



AUSTRALIA'S CONTRADICTION – FARMED ANIMAL WELFARE

A Report by Dawn Lowe and Dr. Peter Kerkenezov

EDITOR: Dawn Lowe, **CONTRIBUTOR:** Dr. Peter Kerkenezov

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTENT IS WITH THE AUTHORS

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ANIMALS' ANGELS HEAD OFFICE: Rossertstraße 8 | D - 60323 Frankfurt a. M. | Germany

www.animals-angels.org | info@animals-angels.de

Tel + 49 (0) 69 707 981 70 | Fax + 49 (0) 69 707 981 729

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Animals' Angels has been monitoring animal transports for many years. Animals' Angels has been there with the animals on the road. This report is a co-operative effort of field inspectors, office team and donors. Animals' Angels' work is financed by private donations only.

N.B. While working on this report Animals' Angels was concerned by the following issue: Do we have the right to use pictures of animals in distress without their consent? Or are we violating their dignity? We have come to the conclusion that as an exception it is justifiable in this case.

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I. Introduction

Many people, organisations, farming bodies, scientific researchers, and even governments from around the world should be proud of their efforts in the constant struggle to improve animal welfare standards on both a local and a global front. The question we need to ask ourselves before further refining already extensive legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines, before contributing an even greater amount of time, effort, expertise and expense, and before congratulating ourselves on our individual or combined efforts is this; can we be equally proud of the progress reflected by our efforts?

Successive Australian governments have claimed to be world leaders in animal welfare. Whilst it could be argued that our “outcome based” as opposed to ‘prescriptive’ legislation as used in place in the EU, does have the capacity to provide adequate redress to animal welfare issues, this can only occur IF the Animal Welfare Legislation, Codes of Practice and Regulations are routinely and consistently enforced. Outcome based legislation is one whereby an act of obvious cruelty must occur before the breach can be reported and by then, the animal has already suffered and possibly died. Without active enforcement there is not, and can never be, any PREVENTION of cruelty and suffering. Without enforcement, our efforts remain a theory because our efforts have failed in practice.

Animals’ Angels is the only group in Australia which actively and routinely monitor the farmed animal industry for compliance with animal welfare legislation. Although our resources are stretched to the limit, with consistent and regular inspection, we assess the operation of farmed animal markets (saleyards), short and long distance transport and the export of live animals. These inspections are meticulously documented and substantiated with video and photos. We have access to independent veterinarians and animal welfare legal advice which allows us to make a professional judgment on whether or not these operations comply with animal welfare laws.

What we can’t do is enforcement.

Over the last decade we have clearly established that many aspects of procedures and practice in the farmed animal industry fall short of the legal requirements for maintenance of animal welfare. Our analysis has also exposed the result of our efforts when not matched by the enforcement of the legal framework which we all work to put in place. In order to find a 'solution' to animal welfare issues both Federal and State Governments with participation by industry create 'paper'; reviews of current codes or regulations, or the creation of new Codes called Standards and Guidelines which ultimately require the creation of even more paper work. We need to divert our attention to implementing our theories by enforcing them in practice.

Our reports to responsible agencies of breaches of animal welfare laws have repeatedly been met with ineffective responses and action is rarely taken against those in the farmed animal industry responsible for these breaches. We have observed that the inability by authorities to act on breaches of animal welfare law has created a culture within the farmed animal industry that has become firmly entrenched.

Animal welfare strategy has become legislation 'for the industry, by the industry, and in support of the industry'. Should this be a successful strategy, proven to be sound in its approach, workable in its application, productive in its results, opportunities may exist for refinement. However, should it be that our combined efforts do not achieve productive results, perhaps it is our approach and execution which could be improved upon. Much of that which goes into the development of codes and standards are, processes dominated by the farmed animal industry. Although some animal welfare groups are involved, they are very much in the minority, serving purely as token participants to enable governments to claim that animal welfare stakeholders have been consulted.

Another aspect of animal welfare regulation in Australia is that the overwhelming majority of scientific research, which is often relied on to justify what is in the legislation and codes, is paid for and supervised by industry. Perhaps one has to look sceptically at the independence and objectivity of scientists who are paid by industry to carry out studies. This is particularly so where the farmed animal industry sponsor has an effective veto on publication. This is not to suggest that this research is without merit, however, as with all research, it would benefit from the participation of scrutiny. With industry and industry-funded research, paperwork is generated and reviews of current codes or regulations are the result, which again, requires the generation of even more paper work. These lengthy paper trails ultimately pass for being action to improve animal welfare. In reality, the outcome is an endorsement of standards which are those acceptable to industry. Historically, this process has not resulted in substantial improvement to animal welfare, and in the long term, allows industry to be seen for all that it isn't, rather than for all that it is. Successful outcomes require sensible standards, and those standards need to be enforced.

What is entirely lacking in Australia is an independent body equivalent to the European Food Safety Authority Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. Whilst government has recently announced the implementation of such a body, which we recognize as a positive measure and as such congratulate government on its intent, details as to „how independent“ or „how effective“ in comparison are questions unanswerable at this time.

Also missing nationally, is the essential physical application of enforcement of the legal requirements. Whereas this may not align with certain constraints on the Federal Government, in that the Australian Constitution does not allow for the Federal Government to enforce animal welfare laws on a national basis - this is the responsibility of the individual States and Territories, it is nevertheless unrestricted in pursuing a National and unified agreement between the States and Territories.

Nationally the government department responsible for animal welfare issues is the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Similar departments are responsible for the creation of animal welfare law and enforcement in most of the Australian states. This raises questions such as conflict of interest.

**IF THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENTS ARE THERE
TO PROMOTE THE USE OF ANIMALS,
HOW CAN THEY EFFECTIVELY AND WITHOUT PREJUDICE,
BEST POLICE THE INDUSTRY?**

II. Farmed Animal Markets or Saleyards

The lack of control over animal welfare by government directly relates to the limited resources they dedicate to it in terms of enforceable legislation, manpower, and funding. The result of this continued oversight is that “essentially” the industry remains a self regulating one, effectively demeaning our combined efforts to improve the manner in which it operates in an attempt to overcome the constant issues it experiences. While Federal and State Governments view “industry” as an asset and “animal welfare” as both a risk and a cost factor to it, very little can realistically ever be achieved. A passive consent to the standards resulting from our combined efforts is meaningless to animal welfare unless coupled with meaningful enforcement. Then, and only then, can we assess the effectiveness of the standards we apply. Then, and only then, will we begin to see both positive and productive improvements to animal welfare. By ensuring little meaningful enforcement, industry has no need to show compliance to legal requirements therefore the journey for the animals through the farm to destination chain involves risk of mistreatment and injury because there are no mechanisms in place to prevent it. The vast majority of saleyards/markets do not have an established system and methodology to identify, assess and manage animal welfare. Veterinarians do not inspect animals for fit to load on behalf of the farmed animal industry. Fitness is assessed by Inspectors, agents, transporters, farmers and saleyard staff who whilst being arguably unqualified to do so also face financial pressure to minimise the number of animals declared unfit for travel. Animal welfare is not and can not continue to be viewed as an economic imposition. It is a reality which society demands is given an equal, if not greater, consideration as to any other part of the animal producer industry, and it would be to industry’s advantage to work toward our common animal welfare objectives.

Obvious examples of issues which require urgent attention include high density in sale/holding pens, rough loading/unloading of animals, dragging of animals, the hitting/throwing of calves, the use of unmuzzled dogs, failure to use ramps to unload sheep, the sale and transportation of unfit animals, delays in attending to animals presenting with serious conditions such as 5/5 lameness, arthritis, cancers, any open wounds, swollen testicles, mastitis, late pregnancy, and emaciation, the failure to treat conditions such as eye infections, bleeding horns, salmonellosis and the inhumane emergency slaughter of sheep each of which is “common place”. Australia is a hot country with vast distances over which animals are transported, and despite every past effort to create a sensible and workable system we are still constantly frustrated by how even the obvious, such as the adequate provision of water and shade at sale yards, is routinely ignored.



Abbey was severely traumatised due to likely soft tissue and bone fracture to the skull. Transported to the saleyard and forgotten about. **JUNE 2011**



Jess suffered prolapsed rectum and is unfit. Sold and transported. **SEPTEMBER 2010**



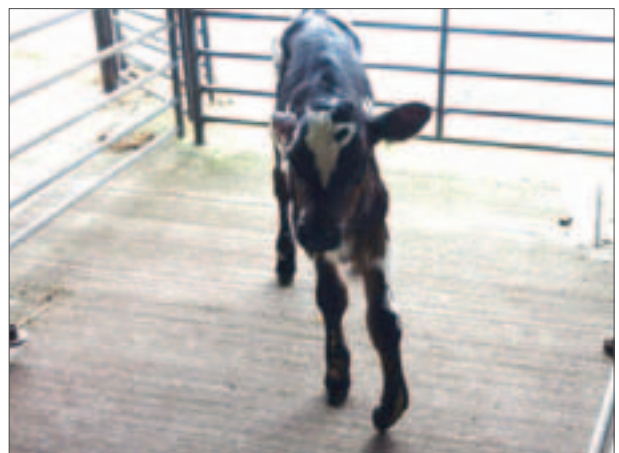
Tyson suffered a broken hoof and is unfit. Sold and transported. **JUNE 2011**



Chaz was unable to use her front leg and was unfit. Sold and transported. **DECEMBER 2010**



Bruce suffered a prolapsed eyeball. The damage to the optic nerve is irreversible and painful. He was unfit. Sold and transported. **MARCH 2011**



Cyril suffered left fore limb lameness and is unfit. Sold and transported. **MARCH 2011**



Casis suffered a broken and bleeding horn and was unfit. **MARCH 2011**



Boris suffered a broken and bleeding horn and was unfit. Sold and transported. **MARCH 2011**



Harry suffered a broken and bleeding horn and was unfit. Sold and transported. **AUGUST 2010**



Jay suffered cancer of the nose and was unfit. Sold and transported. **APRIL 2011**



Casey suffered acute mastitis and was unfit. **DECEMBER 2010**



Joan suffered acute mastitis and was unfit. **DECEMBER 2010**



Tim's testicles had ruptured. He was unfit.
AUGUST 2010



Cain was unable to bear weight and was unfit.
Sold and transported. **JUNE 2011**



Emaciated sheep for sale. **DECEMBER 2011**



Bobby had suffered flystrike. He is unfit.
Sold and transported. **MAY 2011**



Barry suffered Exophthalmos – abnormal protrusion of the eyeball from the orbit and was unfit.
Sold and transported.



Kel is weak, thin and exhausted. He was unfit.
FEBRUARY 2011



Ranji is exhausted and emaciated and therefore unfit. Sold and transported. **AUGUST 2010**



Ashi suffered cancer. She was unfit.



Unloading without use of ramp. Sheep falling onto his head and neck. **NOVEMBER 2011**



Unmuzzled dog chasing a sheep until it corners the animal. The dog bites the neck of the sheep. No action is taken to prevent the dog biting the sheep.



Sheep tightly packed into a holding pen, unable to access water. **NOVEMBER 2011**



So many animals in the pen they are unable to move. **DECEMBER 2011**



Even though the use of electrical shock prodders (goads) on sheep and goats violates the recommendations of the OIE to which Australia is a signatory, the use continues.



Dragging Bernie to the trailer by his two back legs. **DECEMBER 2010**



III. Long Distance Transports

In Australia, approximately 970 million animals are transported in excess of 142 million kilometres per year, mostly by road, in all climatic regions, and extremes of weather.

Australia's weather can range between snow, and sweltering heat; with highway temperatures reaching 50°C plus (147°F) in the summer months of December, January, February and March in some areas.

The majority of these animals (sheep cattle, goats, camels, and wild horses) are destined to be slaughtered for Australian and global markets, or exported live (apart from camels and wild horses). Their transport can involve journeys of up to thousands of kilometres without access to water, feed or rest before reaching their destination. In one routine interstate transport of sheep it was estimated that after water deprivation on the farm, whilst at the yard, and during the 2500kms in which we followed the truck, the animals were denied water for over 72 hrs.

Animal transport is governed by various state laws and voluntary industry Codes of Practice. These codes are the industry's own guidelines for complying with animal welfare legislation; compliance is in some instances a legal defence against charges of animal cruelty, but the reality is that there is no universal legal requirement for the industry to transport animals according to the codes".

Based on our experience, we have observed another problem arising from an insufficient number of properly trained animal welfare inspectors who can oversee and regulate animal transport. Our legal advice is that even if there were enough inspectors, there is no national power allowing random inspection of vehicles transporting animals. Again, our combined efforts to make improvements are essentially to no avail, and the time we invest on behalf of animal welfare is disrespected from the highest levels down.

The following photos reflect what is seen during animal transport in Australia. We find, amongst many other examples of cruel, unsafe, and or unlawful procedures, that it is routine and accepted practice to pen more than recommended numbers of animals on uncovered top decks of transport vehicles. One disastrous result is that animals, particularly sheep, often fall from the vehicles. As often as not, the sheep is then hit by a following vehicle. In this not uncommon event, there can be a fate for the animal that “is” worse than death. They may struggle for their life in unbearable pain, in unbearable heat or cold, and likely on or on the side of a burningly hot or chillingly cold black tar road, perhaps for minutes, perhaps for hours, and this after potentially being deprived of water for several days. This is the result of “human” hands. The reality is actually worse still however. Rather than attempt to picture this unimaginable scene, rather than consider what regulations could be put in place to prevent it, consider the fact that there are “already” laws in place, and that there are “already” guidelines in place, to prevent this exact example of unforgivable human cruelty...

Now, attempt to picture it.





We have found sheep carcasses indicating that injured or moribund sheep are routinely dumped in the bush at the border between Western Australia and South Australia. This is despite the fact that animal transport drivers who do discover sick or unfit animals during the journey, should kill the animals before dumping them. For example, we have found dead sheep with disturbed dirt immediately around them, suggesting they had been struggling to get to their feet. Faeces around the carcasses provided further evidence suggesting the animals had been dumped alive.



It goes without saying that this sort of behaviour is a serious breach of animal welfare law – in other words a criminal act. Many standards often amount to little more than a bare minimum in either common sense or human decency, why do we work toward improving them if they are to be ignored, not enforced, and or not re-enforced with meaningful penalties?

IV. Export of Live Animals for Slaughter Outside of Australia

Due to past intense scrutiny by the media which exposed the high numbers of deaths aboard live export ships and subsequent public outcry over cruelty within the live export trade, the Federal Government developed a set of regulations by which all exporters are expected to comply with if they wish to be granted a permit to export. These ‘Standards’ are only ‘regulations’ as they have not been ratified into a legislative ‘Act’ by the Federal Parliament. Therefore their enforcement is limited and being regulations there is no mechanism for implementing ‘punishment’ per se of exporters for non compliance. Further, WTO Regulations (GATT 1947) all but provide governments with justifiable excuses not to enforce agreements with “third countries” in that they encourage “members” to exercise the maximum amount of flexibility in their trading requirements. These same regulations also provide for action, and specifically in terms of welfare, which our governments do not seek to make known, as initiating any such action to improve animal welfare would be a cost not only to themselves, but to industry.

The Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry operate the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS). AQIS has the responsibility for ensuring the compliance to regulations governing the live export chain, (ASEL).

The ASEL comprises six sections each covering a particular aspect of live export: sourcing animals from farm, transportation, registered export feedlots, vessel preparation, on-board management and air transport. The ASEL can be legally enforced by AQIS and AQIS inspectors must be satisfied that the ASEL Standards and importing country requirements are met before issuing a health certificate and export permit. They are only concerned with **THE HEALTH STATUS OF THE ANIMALS FOR THE PURPOSES OF TRADE.**

Our on-the-ground observations show that animals are transported to the ships despite qualifying for rejection on any number of criteria in the government standards. For example, we have frequently documented animals which should not be loaded, presenting partial blindness, wounds, possible pregnancy, bleeding horns and eye infections. Although we bring this to the attention of the government authorities on a regular basis, with photographic and video evidence, the efforts of your contribution, Australia’s own regulations, Animals’ Angels attempts to have them enforced, and an apparent government resolve, all go completely ignored ...

“Nothing” happens.

Government may legitimately argue that they do not have the inspectors to follow through on these reports; there is no argument that AQIS is seriously understaffed in this area, and others. The primary consideration here is why that situation exists. It is one thing that a government department may not have adequate staff to achieve all of its goals, however, it is another when that same government department does not employ even the basic number of staff to carry out not only the daily duties of that department, but those which are government regulations. The animal welfare system in Australia is such that it relies on non-government organisation (NGO) scrutiny to measure performance and report breaches. However when breaches or non conformance is reported, the government pays little or no attention.

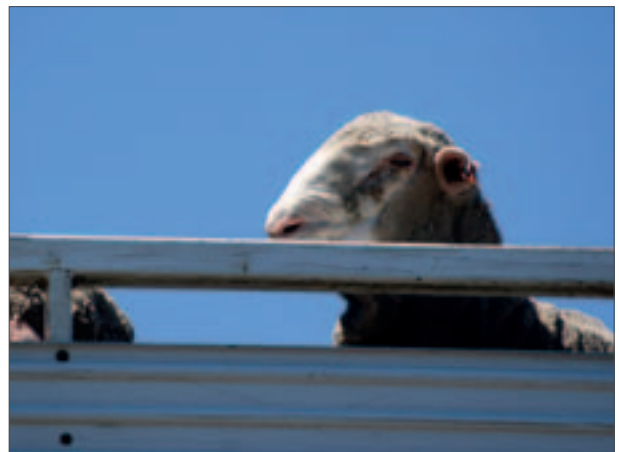
Perhaps this is policy, and if so, it would explain why government does not employ the required number of inspectors themselves...

**COULD IT BE THAT THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF
ACTING ON, OR ENFORCING, THEIR OWN REGULATIONS?**

Eye infections

Possible breaches of:

— Relevant ASEL standards:
S1.7, S2.11



Panting sheep. Likely cause- dehydration

Possible breaches of:

→ Relevant ASEL standards:

S1.7, S2.11

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF SHEEP IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

4.MINIMISING STRESS - 4.1: 4.1.3. DISTRESSED ANIMALS-9.1.5, TEMPERATURE-9.2



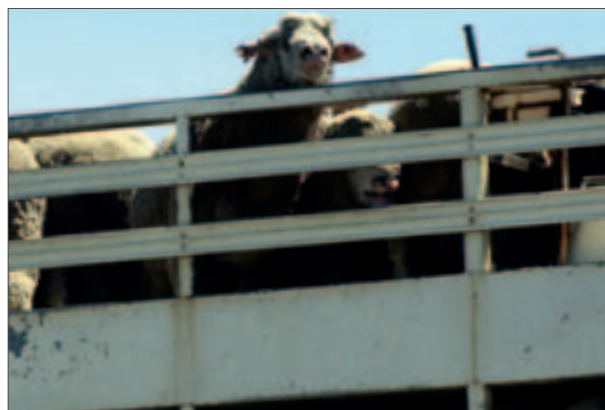
AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011



AL KUWAIT, DECEMBER 2010



OCEAN SHEARER, OCTOBER 2010



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011

Nasal discharge

→ Relevant ASEL standards:
S1.7, S2.11



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011

Insufficient space between decks for the livestock to stand in a natural position without having contact with overhead structures

→ Relevant standards:
S2.1, Appendix 2.3 Vehicle requirements (c)

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF SHEEP IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA:
SPACE BETWEEN DECKS- 7.1.7



AL KUWAIT, NOVEMBER 2010



AL KUWAIT, NOVEMBER 2010



OCEAN SHEARER, OCTOBER 2010



OCEAN SHEARER, OCTOBER 2010



AL SHUWAIKH, JANUARY 2011



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011

Possible downers

Animal Welfare Act 2002, (2) (b) (c) Part 3 s 19. (a) (h) (j)

→ Relevant standards:

S1.7: Systemic conditions; collapsed, weak, unwell, lethargic, dehydrated, ill-thrift

S2.13 Livestock must be loaded in a manner that prevents injury and minimises stress.

S2.16 Livestock must be checked to ensure that they are evenly distributed and remain fit to travel.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF SHEEP IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

8.2 THE DENSITY OF LOADING SHOULD BE DETERMINED BY THE NEED TO MINIMISE INJURY BUT ALLOW FALLEN ANIMALS TO RISE WITHOUT ASSISTANCE.

9.3 IN-TRANSIT INSPECTIONS 9.3.1 ALL CONSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE INSPECTED WITHIN 30-60 MINUTES OF COMMENCING A JOURNEY. ROAD CONSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE CHECKED AT LEAST EVERY THREE HOURS, OR WHENEVER THE DRIVER HAS A REST STOP.



AL KUWAIT, NOVEMBER 2010

Most drivers do not check **ALL** animals on each of the decks of their trucks on arrival at the port to ensure the wellbeing of the animals for which they are responsible. During any given loading those drivers who may check animals on the lower levels of their trucks rarely check animals on the decks above.

If there are injured or downer animals, there is no routine inspection undertaken to identify them for attention so they are left on a stationary truck often for many hours until the sheep are unloaded.



AL KUWAIT, NOVEMBER 2010



AL KUWAIT, DECEMBER 2010



AL KUWAIT, DECEMBER 2010



AL SHUWAIKH, JANUARY 2011



MAYSORA, FEBRUARY 2011



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2012



AL SHUWAIKH, FEBRUARY 2011

V. Conclusion

Do we need more regulations, more research, or more laws? Or would animal welfare standards significantly improve if we instead simplified the regulations, had half as many to consider, and dedicated more time, effort and funding into those regulations becoming better known, better understood, typically adhered to, properly enforced, “along with the application of meaningful penalties for any breach to them.”

The treatment of animals at many saleyards, throughout many transports and during export, is a continuing disgrace in Australia. The government departments charged with protecting animals against cruelty are closely tied to animal industries; their attitude is evidenced by their disinterest, denial and obfuscation when presented with evidence of events of cruelty.

In our view, what is needed is an independent Australian agency, created and empowered by law, to oversee and guide the development and enforcement of laws and procedures to improve the treatment of these animals. We would like to see the overwhelming political power and influence of those whose interests lie in animal farming enterprises to be directed toward greatly improved animal welfare, and as a result, a greatly improved industry. We remain optimistic that this will happen in Australia very soon.

Instead of working toward the improvement of animal welfare regulations, let's work toward the improvement of animal welfare.

Animals' Angels thanks you for your time and consideration of this paper.

Dawn Lowe
Animals' Angels Australia
15 February 2012

Re: Submission to Independent Review into Livestock Export Trade - due 15th June 2011

Captain (Dr) Peter Kerkenezov

Master Class 1 (unlimited) (AMSA), DipAppSc (Shipmaster), Compass Adjuster (AMSA), BVSc (Qld),
Cert Equine Surgery (Syd)

'Balliwood Stables' Equine Veterinary Hospital

&

Portside Marine Pacific

34 Racecourse Road

Ballina NSW 2478

Mr. Bill Farmer and Secretariat

Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry

Australian Government

Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Submission to Independent Review into Livestock Export Trade - due 15th June 2011

12th June 2011

Dear Mr. Farmer and Secretariat,

In 1909, when sheep cost 12/-, C.E.W. Bean wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald that "No one makes a friend of a sheep, any more than he would a sixpence. They are countered over like so many bank notes. That is all". One hundred and eleven years have passed and the same attitude prevails in the live export trade. Cattle, sheep and goats are still thought of as mere commodities in the live export trade, thrown together like inert grains of wheat.

In 1974, New Zealand stopped exporting live sheep to the Middle East despite the threat of a complete veto of all meat. New Zealand ended up with a bigger market in frozen meat than Australia.

In June 1980, the MV “Khalij Express” sailed from Adelaide to the Middle East (Voyage 24 North). 13.4% of the sheep died during the voyage. The Head Stockman wrote in a letter to the Agent **“DURING THE LOADING THE CARGO REFLECTED AN EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY OF SHEEP. BY THE END OF THE LONG HAUL 2,713 SHEEP HAD DIED OUT OF THE 20,133 LOADED. THE MAJORITY OF THE LOSS, 2,275, OCCURRED WITHIN THE FIRST 10 DAYS OF THE VOYAGE FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF A VERY VIRULENT DISEASE ON THE SECOND DAY. CORPSES RAPIDLY DISTENDED WITH GAS IN THE STOMACH AND BOWEL REGIONS AND POSSESSED OFTEN BLOODY OR FROTHY NASAL DISCHARGES”**.

An extract from a letter the Onboard Veterinarian sent to the Agent states **“I AM A LITTLE MYSTIFIED WHY, AS THE ANIMALS DID NOT SHOW ANY SIGNS IN THE FEEDLOT, IN FACT WERE ALL REMARKABLY HEALTHY. USUALLY WHEN AN OUTBREAK OCCURS EARLY IN A VOYAGE, IT CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE FEEDLOT, AND NO DOUBT THE LITTLE STRESS THAT OCCURRED WITH WEATHER, FEEDLOTING AND TRANSPORTATION TO THE SHIP OBVIOUSLY WERE SUFFICIENT TO PRECIPITATE AN OUTBREAK OF SALMONELLOSIS. WE UTILIZED A LOT OF DRUGS ON THE VOYAGE. THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT THE DRUGS WORK. HOWEVER THERE IS ONE THING IN UTILIZING THE DRUGS, THE OTHER IS TO ADMINISTER THEM TO INDIVIDUAL ANIMALS, AND WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS WITH THE ANIMALS WHEN THEY ARE ILL IS THAT THEY DO NOT DRINK, OR DO NOT DRINK SUFFICIENTLY ENOUGH AND THUS DO NOT RECEIVE A THERAPEUTIC DOSE”**

In March 1982 the Australian Government sent a delegation to the Middle East to study sheep meat markets and animal welfare. It was reported that many issues concerning animal welfare, were ignored by the responsible Minister. His comments were that any interference in the live sheep trade “would constitute excessive interference in the industrial development of other countries”. Since, over 160 million animals have been shipped over seas and over 2.5 million have died on the ships. It was also revealed about this time that sheep sent on long ocean hauls were 12 times more likely to die of stress, disease and accidents than sheep left in the paddock in spite of drought and bush fires.

The author (Dr Peter Kerkenzov) is an AQIS accredited veterinarian for live export (AAV), and a holder of a shipmaster's Certificate of Competency Master Class 1 (unlimited) issued by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). The author has served on ships carrying horses, cattle, and sheep on 'short hauls' and 'long hauls' (> 10 days) and last served on a dedicated livestock ship as an Onboard Veterinarian in 2002 and as Master in 2003. Notwithstanding the improvements in ship design, improved technology, scientific and practical knowledge, **unpreventable deaths** will always occur akin to that witnessed on the MV "Khalij Express" in 1980. The mortality rates will vary from what are considered within normal limits to excessive. Proponents of the trade argue that low death rates are an indicator of trifling cruelty. For example, because only 0.44% of the sheep die out of 65,000 sheep then that represents very little cruelty having occurred. This, of course, is an incorrect assumption or fallacy.



Author with two Philippino stockmen

The information following will be in point form (in no particular order) for ease of presentation. Most has been extracted from the author's actual records

- The Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL), as amended, reads as a highly commendable document. It covers all aspects of the export chain from sourcing suitable animals to disembarkation from the ships at the foreign ports. The Standards, however, state "AQIS must be satisfied that importing country requirements and Standards have been met before issuing a health certificate and export permit". Else where it stipulates "at disembarking, the master of the vessel transfers responsibility for the animals to the importer in the importing country, and should provide details of the voyage that may affect the future health and welfare of the livestock". These proclamations provide lustre to the accent on animal welfare; however, in reality are simply false piety or 'lip service'.
- The Marine orders – Part 43: Cargo and Cargo Handling – Livestock, Issue 6 (Order No 13 Of 2006) pursuant to subsection 425(1AA) of the Navigation Act 1912 is also a praiseworthy manuscript and its implementation falls to AMSA. Basically, AMSA's primary role is to ensure the ships' equipment and systems are compliant at the point of loading before being permitted to load. Theoretically, however, once the vessel sails beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone (200 mile from base line). Australia loses any jurisdiction over the ship unless it is Australian registered. The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS), on the other hand, are more concerned with animal welfare; however the same status quo would apply. AQIS relies upon voyage reports from the masters of the foreign flagged ships and the AAV's as to what transpires on board and any action would have to wait until the ship was to return to Australia. Thus from the aforementioned, once a foreign flag vessel unberths the wharf and departs with a consignment of sheep, Australian authorities appear technically constrained from control over their destiny
- Confidentiality Agreements can become an imposition on the way AAV's report the true picture of what really has been occurring on board ships for fear of retort. Theoretically the AAV is there to represent the interests of the animals and monitor compliance with reasonable standards, however any constructive criticism of the operation may result in the veterinarian losing future employment and hence a degree of pecuniary interest exists

- The selection procedure of sheep frequently becomes an animal welfare concern at times. In the photo the reader will notice severely debilitated sheep in the yards on the right. A dog was seen chewing on dead and dying sheep. It is here the final cull is performed by a veterinarian(s) at the Registered Premises or feedlots, after consolidation and acclimatization to the food pellets (South Australia), or at the quayside (Fremantle).

When sheep are given the final inspection before loading, they are run past experienced veterinarians, however due to the huge numbers and the time allowed, some sheep do pass through that would otherwise be culled. Such animals might include sheep suffering from early, unobvious Contagious Ophthalmia, early Inanition, sub clinical scours, Foot Rot (*Fusiformis necrophorus*, *Bacteroides nodosus*), and carriers of *Salmonella* sp., and sub-clinical respiratory disease.

At a South Australia feed lot in 2002, Salmonellosis was diagnosed by a veterinarian after performing an autopsy. Sheep from the same mob that appeared healthy were passed and loaded. 40,038 sheep were loaded that day and by 1000 hrs the next day, after the ship had sailed, acute Salmonellosis was diagnosed on board. By 1530 hrs eight sheep had died from acute Salmonellosis (likely *S. typhimurium*, *S. Dublin* or *S. anatum*).



South Australian Feedlot

- Discrepancies in counting live and dead sheep has occurred. The number of dead sheep collected for the veterinarian, during the days at sea, did not always match up with that of the Chief Officer (C/O). The veterinarian's count was mostly less and the C/O's count more. The mortality rate recorded by the veterinarian for the Final Report would then be lower than it should have been. That is, many sheep have gone somewhere and that is over the side without being recorded or examined. It was also rumored amongst the officers that possibly more sheep were loaded than the official number. For example; 65,200 sheep loaded instead of 65,000 sheep
- The author's records show that on one voyage to the Middle East autopsies were performed on Deck 7 at 1530 hrs each day. At one end of the deck was a vertical shaft in which was rigged a block and tackle and cargo net. The cargo net was lowered to Deck 1 and remained there throughout the day. The stockmen on Decks 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2 would drag out any dead sheep from the pens, plus any sheep that were considered terminally ill and throw these down into the cargo net. The cargo net containing dead and live sheep was then drawn up to Deck 7 for autopsies. Their bodies were frequently broken by the drop, some from as high as deck 6. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, sheep alive and dead were also thrown over board and hence not recorded by the veterinarian. Despite efforts to stop this practice, including reporting the matter to the master, the dilemma was not resolved entirely and one can only assume it continued after the next crew change. A ship's crew list might number approximately sixty people who come from different countries. Language and culture barriers exist frequently making communications difficult. Irretrievably sick sheep are meant to be put down humanely. The incidents such as the throwing of live sheep down the vertical shafts are very unlikely to be included in a master's voyage reports, thus not putting at risk the companies' chance of losing the license to engage in this trade.



Autopsy on Deck 7 mid Indian Ocean

- It is assumed most consignments of sheep are sold using Documentary Sales or an International Sales Transactions. This would mean that once the sheep are loaded the risk moves to the consignee. The buyer may then look to the carrier if the cargo is lost or damaged. The carrier can always Note Protest as a defense. For example; bad weather. In the final analysis the ship owner or carrier must look after the cargo for payment of freight, however despite due diligence **unpreventable disease and injury** occurs and that is the nature of the live export trade
- The following is a list of diseases and other medical problems observed by the author. No laboratory back up was available to confirm a definitive diagnosis so the list is somewhat speculative. Notwithstanding this, most of the sheep that succumbed to disease(s) or injury suffered atrociously, bearing in mind different diseases frequently occurred concurrently

Sheep:

1. Contagious Ophthalmia (keratoconjunctivitis or 'Pink Eye') – presumably due to Rickettsia conjunctivae
2. Salmonellosis – presume *S. typhimurium*, *S. Dublin*, or *S. anatum*. No vaccine for sheep
3. Enterotoxaemia – *Clostridium perfringens* Type D (Pulpy Kidney) – vaccine
4. Inanition / inappetence / starvation – a pathological state of the body due to lack of any foodstuff (including water) which is essential to the living organism – many animals that passed the selection process ashore ('shy feeders') were obviously not eating pellets before embarkation. These were hollow in the paralumbar fossae (flanks) and accounted for early deaths
5. Colibacillosis (*Escherichia coli*)
6. Septicaemia
7. Hematoma
8. Fractures
9. Dermonecrosis
10. Wool shedding (extreme stress induced)
11. Haematuria
12. Pneumonia – truck diesel exhaust fumes during land transit, particularly whilst on the top decks, may be a predisposing factor for pneumonia developed at sea. The causative agents were suspected as being *Pasteurella* (Pneumonic Pasteurellosis), *Mycoplasma*, and / or *Fusobacterium necrophorus*
13. Abortion – well developed fetuses were observed. Approximately 50 pregnant ewes were on board
14. Hyperthermia
15. Suffocation
16. Pigmentation of the kidney parenchyma (plant?)
17. Skin deficits due to trauma
18. Tracheobronchitis (mucoid to mucopurulent nasal discharge)
19. Rhinitis (serous nasal discharge)
20. Ruminal tympany (bloat)
21. Pulmonary abscessation
22. Haemothorax
23. Rapid putrefaction / autolysis



Sheep arriving at the wharf in Fremantle

- Due to the large numbers, many animals are found dead or terminally ill before treatment can be instigated. The terminally ill joined the dead into the cargo net (referred to earlier) or into the sea
- On arrival at the Middle Eastern ports, the Sovereign State's veterinary technicians embark to collect blood samples. The blood samplers are often seen to take up to 18 needle jabs before finding the jugular vein. During the blood collection procedure they lay their syringes and needles in faeces and dirt on the deck. Once the blood tests are deemed satisfactory, the animals are unloaded. It may be fair to say that those animals that die a quick death early in the export chain are more fortunate than those that show more resilience and make it to the 'other end'. It is at this point our poor animals lose any care the Australian AAV's can offer

- An extract from the author's daily log reads: **"CASES OF PNEUMONIA BEGAN APPEARING EVERY DAY AND THE CAUSE OF THIS WAS THOUGHT TO BE A COMBINATION OF INHALATION OF INFECTIVE AGENTS AND MANURE GASES (AMMONIA, HYDROGEN SULPHIDE, METHANE AND CARBON DIOXIDE), AND HYPERTHERMIA. AMMONIA ACTS LIKE A 'SEDATIVE' EXPECTORANT BY VIRTUE OF IT CAUSING AN INCREASE IN PROTECTIVE MUCUS AND LESSENING COUGHING. THE SHEEP MAY ACCLIMATIZE TO SOME DEGREE, TO THE AMMONIA GAS. MANURE GASES MAY IMPOSE SOME DEGREE OF MUCOCILIARY DYSFUNCTION. ATMOSPHERIC LEVELS OF HYDROGEN SULPHIDE MAY OR MAY NOT BE SIGNIFICANT. EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE TO TEST FOR H_2S AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE SHIP. THIS GAS IS WELL KNOWN TO CAUSE ACUTE PRIMARY PULMONARY OEDEMA"**.

Conclusion

From the author's own experience, it seems very little had changed since the voyage of the MV "Khalij Express" in June, 1980 in that many disease processes are **unpreventable** due to being induced by excessive stress and fear. In addition, machinery breakdowns will continue to occur despite better back up systems. Ventilation and adequate air changes, and many other aspects of the whole seagoing operation are always at risk of becoming compromised.

Human beings that die of Salmonellosis, pneumonia, injury, starvation (inanition), apparently experience an appalling death no different to that of the sheep or cattle.



A steer suffering from pneumonia and severe depression, mid Indian Ocean

Despite the wide-ranging complicity to satisfy the export of sheep and cattle to foreign lands it is hard to come to terms that money, political gain, or religion are the driving forces allowing so much inhumanity to exist. If it were food then Australia can still provide the best chilled and frozen meat with a longer shelf life than any other competing country.

Regrettably, extreme fear, unpreventable disease and injury are synonymous with 'long hauls' at sea carrying livestock and this is undeniably unconscionable. On a random sample voyage to the Middle East; 14.1% of the dead sheep died of starvation, 20.5% died of enteritis (Salmonellosis, Colibacillosis), 54.3% died from pneumonia, 1.3% died from suffocation and 2.1% died from trauma.



Sheep suffering from pneumonia and severe depression being treated with oxytetracycline in the drinking water, mid Indian Ocean

With due respect to some colleagues in the offices of Canberra who administer the bureaucratic affairs concerning the live export trade, there is no substitute for experience first hand. Since Australia's merchant marine is now markedly reduced, the ships engaged in the movement of livestock are foreign flagged. The crews are mostly foreigners and the only Australians likely to be onboard will be the Head Stockmen and the AAV's. If the AAV's are silenced by Confidentiality Agreements and only report what employers and administrators want to hear then this industry will be allowed to continue on for all time. The AAV system – with the veterinarian being employed by the exporter – may result in systemic failure because of the possibility of conflict of interest.

There comes a time when one has to draw a line in the sand and decide whether the incentives to continue (money, promotion, political gain or what ever) are really worth it.

The author conscientiously believes the above is a true and honest account of what typically has occurred over the years of transporting sheep and cattle from Australia to the Middle East, based on his experience. This portrayal has been given in good faith and without prejudice.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Kerkenezov
Veterinary Surgeon/Shipmaster
Ballina NSW 2478



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