSE BART 7-4-17

There is talk of putting Fitbit-like collar devices on individual sheep.

According to figures provided by Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

All other years were higher: 2017 was 0.71 per cent, 2016 was 0.66 per cent, 2015 was 0.42 per cent. The highest in recent history is 2013 when the average mortality rate was 0.68 per cent.

The improvements to conditions continue to be made. Recently there has been the introduction of more space requirements per animal during May — up to 38 per cent more room for some types of sheep — when the weather is starting to heat up in the northern hemisphere.

There are also moves to put multiple automated environmental data collection devices on ships, enabling live tracking of temperature, rather than the current less accurate information which is updated several hours apart.

Further rules, this time driven by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, will ban the use of tender vessels from January 2018 under its Marine Order 41.

That will affect three ships coming into WA, meaning those exporters will have to find alternatives or upgrade the ships by reworking the second tier.

And it has not just been about the big ship approach from the Government.

One proactive initiative is the \$1.2 million grant from Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud to test dehumidifiers aboard live export vessels.

In a project to be managed by LiveCorp, a research organisation funded through statutory bodies contributed by exporters, dehumidifiers will be tested on empty boats in May or June this year before

potentially being tested on boats with a "small number of sheep".

The lobby group WA Farmers is also hopeful about the project, expecting it will provide beneficial outcomes to the live export industry, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the trade.

Farmers and exporters themselves have also taken action beyond what regulators have told them to do.

For example, exporters last year initiated the three-month summer monitoring, stopping exports of sheep to the Middle East during the northern hemisphere summer.

Although that has since been ordered by the Federal Government, exporters took action ahead of this happening.

There is talk of putting Fitbit-like collar devices on individual sheep to monitor temperature and health, and a pilot project could get under way in coming months, an initiative driven by farmer Belinda Ley, who was recently named WA Rural Woman of the Year.

Avoid much public scrutiny after the *Ararat* footage, the traditionally secretive and closed industry has become

remarkably transparent, under a project called the *Sheep Collective*, led by *Emmanuel* Exporter *Reddy* Latham.

The *Sheep Collective* represents a tradition of leading WA sheep producers, transport and feedlot operators, exporters and importers, aiming to win hearts and minds by providing transparent information about the trade, and highlighting the care provided at every step of the journey.

Its work has included tours aboard live export vessels for groups including politicians, farmers and support industries, and media.

The *Sheep Collective*, like many, desperately wants to save the industry, and there's good reason why.

The Australian live sheep industry alone is worth about \$250 million each year, of which 86 per cent comes from WA.

Sheep form part of the broader \$2 billion livestock export trade, including \$1.25 billion from beef cattle exports and about \$170 million from dairy cattle exports.

For WA's northern pastoralists, live export of beef cattle is a major source of income.

Economic modelling conducted by ABARES and the Centre for International Economic Research found that Australian livestock exports generate about 31,000 jobs across the country.

These include plenty of support roles such as livestock trucking and feed pellet manufacturing, which provide important jobs for people living in rural WA.

Regardless of allegations whistleblowers were paid for *Ararat Express* footage, those confronting images marked an important turning point for the industry.

The exposure led to a major and much needed clean up, but that is well and truly happening and for the better.

The industry knows it's on course, but is now doing all the right things.

It deserves the chance to prove it can export sheep and other livestock humanely under these new world-class standards in Australia and maintain this important and much needed industry.

# Exporters stand behind need for ESCAS

■ Rueben Hale

CM 17/12/2015

Australia's live animal export industry has warned that the country's stringent live animal export standards must play a part in the future of the trade.

Australian Livestock Exporters' Council chief executive Alison Penfold said the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System used in overseas markets must be, and would be, based on whole-of-chain welfare assurance.

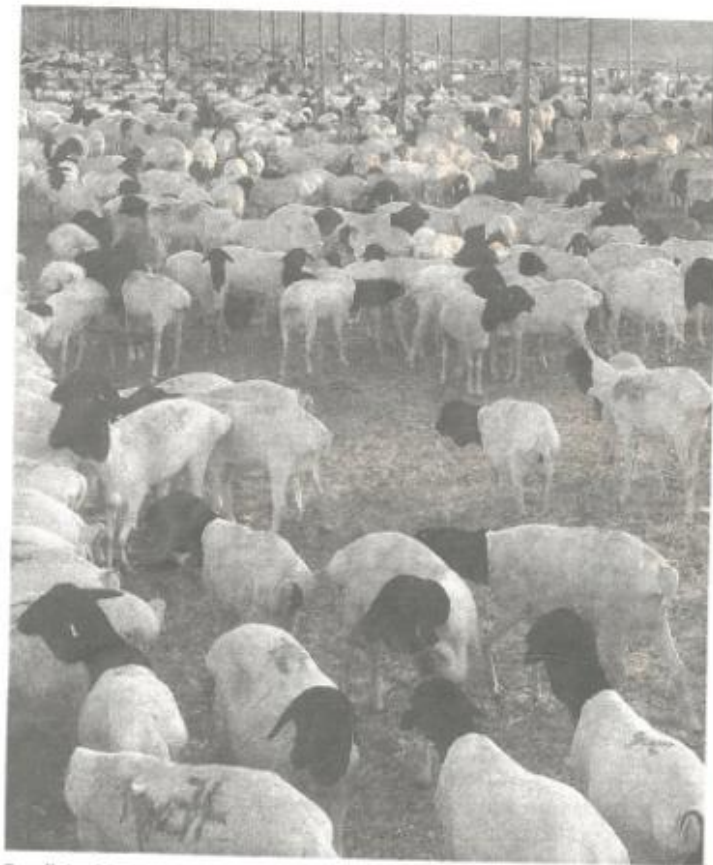
Last week former WA Livestock Exporters' Association chairman and Saudi Arabian livestock company Suleiman Al Jabri Trading export manager John Edwards told *Countryman* Australia's onerous ESCAS scheme had cost the country's livestock industry millions in lost sales throughout the Middle East.

Mr Edwards' company, which imports two million sheep, goats, cattle and camels every year, predominantly from markets other than Australia, said the Government's inaction in meaningfully engaging with Saudi Arabia and other Middle East markets was responsible for the lowest numbers of sheep exported to the region in 20 years.

He said exports had declined by more than 3.3 million head since 2000.

Mr Edwards said until the Federal Government was prepared to have a constructive dialogue with the Middle East, importers and their governments, the Australian livestock industry would continue to miss out on the lucrative trade the region offered.

Last year Saudi Arabia, which at its peak represented 32 per cent of all livestock exported to the Middle



Saudi Arabia imported eight million head of sheep, cattle and goats last year from countries other than Australia. Picture: Rueben Hale

East from Australia, imported nearly eight million sheep, goats, cattle and camels into the country.

But a Federal Government spokesman for Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce said Australia exported more than 2.1 million sheep to the Middle East last financial year and the region remained a top export destination for Australian live sheep.

He said the Government would not consider any reduction in animal welfare standards for Australian livestock exported overseas, including Saudi Arabia.

Ms Penfold said the association's members had adopted and endorsed the implementation of ESCAS.

"Our members have spent millions of dollars investing in supply

chains to ensure that practices and systems support compliance," she said.

"ESCAS remains a bespoke first-of-its-kind system and in some markets promotes and supports a meat distribution model over the centuries-old livestock trading model. This makes philosophical adoption far more of a challenge in markets where cultural business practices



ALEC chief executive Alison Penfold. Picture: Bob Garnant

operate under a trading mentality. Change is occurring, but bedding down cultural acceptance will take time."

Ms Penfold said Saudi Arabia had presented a major challenge to ESCAS implementation.

"While the ESCAS system in simple terms seeks to assure and demonstrate OIE compliance, there remain some concerns about its implementation and the sovereign over-reach components," she said.

"Discussions at a government and business level are ongoing and ALEC remains focused on a reopening of the market as soon as is practicable in line with welfare assurance requirements.

"The minister remains committed to a reopening of the trade and is looking to industry to provide solutions, a challenge we are up for."

Ms Penfold said the development of a Livestock Global Assurance program could address some Middle Eastern country's concerns about Australian sovereign over-reach and address a number of criticisms of the ESCAS.

"This will improve industry ability to demonstrate compliance with ESCAS," she said.

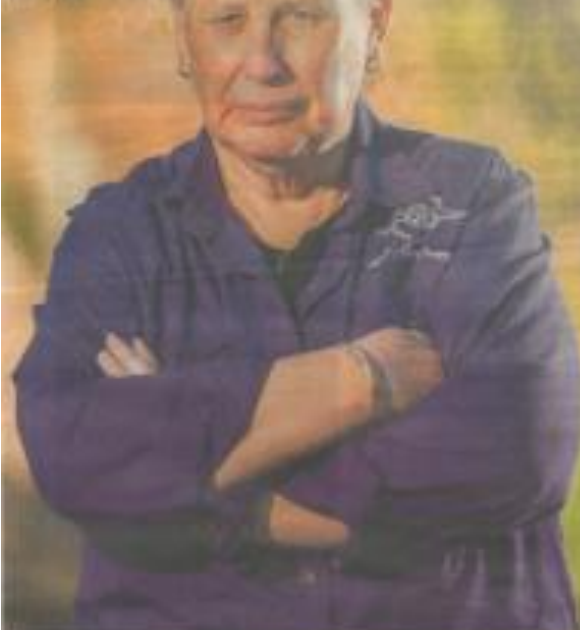
"This program would, if implemented, be arm's length from industry and independent of government."

Ms Penfold said ALEC continued to engage with the Federal Government to seek out improvements to ESCAS and remove red tape.

"We will achieve this without undermining the core principles of the system — control, traceability, animal welfare and third-party auditing," she said. "Many of the reforms that industry has sought have been implemented."



Pastorist  
Colleen Hall  
Picture  
Toby Hall



Animal Justice Party has pastoralists fearing future

# Activists brag they'll win cattle battle

OLIVIA FORD

The Animal Justice Party has congratulated itself on ending live sheep exports and is now turning its sights on the cattle industry.

With farmers reeling from the Federal Government's announcement of a timeline to end live sheep exports, the fringe party wasted no time creating the cattle trade war next on the chopping block.

It has left cattle farmers fearing for their future, with one pastoralist saying she feared the worst.

The Animal Justice Party said it was "proud" to "deliver the knockout blow".

WA is responsible for about 75 per cent of all exported live sheep but is the only State that still sends them by sea. The Federal Government will not be ending the exports by air.

"While we wish the phase-out will happen more quickly, our contributions to securing financial support and certainty around transition dates

## ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY EMAIL

Everyone should be proud of their work leading to today's remarkable win for the AJP. However, we know the job is not yet complete. I will be laser-focused on:

- Ensuring Labor stabilizes the end of the trade in law before the election;
- Making the end of live cattle export the test AJP policy and political win; and
- The Coalition parties committing to end live export as a requirement for discussions.

mean there is no nothing back," the AJP statement said. "Everyone should be proud of their work... we know the job is not yet complete."

The AJP listed three major priorities the group was now "laser-focused" on, including ensuring that Labor enshrines the live sheep export end date before the Federal election and making sure Coalition parties also commit to the end of live

exports. It said it would now gear its efforts towards ending live cattle exports.

Basilian Hall, a retired Murdoch pastoralist, said the consensus had left her "quiet". Mrs Hall had been from Bells Creek, a cattle station north of Newsham, where she lived with her husband, Clyde.

Her two sons, third generation pastoralists, are managing the station, Mrs Hall said.

The idea of a live cattle export phase-out made her feel "very nervous" for the future of the property and her sons.

"Without the live cattle trade, I can not see us going the same way as a lot of sheep producers. There just won't be enough market or enough abattoirs to process the cattle that will be coming in," she said, adding she feared her family would not be able to stay farming because it would be financially unstable.

She also questioned the motivations behind ending live exports and said ending the trade would not do anything to help animal welfare.

"Anybody in the industry or with any knowledge of the industry knows the government doesn't supply aren't going to stop getting live sheep," Mrs Hall said. "They are just going to get them somewhere else that will have abysmal animal welfare standards compared to ours, because we have the highest welfare standards, as far as live export shipping

goes, in the world. It doesn't come down to animal welfare. It doesn't come down to human welfare. It doesn't come down to the safety of our food for our country or other countries."

"It all comes down to votes," Shadow agriculture minister Colin de Graaf said. The AJP's campaign proved the live export phase-out campaign had more to do with politics than animal welfare.

"If... (the AJP) have some how done backroom deals with the Labor Party, that just proves the shutdown of live sheep exports is purely political and has absolutely nothing to do with animal welfare... This attack on agriculture is not going to stop," he said.

Federal Agriculture Minister Murray Watt on Monday moved to reassure the cattle industry it would not be next.

"We've been very clear that we will not be ending the live cattle trade," he said. "It's a really critical pillar of the economic base of northern Australia, including in WA."

# Our biggest buyer to look elsewhere

Importer talks boxed beef, animal welfare and food security

By SHAN GOODWIN

THE largest importer of Australian live sheep has revealed his company is looking to find other secure sources of livestock as a result of Australia's talk of halting the trade.

Osama Boodai, chief executive officer of Al Mawashi in Kuwait, said the livestock trade was a matter of national food security in his country.

He has spoken candidly about the issues being hotly debated in Australia, providing extensive explanation around why the trade can not simply be replaced with boxed meat and Muslim cultural beliefs on animal slaughter.

In what will likely contradict the views of many Australians who believe their animal welfare beliefs superior, Mr Boodai said many customers in his country did not believe it was good welfare to use a stunning device on an animal and then slaughter it.

Mr Boodai is emphatic those on the Middle Eastern side of the trade were also outraged at the footage on board sheep ships, saying "those conditions were not acceptable to any of us".

However, to ignore other evidence of what a livestock journey normally looks like means "people are judging us without having all the facts in front of them," he said.

Mr Boodai has just visited Australia to talk to politicians and farmers about the reality of conditions on livestock vessels.

Emanuel Exports has been the sole supplier of live sheep to Al Mawashi since its first shipment in 1963.

Al Mawashi, which incorporates the Kuwait Livestock Transport and Trading, is a majority government-owned business focused on food security rather than maximising profits, he explained.



Al Mawashi chief executive officer Osama Boodai at the company's Kuwait feedlot inspecting Australian sheep, exported on the Al Messilah.

It was subsidised by the Kuwait government until it became self-sustaining and has been importing Australian sheep for four decades.

"Kuwait is not an agricultural region but given we sense the threat to livestock imports, we have started building our own flock and are hoping to increase its capacity," Mr Boodai said.

"However, there are real limitations to our production potential and ability to ever be self-sufficient.

"That's why for countries in the Gulf, the livestock trade is a matter of national food security."

Mr Boodai spoke about his

company's investments in the supply chain and how seriously it takes animal welfare.

Those investments include the world's biggest covered feedlot, a new \$70 million closed-loop abattoir in Kuwait and a new \$110m livestock vessel due to be launched in 2019.

"Our company's farms, feedlots, vessels, livestock trucks, fodder infrastructure and abattoirs are all geared for imported live animals," he said.

"We always need to manage the risks associated with unpredictable weather, especially in the Arabian Gulf, but our record shows we have the planning in place to

“

*A clear example of this is what we have seen in Saudi Arabia, which ceased importing Australian sheep in 2012.*

OSAMA BOODAI

”

maintain animal welfare all year.

"Al Mawashi has upgraded its ventilation systems on its

Continued on page 6

P.T.O.





Should live exports  
be banned?

HAVE YOUR SAY NOW  
IN THE FORM BELOW



**WALEA**