

# LEARN THE FACTS

# AUSTRALIA'S CRUEL LIVE ANIMAL EXPORT TRADE

## CRUELTY

Australia generally enjoys a good reputation for animal welfare. However we also have the shameful title of being the world's largest exporter of animals for slaughter.

Every year, millions of Australian animals are sent overseas. Most cattle are sent to Indonesia, while sheep destined for slaughter are predominantly bound for the Middle East.

Every year around 4 million Australian sheep are exported overseas alive. Of these, approximately 40,000 die en route with roughly half dying from starvation.

An animal's journey to slaughter starts on an Australian farm. They will be taken by road to an Australian port – a trip of often up to 1200 kilometres. That's almost equal to the driving distance between Sydney and Adelaide.

The journey to the Middle East is long and arduous and can last up to 35 days. Animals are subjected to immense heat stress and overcrowding - three sheep per one square metre for the entire journey is common practice.

Many suffer and perish from salmonellosis and pink eye, increased excretion and physical trauma. Animals board export vessels in a highly stressed state, often having already travelled long distances to reach the port.

Once on board, a sheep can be one of up to 100,000 animals confined on a single ship. Australian standards exist, but still allow for sheep to be kept in overcrowded, poorly lit, poorly ventilated, filthy conditions for extended periods of time.

Recent WSPA investigations have shown many survivors are still handled and slaughtered horrifically on arrival. Australia has no control over animals once they land on foreign soil – the only control we have is whether or not we send them.



Investigators have evidence which shows sheep dying in feedlots, and sheep enduring appalling handling and slaughter techniques. For example, many sheep are trussed (their legs and feet tied together) and transported in car boots or on roof racks in countries where temperatures can reach in excess of 50 degrees celsius in summer.

It is common for these terrified animals to be slaughtered while they are fully conscious in plain sight of other confused and frightened animals. In Indonesia, 80 per cent of cattle have their throats slit while fully conscious.

Animals slaughtered in accordance with Halal principles in Australia are protected by Australian legislation and are ensured a rapid death without prolonged suffering.

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This suffering is all the more unnecessary as Islamic leaders have approved the use of pre-stunning so the animal is rendered unconscious before slaughter.

Over 70 per cent of Australian abattoirs are Halal accredited and comply with Sharia Law standards relating to pre-stunned Halal slaughter. Sadly the majority of Middle Eastern countries do not legislate for pre-stunning of animals.

The Australian Government is a member of the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health). For the OIE to be effective it relies on member countries to be compliant with OIE guidelines as the basis for bilateral trade agreements. As most Middle Eastern countries are not complying with these guidelines, Australia is effectively undermining the ability of the OIE to improve long term animal welfare standards in those countries.

## JOBS

In the last 35 years, more than 150 meat processing facilities have closed in Australia, with an estimated loss of 40,000 jobs.

The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) claim that over 1,000 meat workers lost their jobs and hundreds had their shifts cut back, some by up to 70 per cent, predominately due to livestock shortages – not due to a lack of demand – in 2010 alone<sup>1</sup>.

The AMIEU is calling for a phase out of live export by 2016 to protect rural and regional processing jobs.

In Western Australia, it is estimated that the total number of jobs in the industry would double from approximately 2,000 to 4,000 should the live sheep trade be phased-out with industry turnover potentially rising from approximately \$700 million per annum today to \$2 billion per annum<sup>2</sup>.

Since 2000 127 meat-processing plants have been lost<sup>3</sup>.

In instances where live export has been temporarily banned, a dramatic increase in meat imports to that particular country has taken place<sup>4</sup>. It's clear that Middle Eastern customers accept chilled meat products. Acceptance of Australian chilled meat products clearly negates the need to live export.

1 90 lost in Tasmania at the JBS Swift Plant – Oct, 2010: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/10/06/3031364.htm>

300 lost in Young at the Burrangong Meat Processors – Feb, 2010: <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2010/s2813935.htm>

230 lost in Killarney & Pittsworth - Leitch Pastoral Group – Feb, 2010: <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/qld/content/2010/02/s2813496.htm>

430 lost in Dinmore and Townsville at the JBS Swift plants: [http://www.meatradenewsdaily.co.uk/news/180810/australia\\_\\_\\_meat\\_packing\\_jobs\\_lost\\_.aspx](http://www.meatradenewsdaily.co.uk/news/180810/australia___meat_packing_jobs_lost_.aspx)

Total numbers lost in 2010 = 1050

2 Barber, Mark, (2009), Australian live sheep exports, ACIL Tasman Report "Executive Summary." Pp 73

3 IBIS World Industry Report C211 Meat Processing in Australia, "Beefing up: Increasing beef production will pull the industry out of the mire", (June 2010), Pp 45.

4 Barber, Mark, (2009), Australian live sheep exports, ACIL Tasman Report, "Economic analysis of Australia's live sheep export trade," Pp 65

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## ECONOMICS

The ACIL Tasman report of 2009 states that for "every \$100 of additional output from exporting sheep live produces additional Gross State Product (GSP) of \$82.50; for every \$100 of additional output in the meat processing sector GSP rises by \$101.50". In summary, a sheep processed in Australia is worth 20 per cent more to our economy than one processed overseas<sup>1</sup>.



Based on last year's live export figures (live sheep trade worth 323 million), that means thanks to the live export trade we missed out on around 65 million dollars of additional revenue for our economy.

Australia already exports chilled and/or frozen meat to every country it exports live animals to and has Halal-certified export abattoirs supplying high quality Halal meat to the Middle East. In 2010 sheep meat exports to the Middle East were worth \$110 million more than live sheep exports, with the Middle East now being Australia's largest market for sheep meat products.

An increase in substitution, gradually replacing live exports with chilled meat products, would help prevent importing countries seeking live imports from elsewhere and ensure that value adding opportunities can be captured by the Australian economy.

In 2000, the Heilbron report concluded that the 'live export trade could be costing Australia around \$1.5 billion in lost GDP, around \$270 million in household income, and around 10,500 lost jobs<sup>2</sup>.

## PUBLIC OPINION

Over 85,000 Australians have joined the Humane Chain to call for an end to live export. Links include Federal and State MPs from all sides of politics, plus celebrities, lawyers, veterinarians and every day Australians.

In 2010 a Galaxy opinion poll revealed that an overwhelming 79 per cent of Australians believe live sheep exports are cruel, while 86 per cent agree that the Government should phase out live sheep exports if there's an alternative that saves Australian jobs<sup>3</sup>.

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1 Barber, Mark, (2009), Australian live sheep exports, ACIL Tasman Report "Executive Summary." Pp 08  
2 Dr S.G Heilbron, Impact of the Live Export Sector on the Australia Meat Processing Industry, 2010  
3 Galaxy Opinion Poll, "Main Findings", 2010, Pp 5