



## Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited

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### Australian Livestock Export Industry Animal Welfare Scope

The Australian livestock export industry is committed to high standards of animal welfare. It has initiated developments which has put Australia in the forefront of ensuring the welfare of animals through the export process. Industry programs endorsed and funded by Australian exporters and producers cover markets in the Middle East and Asia, which are principally aimed at improving the welfare, management and handling of Australian livestock through the supply chain. Australia is the only country exporting livestock to offer on-going services to our customers after delivery. This activity is supported by a dedicated research and development program, and comprehensive independently audited quality assurance (QA) arrangements, which promote adherence to agreed standards and continuous improvement in Best Practice across the industry. These standards are continually updated as our knowledge and understanding develops through outcomes of various program and R & D project findings.

#### APLEI

The livestock export industry's commitment to continuous improvement of animal welfare is demonstrated in its active participation in the Action Plan for the Livestock Export Industry developed in October 2002.

A priority of the plan was the development of a risk analysis approach to heat stress covering all aspects of selection, preparation and export of animals to the Middle East from Southern ports during the Australian winter.

Since October 2002 industry has implemented;

- The utilization by exporters of *Hot Stuff* – a computer software program developed by engineering consultants Maunsell Australia P/L and funded by industry (A\$250,000). The software takes into account variables of weather at destination and en route, animal acclimatization, coat and condition and ventilation characteristics of vessels and produces a risk assessment of heat stress. Under the new Cattle and Sheep Orders, AQIS require an exporter to produce a plan on how to manage the risks involved in the consignment. The successful use of the Maunsell model fulfills the requirements for the risk of heat stress. It is anticipated that formal demonstrable risk management will be an ever-increasing factor in preparing consignments.
- Procedures to upgrade southeast Australian assembly depots quality standards
- Amendments to regulations and legislation governing the export of livestock

- Amendments to the industry Livestock Export Accreditation Program (LEAP) in respect to issues regarding animal welfare
- Improved arrangements for accredited veterinarians who undertake and supervise prescribed treatments and procedures in preparation of animals for export
- Additional staff has been recruited to assist and ensure the adoption of risk management practices within the Australian livestock export standards.

Industry is committed to ensuring all participants in the livestock export trade adhere to recognized best practice and has demonstrated this through funding of all initiatives under APLEI.

It is approximated the development and implementation of APLEI has to date (from October 2002 to June 2003) cost industry almost A\$1 million.

#### Research and Development in the livestock export industry

Animal welfare is the major focus of the industry's extensive research and development program. Livestock exporters *voluntarily fund* a substantial proportion of this program which is largest of its kind in the world with an annual budget in excess of \$1.6 million.

Projects focus on the improvement of management and handling practices in preparation and delivery and shipboard management areas.

Since June 2001 industry animal welfare focused R & D projects have included;

**LIVE.108 Theoretical deficits of electrolyte products**  
**LIVE.112 Sheep feedlot management**  
**LIVE.116 Development of heat stress risk management model**  
**LIVE.202 Decreasing ammonia accumulation on ship**  
**LIVE.206 National mortality and recording system**  
**LIVE.207 Best management of export cows**  
**LIVE.208 Best practice in the export of pregnant dairy cattle**  
**LIVE.209 Physiology of heat stress**  
**LIVE.212 Ventilation efficacy on sheep vessels**  
**LIVE.214 National mortality and morbidity report**  
**LIVE.215 Risk management in the export of goats**  
**LIVE.216 Mortality and morbidity risk factors of livestock**  
**LIVE.301 Management of predelivery stress in cattle**

**These projects alone have cost in excess of A\$1 million**

#### Chair in Animal Welfare at University of Queensland

Industry has supported the inaugural position of Chair in Animal Welfare at the University of Queensland and will contribute to the funding of any livestock export specific projects under the position.

#### MLA LiveCorp Joint Livestock Export Program

A key objective of this A\$3.3 million annual program is improving animal welfare, performance and efficiency in the livestock export supply chain.

Through this program industry continually works toward improving livestock transport systems through industry quality assurance systems. Program activities support and fund the handling of livestock once they have arrived at their overseas destinations. These include a full time veterinarian based in the Middle East with responsibility for the delivery of trade support activities in the region. This includes programs of animal health and husbandry practice, training, technical advice and services covering the receipt, handling and processing of Australian livestock in overseas destinations.

Specific projects in the past twelve months include;

- equipment to improve the slaughter process was installed in six abattoirs in Indonesia. As of March 2003, eleven Australian-designed restraining boxes had been installed in abattoirs in South East Asia. In the Middle East, one has been installed in Cairo, Egypt, and another in Amman, Jordan. The restraining boxes secure an animal for Halal slaughter, and allow larger Australian animals to be restrained quickly, efficiently and with minimum stress.
- A review of cattle and sheep abattoir facilities in Bahrain and Egypt was also undertaken in 2002 as a first step in plans to assist upgrade of the facilities. In addition a meat science group was formed in Egypt to improve the quality of Egyptian slaughtering systems.
- The development, design, funding and provision of an unloading device known as the 'movor' in Middle Eastern ports to facilitate a more efficient and low stress animal discharge

#### Comment:

Whilst animal welfare is a major priority for the Australian livestock export industry it is not necessarily a priority in the Middle East or Asian markets. The Joint Program has structured programs to raise standards in animal welfare in the Middle East. This has been developed with cognisance of cultural and religious differences between Australia and those countries. At present Australia has a presence and is able to make informative recommendations that will hopefully be of use in the development of codes of practice or other written documents in Middle Eastern countries. However it will always remain the prerogative of the authorities in any country to implement its own rules. If Australia ceases trade with Egypt, or any other Middle Eastern country then our ability to assist them in their development is severely curtailed, our sphere of influence will be reduced and the trade replaced by other countries (particularly in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries) in the region **who have minimal desire or ability to effect any change at all.**

#### Specific industry in market initiatives

- 8 restraining boxes in Indonesian abattoirs funded by JP, a further 5 have been put in privately funded
- 1 restraining box in Brunei
- 2 restraining boxes in Middle East abattoirs including in Busateen, Cairo, and Jordan, another 1 has been privately funded into an abattoir in Jordan

- 3 unloading ramps in Tanjung Priok Indonesia
- 3 unloading devices (Movor) in ME with more planned to be constructed this year
- 3 ME Veterinarian training courses on animal handling to reduce stress
- Computer software program for heat stress risk assessment Hotstuff
- In 2001 a training course in Cairo included animal welfare.
- Visits to Australia 3 Egyptian abattoir specialists to inspect slaughtering facilities
- UAE delegation for same
- Projects under way this year to improve transport / ramps in Jordan and Israel
  
- Livestock and Meat Symposia; Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon – July 6-10
- Series of presentations by NDB this last year in Dubai, Egypt, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah
- Ongoing visits 6 in next 12 months by abattoir specialists to work with Egyptian abattoir staff during upgrading.