

# **AUSTRALIA'S LIVE EXPORT TRADE**

## **THE CRUEL FACTS**

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*"The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them. That's the essence of inhumanity." - George Bernard Shaw*

The export of livestock overseas exposes the animals involved to an unacceptable level of suffering and cruelty. In 1985 the Senate Select Committee of Inquiry into Animal Welfare in Australia determined that on animal welfare grounds there was enough evidence to stop the trade. It concluded that reforms will not eliminate stress, suffering and risk to the animals involved and therefore recommended phasing out the live trade and replacing it with a carcass trade. Unfortunately that recommendation has been ignored and the trade has since grown. The Inquiry also made a number of recommendations to improve the welfare of the animals whilst the trade was being phased out. To date these recommendations have largely been ignored by those involved in the trade. However, regardless of what improvements are made, cruelty to animals subjected to live export is inherent. There will always be deaths and suffering even with the most stringent standards. Also, no reforms will improve the welfare of the animals once they leave Australian waters and are no longer under Australian jurisdiction.

The suffering for livestock destined for export begins at the farm gate and continues until each animal loses consciousness at the point of death. Most of the following information relates to sheep as the live sheep trade is much greater than that of cattle and goats and has been going for many more years. However, with the increase in cattle exports, particularly to the Middle East, documentation on cattle deaths and suffering is increasing.

This report will begin at the wharf with the loading of animals on the ships. Conditions prior to this are common to all livestock that leave the farm and therefore not specific to export animals.

## **1.0 DURING LOADING**

- 1.1** Wharf workers involved in the loading of animals onto ships appear to have little or no knowledge of livestock handling. They have been observed using metal pipes to bang on the rails of trucks and the loading ramp terrifying the already confused animals. As the animals can only go as fast as the space on the ramp and the ship allows, the noise is solely an exercise in creating unnecessary fear. (\*11 & \*17)
- 1.2** Some truck drivers use dogs to move sheep from the trucks. Again as the animals have nowhere to go, the constant barking serves only to frighten them. (\*11 & \*17)
- 1.3** Animals slip and fall on the deck made slippery from the waste of previously loaded animals, contributing to trauma and injury. (\*17 & \*38)
- 1.4** Accidents happen during loading. Animals fall into the harbour and many have been seen washed up on river foreshore and local beaches. A Ranger is frequently called in to round up strays. In one documented case an accident resulted in sheep being boarded with severe bruising of the sternum and broken ribs. (\*24)
- 1.5** When loading is being carried out, particularly on a large ship or when multiple ships are in port, the truckers need to offload animals quickly and have been observed getting impatient. One eyewitness reported seeing sheep being picked up by the skin and thrown from the top deck of the truck to the bottom ramp. (\*18)
- 1.6** Sheep of different weight are not always segregated during loading as per Industry recommendations. (\*8) Eyewitnesses have observed large wethers being loaded with smaller and younger sheep. (\*14 & 29) The latter being disadvantaged when trying to eat or stand up after a fall.
- 1.7** The Industry recommendation that rams have their horns trimmed (\*30) is being ignored. Rams are loaded with the entire horn, which can be trapped, torn off or can damage another animal.
- 1.8** A police officer who was dockside during the loading of several ships noted that the bodies of sheep that died during transport to the wharf were thrown into the harbour. Other sheep that were weak or maimed were loaded together on an outer area of the ship. (\*26) Although there is no conclusive proof, from comments made by fishermen on the number of sheep carcasses found outside Gage Roads, it can be assumed that these animals were thrown overboard once the ship was out of sight of land. Evidence does show that sheep are thrown overboard whilst conscious. (\*2)
- 1.9** One ship inspected by the RSPCA was found to have 320 dead sheep before it left port. With the exception of the few ailing sheep who had their throats cut on the insistence of the Inspector, all the other animals had been left to die slowly without intervention. (\*10)

## **DURING THE SEA VOYAGE**

- 2.1** The Australian Bureau of Animal Health states: "The exporter should ensure that sufficient staff under the supervision of a competent stock attendant are available to

care for the animals.” (\*8) This is not the case. Though some livestock exporters do employ stockmen to travel with the animals the criteria for selection is only “a willingness to travel and some stockmanship”. (\*6) Mostly the animals are tended by inexperienced and often uncaring crew members who may not meet Australian standards and are not regulated by Australia.

Trade with Saudi Arabia was suspended when there was an outbreak of scabby mouth disease amongst Australian sheep. Since the resumption of the trade with this country, a veterinarian or accredited stockman has accompanied the animals. This only applies to shipments to Saudi Arabia.

- 2.2** Sheep are severely stressed during the sea voyage. Using wool break as a test for stress, (the higher the level of stress, the easier the wool breaks) an officer from the Australian Bureau of Animal Health reported that there was a marked decrease in the force required to wool break between day 1 and days 4 and 5. It shows that sheep are subjected to a similar level of prolonged stress during sea transport as would occur naturally in a severe drought. (\*38)
- 2.3** Sheep pens on ships are so overcrowded that according to eyewitnesses, the vast majority of animals are unable to lie down and some cannot reach the feed troughs. (\*1 & \*17) Some animals have been observed standing on their hind legs, resting their forelegs on other sheep. (\*17 & \*19)
- 2.4** For the first few days the sheep do not usually sleep at all. (\*23) This serves to weaken them, making them more susceptible to disease and trauma.
- 2.5** Due to the overcrowding, once the sheep are down, they are unable to get up so are trampled to death or suffocate. (\*19)
- 2.6** On most ships, the feed troughs are inadequate. Shyer, weaker and smaller sheep don't get to eat (\*23). The stronger sheep have been seen jumping over the weaker sheep to get to the food, forcing the weaker ones to fall and die. (\*19)
- 2.7** The feed and water troughs become contaminated from the urine and faeces of sheep in the upper tiers, contributing to disease. (\*17)
- 2.8** Water is not always available to all animals at all times. (\*35) This is particularly negligent, given the thirst the animals must endure during the heat they experience as the ship moves towards the northern hemisphere.  
  
Adult cattle require 45 Litres of water per head per day and double this amount in extremely hot weather. Adult sheep require a minimum of 4 Litres per head per day, and again double this amount in extremely hot weather. (\*42)
- 2.9** The heat on lower decks as the ships near the northern hemisphere reaches 45C. As a result large numbers of sheep go temporarily blind. (\*34). Sheep have been reported as being blinded (\*31) possibly from sea spray and dust from the pelletised feed in the troughs.
- 2.10** Ventilation is often inadequate - rapid gasping respiration has been observed in sheep when temperatures and humidity are high. (\*1)
- 2.11** Lack of concern and compassion has been demonstrated by the mainly unskilled crewmen towards the animals entrusted to their care. For instance on one journey the 4.6% death rate of feral goats was due to poor management by the crew tending

them.(\*9) A ship's engineer reported that sheep are generally handled very cruelly and often beaten and thrown about (\*16)

- 2.12** Eyewitnesses report crew refusing to feed or water the animals. Even when it had been pointed out to them that there was no water and the sheep were showing signs of thirst, the crew ignored the advice. (\*19 & \*29) This has also occurred when there has been an Australian stockman on board. (\*9)
- 2.13** Because they are packed so tightly, an eyewitness reported that unless an animal at the front of the pen had died, it would not be easily detected and often not removed until crew were alerted by the smell of the dead animal. Animals were left to die without intervention. Suffering animals were not put down by humane methods and those that fell were not put on their feet again but left to die from illness or suffocation. (\*19)
- 2.14** There have also been reports of sick sheep being thrown overboard whilst alive and fully conscious and these reports have been substantiated by autopsies and by photographs of carcasses of drowned sheep washed up on shore (\*2 & \*4) and by a ship's engineer (\*16). The engineer also reported that the sheep were thrown to sharks whilst alive (\*16)
- 2.15** Although It is recommended that ewes in a late state of pregnancy are excluded from export. In exceptional cases permission to export pregnant ewes may be given subject to certain conditions "including the provision of satisfactory supervision by an approved animal attendant". (\*8) These conditions are being ignored.
- 2.16** Despite assurances that ewes are ultrasounded prior to export so pregnant ewes are not exported, eye witnesses and crew have reported heavily pregnant ewes on board whose new born lambs are trampled to death in the crowded conditions. (\*19 & \*24) The fate of those few that survive is unknown. It is suspected that they are either eaten by the crew or thrown overboard. Some are given away to officials when the ship reaches its destination. (\*34) Regardless of their ultimate fate, their welfare and that of the mother who must give birth in the most appalling conditions then suffers from a full udder and no fulfillment of her natural mothering instincts is of account. One eyewitness saw new born lambs on the first few days out at sea. The ewes were heavily pregnant when loaded. (\*19)
- 2.17** Many pregnant cows, exported overseas in the late stages of pregnancy have aborted and often died as a result. (\*9) Currently cattle are being administered prostaglandins to effect abortions prior to being loaded onto ships. Photo available (\*40)
- 2.18** Freshly shorn sheep remain with no protection on open upper decks in bitterly cold winds or sweltering heat as they cross the southern and northern hemispheres (\*2)
- 2.19** Normal rumen function is absent in export sheep making them susceptible to a range of nutritional, infectious, metabolic and other diseases. (\*3)
- 2.20** A combination of high temperature and humidity impairs the cooling of sheep and rapid, gasping respiration has been observed in animals exposed to these conditions. (\*3)
- 2.21** In the cramped and often stifling conditions on the lower decks, some sheep asphyxiate because of the high ammonia levels produced by their urine. For each sheep that dies, many more would suffer the ill effects of a high ammonia concentration. (\*15 & \*34)
- 2.22** In bad weather salt spray can wash over the open decks and contaminate the drinking water,(\*29).

**2.23** Australian sheep exported to the Middle East suffer from diseases unknown to Australian animals. Dr Roger Meischke reported having seen screw-worm fly infestation on sheep as they were being unloaded from ships and sheep pox in Australian sheep yards alongside ships that had just recently been unloaded. He stated that there was *a/ways* disease in exported sheep and that there is a health and welfare problem in our export of livestock to the Middle-East. (\*22) Photo available.

**2.24** The Australian Bureau of Animal Health states:

“It is desirable that a veterinarian accompany vessels to provide competent supervision of the health and welfare of the animals and to report on and initiate action in areas where improvement is required” (\*8)

Yet despite all of the above there are rarely veterinarians on board sheep ships carrying Australian animals. (\*5).

### **3.0 MORTALITIES**

(Those as a result of disasters are covered in Section 5.0)

There is evidence that official statistics on mortality rates are much lower than the actual mortality rates themselves. An eyewitness aboard a livestock carrier reported that the number of sheep that died each day was far greater than the captain reported (\*19) and insurance claims for losses can be up to almost ten times the losses recorded in Ships Masters Reports. (\*7)

**3.1** Mortalities alone, however, are not an indicator of the cruelty and suffering inflicted upon animals that are exported overseas. Regardless of how low the documented mortalities are, they do not equate with a low level of suffering. According to Dr Roger Meischke, a former Officer with the Department of Primary Industry and Energy, for every 1 death, approximately 10 animals noticeably sicken. (\*4) Given that many more animals don't die or noticeably sicken but do suffer, it holds that live exports cause an unacceptable degree of suffering to the animals involved. As Col. Don Harris states, “stresses which result in death for thousands, causes distress and suffering for a great deal more.” (\*20)

**3.2** Even so, a sheep in transit to the Middle East is 12 times more likely to die from accident, disease or stress than a sheep staying in Australia in spite of drought and bush fires (\*38) and these are sheep especially selected for their health and vigour. (\*20)

**3.3** Research indicates that of the sheep that die, almost half die from inanition. That is they starve. They fail to eat from the moment they leave the farm. (\*25) The adrenal glands taken from sheep that die from inanition are heavier than normal. (\*24) According to R. Norris et al of Agriculture WA many of these sheep “succumb to salmonellosis or develop low concentrations of blood magnesium and / or calcium which leads to tetany and death and some succumb to repeated trauma.” (\*25) About a third of the sheep that die from failure to eat have degeneration of certain skeletal muscles. “This lesion appears up to a few days before death and may be one reason some sheep die from trauma.” (\*25)

**3.4** Around 20% of the deaths are from salmonellosis. The weight of adrenal glands of these animals is even greater than the above group. (\*24) Infection from salmonellosis bacteria can cause serious gastroenteritis which frequently leads to death. It has been shown that it is sheep weakened by not eating or stressed from

other sources that succumb to salmonellosis. (\*25) Death from salmonellosis is very painful.

- 3.5** Death due to trauma is approximately 12 %, the bulk being from sheep losing their footing on slippery floors during loading or the first 2 to 3 days of the voyage. (\*25) Hip dislocation and torn pelvic muscles are common with the sheep going down, being unable to feed or drink and being trampled upon by other sheep.

“Most shipboard cases of trauma were acute and associated with splaying of the hind limbs on slippery floors during loading. The subacute injuries were probably sustained during the many occasions that sheep were handled once they leave the farm paddock to enter the export process.” (\*24)

- 3.6** Excessive temperature and humidity also causes death of sheep on ships. (\*25) Ships Masters Reports indicate high death rates of sheep and cattle being associated with the extremely hot and humid conditions found on ships en-route to the Middle East. If animals die from the extreme temperature and humidity, it is certain that all other animals would be suffering from the same. On one deck on one ship the temperature rose from 27C to 35C on one day and 46% mortalities on that deck occurred on that one day. (\*21)
- 3.7** In 1987 a ship bound for Kuwait sailed into a heat belt where temperatures were in the high 30s and humidity between 60% & 80%. As a result, 3000 sheep died in one day. (\*36)
- 3.8** 'Sheep carriers have had to drift in the Middle East straits for several days in very hot weather. When the carrier is not making any headway, there is inadequate ventilation (therefore more) mortalities.' (\*7)
- 3.9** On the lower decks, sheep have eventually asphyxiated because of the high levels of ammonia produced by the excrement over several days. (\*36 & \*37)
- 3.10** When a ship encounters rough weather and the water troughs are contaminated with sea water, many sheep die from saltwater poisoning (\*29)
- 3.11** Most of the other deaths are caused by dehydration, rupture of the bladder, pneumonia, and perforated duodenal ulcers. (\*24 & \*25)

#### **4.0 AQIS/AMSA TRIAL INTO LIVE EXPORTS**

- 4.1** An AQIS/AMSA trial into live exports (\*9) is summarised below to give an indication of the inadequacies in the trade which result in suffering and death of export animals. It should be noted that these animals had the advantage of having an Australian stockman on board to see to their needs. This is not usually the case.
- (i) April 1997 - 2.39% death rate in cattle due to the long voyage aboard a slow ship to the Middle East.
  - (ii) April 1997 - Cattle were observed panting, tonguing and with swelling feet. The cattle lost 6kgs during the voyage when they moved from a cold to a hot climate. Stockman's death report does not coincide with the AMSA report.
  - (iii) April 1997 - Cattle did not eat pellets.

- (iv) April 1997 - 4.6% of feral goats died due to poor management by the crew tending them.
- (v) May 1997 - Cattle deaths were associated with poor tolerance of tropical weather conditions.
- (vi) May 1997 - 2.17% sheep died when the voyage was extended to 31 days due to engine problems. It was hot and humid in the Middle East.
- (vii) May 1997 - twice the expected number of cattle died from increased stress when the journey was extended from 5-7 days to 11 days due to problems with the stability of the ship.
- (viii) May 1997 - Sheep deaths were put down to high ammonia level, discharge at 3 ports and high humidity.
- (ix) May 1997 - High sheep and cattle deaths were a result of the long 28 day voyage and high humidity. 70% of the deaths were in the last 6 days.
- (x) June 1997 - Sheep were not allowed the minimum time to acclimatise to the pellets and were not eating properly. Over 100 animals died each day from day 5 and high temperatures and humidity during discharge exacerbated the problem.
- (xi) June 1997 - 3.7% of sheep died after being chilled prior to loading after having been trucked through rain. There were rough seas for the last 4 days and some animals developed pneumonia.
- (xii) July 1997 - 3.55% of sheep died due to the slow discharge rate at 4 ports. The report states that "shipping sheep from Australian winter to mid-Summer in Middle East always increases losses." The Australian stockman on board was unable to get crew to water sheep sufficiently without the necessary support from the chief officer.
- (xiii) July 1997 - 5.12% of feral goats died from being stressed and bruised whilst being transported by land and the rough weather on the ship for the first 2 days.
- (xiv) July 1997 - Half the 1.7% sheep mortalities were in the last 6 days when they encountered high temperatures and humidity after coming from an Australian winter. Discharging at 3 ports exacerbated the problem.
- (xv) July 1997 - 6% of goats died as a result of stress during muster.
- (xvi) August 1997 - 1% of the late pregnant cattle died predominantly from abortion and being unable to cope with the tropical weather conditions.
- (xvii) August 1997 - The sheep endured and many died from high ammonia levels, very rough seas and very hot and humid conditions.
- (xviii) September 1997 - Ships masters report and stockman's report indicate that cattle were in poor condition from the start of the journey - weak, skinny, not drinking or eating well and the mortalities were largely due to stomach bloat.
- (xix) September 1997 - 4.25% of sheep died mostly during the hottest and most humid weather when "additional ventilation" was switched off due to breakdown of an engine.
- (xx) September 1997 - 90% of the cattle that died did so during the hot and humid weather in the Persian Gulf having been stressed by a long journey.

- (xxi) September 1997 - discharge mortality was very high. Report stated that this was the worst time to ship sheep.
- (xxii) October 1997 - 2.06% of sheep died and many were not feedlotted before loading.
- (xxiii) October 1997 Rough seas during the first 6 days exacerbated leg injuries of heavy steers though most deaths occurred during periods of high humidity.
- (xxiv) November 1997 - 2.25% of sheep died. Sailing was delayed by 36 hours because of engine problems and the report states that "ventilation at port in fully loaded vessel not as efficient as moving vessel." This vessel generally had high losses of sheep and goats.
- (xxv) November 1997 - long voyage for sheep, with very long discharge and high discharge mortality.
- (xxvi) November 1997 - cattle ship - vessel was overloaded by exporter, very long voyage of 37 days. Sick pens were not available and alternative food was not available to feed sick animals.
- xxvii) December 1997 - 2.22% of sheep died following intestinal wind for 7 days. The lambs had possibly been in feedlots too long.

## 5.0 DISASTERS

**5.1** At sea there is always the possibility of a major disaster. (\*3) Whether it be due to bad weather some breakdowns and mishaps cannot be anticipated.

**5.2** The following disasters have occurred in the last 20 years and the figures of animals dying (and suffering) in such catastrophes are not included in the death rates reported by the Department of Agriculture and covered by this report in Section 4.0.

- (i) **1980** - the entire 40,605 sheep aboard the *Farid Fares* were trapped and ultimately perished at sea when the ship caught fire.
- (ii) **1980** - disease outbreak on the *Kahleej Express* caused the deaths of 2,713 sheep.
- (iii) **1981** - due to the *Kahleej Express* breaking down at sea and the animals aboard her having to be transferred to the *Al Shuuwaikh*, 635 sheep died.
- (iv) **1981** - when the ventilation aboard the *Persia* broke down, 8,764 sheep suffocated to death.
- (v) **1984** - ventilation breakdown in the *Makairish Althaleth* caused the death of 70 sheep each day.
- (vi) **1985** - 14,994 sheep died from heat exhaustion on board the *Fernanda F.*
- (vii) **1987** - the *Corriedale Express* was attacked by Iranian gunboats resulting in the death of many sheep.

- (viii) 12,000 sheep were abandoned and drowned when the *Star of Shaddier* was wrecked.
- (ix) **1989** – six shiploads of sheep were rejected by Saudi Arabia resulting in 29,978 sheep dying from heat exhaustion, thirst and so on as the ships went from port to port seeking someone to accept the sheep.
- (x) **1990** – The fully laden *Mawashi Al Gasseem* was forced to stay afloat for 16 weeks, resulting in the prolonged suffering and death of thousands before a country would accept the animals.
- (xi) **1990** - The *Cormo Express* left New Zealand for the Middle East and more than 10,000 animals died en route from heat stroke, and pneumonia due to inadequate ventilation.
- (xi) **1991** - Australian sheep arrived in war devastated Kuwait and around 30,000 died from heat stroke and dehydration due to lack of feedlot facilities.
- (xii) **1996** - 67,488 sheep died when fire broke out on board the *Uniceb* which had been inspected prior to leaving Australia. The sheep were left alone on the burning ship until it sunk. No-one knows how long the animals took to die as eight days elapsed before any rescue attempt was made.
- (xiv) **1997** - the entire cargo of 1592 cattle bound for Japan aboard the *Guernsey Express* drowned when the boat sank during a typhoon.
- (xv) **1998** - 154 cattle and 283 goats died after a financial dispute delayed unloading of the *Anomis* in Malaysia
- (xvi) **1998** - 346 cattle aboard the *Charolais Express* died from pneumonia and suffocation due to the ship having been overloaded. Of the surviving animals, 174 were rejected and later killed on the return journey. The Australian public would never have heard of this had it not been for an animal welfare group in Israel alerting the RSPCA
- (xvii) **1999** - 800 cattle suffocated on the Indonesian bound ship *Temberong* after a power failure. Their bodies were thrown into the sea.
- (xviii) **1999** – 300 cattle perished in December when the *Kalymnian Express* was caught in Cyclone John out of Geraldton.
- (xix) **1999** – 30 cattle lost on the *Buffalo Express* when she sailed out from Geraldton during Cyclone John.
- (xx) **2001** – Two shipments of cattle to Korea were rejected at their destination when local farmers believed the trade would threaten their local ‘Hanwoo’ cattle industry. Six cattle were beaten to death while the remainder had to be held in quarantine and on board ship until the Korean Government were able to move them to slaughter.
- (xxi) **2002** – In February the MV *Norvantes* left Darwin with 1,169 cattle on board en route to Jakarta. 99 animals died when the ship hit bad weather, Report on cause of death is awaited.
- (xxii) **2002** – In June Wellard Exports launched a newly built ship “with animal welfare in mind”, the MV *Becrux*. 900 cattle and 1400 sheep perished or had to be

destroyed on this maiden voyage due to the animals suffering from the excessive heat and humidity as it approached the Persian Gulf.

(xxiii) 2002 – In July/August four consignments of sheep were exported to Middle East ports that resulted in mortality levels in excess of the industry accepted rate of 2%. Details follow.

Cormo Express	-	1064 head of sheep died (2.03% of total)
Corriedale Express	-	6119 head of sheep died (11% of total)
Al Shuwaikh	-	5800 head of sheep died (6.8% of total)
Al Messilah	-	1554 head of sheep died (2.01% of total)

It is understood mortalities were subsequently shown to be higher. Although no official Inquiry information has been handed down, cause was probably due to heat stress suffered by sending animals from Australia's winter climate to the northern summer. Temperatures at that time were in the region of 40 – 45 degrees.

## **6.0 DURING DISEMBARKATION**

- 6.1** Substantial numbers of sheep die during the unloading phase of the voyage. Many ships unload at more than one port and deaths after arrival at the first port are considered as discharge deaths. (\*25)
- 6.2** Strikes and delays have disastrous consequences such as food and water running out and hundreds of animals perishing from starvation and thirst. (\*2 & \*13)
- 6.3** Sheep are sometimes unloaded into make-shift yards where the barriers are inadequate. Eye witnesses report that this has resulted in confused and frightened sheep running over the wharf being chased by dogs and children (\*1) and running into the sea to drown. (\*19)
- 6.4** As many sheep are blind, in their confusion they slow the unloading process (\*7) which results in them being beaten. (\*31)
- 6.5** An eyewitness reported a confused sheep, possibly blind, running the wrong way and jumping from the top deck of the Al Khaleej and splattering on the deck. The animal was still alive but no attempt was made to put it out of its misery. The members of the crew who witnessed the event found it highly amusing. (\*19) The eye witness himself went to the aid of the animal.
- 6.6** An eyewitness in Libya referred to what he saw as "inhumane and brutal" "There were legs hanging out over the sides, blood was dripping down the sides of the ship and as the sheep were herded off they were beaten over their heads with sticks dripping with blood." (\*27)
- 6.7** Another eyewitness similarly reports the brutality and saw a horn ripped from a sheep's head while those that unloaded the animals used metal bars, lumps of wood and pipes to belt the sheep on the head and body as they were being unloaded. (\*19) These animals were still disoriented from the journey and many were blind.

## **7.0 IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

- 7.1 Large numbers of Australian sheep succumb to disease and climatic conditions in the Middle East. Mortalities after unloading sometimes exceed 7%. (\*13)
- 7.2 After unloading, Australian sheep are kept with animals from other countries for 2-3 weeks in holding pens where they are exposed to various diseases such as foot and mouth, sheep pox, rinder pest and screw worm fly from which they have no immunity. (\*38)
- 7.3 These feedlots are often inadequate and have no shelter for sheep unaccustomed to the high heat and humidity. (\*13)
- 7.4 Sick sheep cannot be destroyed as this would be contrary to the Muslim religion (\*33) and because of theft (\*1). They are therefore left to suffer a prolonged death without any intervention..
- 7.5 An eyewitness reports that animals are sometimes purchased at the feedlot and have been seen “caught by one leg, their legs tied tightly with twine, and then they were thrown, one on top of the other in the back of the ute.” (\*33)
- 7.6 Others have been put in the enclosed boots of cars to travel to their destination in the extreme heat. (\*33)
- 7.7 Many travel long distances overland to slaughter houses, packed into trucks like carcasses. (\*31)

## 8.0 SLAUGHTER

- 8.1 Three of the most important considerations for the humane slaughter of livestock are:
- the animal should be slaughtered as near as possible to the point of production.
  - the animal should first be stunned to render it unconscious and insensible to pain until it bleeds to death.
  - death should occur without signs of panic, pain or distress. (\*20)

All three of these considerations are ignored when exporting animals for slaughter.

- 8.2 Australian sheep, cattle and goats are killed without pre stunning in the Middle East. They are fully conscious whilst their throats are cut. (\*7)
- 8.3 An Australian vet reported on the slaughter of sheep and goats in the Middle East. “Sheep and goats were killed, totally without compassion, by cutting their throat and then were left struggling in heaps (fully conscious for between 9 and 105 seconds) until they bled out and died.” (\*20)
- 8.4 The same vet reported:
- ‘it was not uncommon for slaughter men to punish animals which were difficult to handle by hamstringing or other mutilations’. (\*17)
- 8.5 An Australian eyewitness reported on sheep after having their throats cut:
- “the animal did not die immediately. It waved its head about in obvious confusion, trying to stand up and call out as blood gushed from its throat”. (\*33)

**8.6** This same eyewitness reported:

“Some sheep appeared to be struggling and kicking several minutes after slaughter, over and above the normal unconscious reflex reactions. When the heads were severed, after all the animals had had the throat cut, some sheep appeared to react to this by twitching and struggling as though they were still conscious until this moment”. (\*33)

**8.7** In some abattoirs, the slaughtering process is so swift that stuck animals were still conscious when loaded on the lines. (\*34)

**8.8** An eyewitness has reported that in Iran animals were shackled and left hanging upside down for hours before their throats were cut. (\*14)

**8.9** One eyewitness watched five men struggle for 10 minutes to kill a beast. “Some victims are cast, some have their tendons slashed and others have legs cut off to bring them down.” (\*32)

**8.10** In Egypt the tendons in the cattle’s legs may be cut so as not to injure the slaughterer. (\*33)

**8.11** In an abattoir in Bahrain the cattle are contained in an apparatus:

“The animal’s lower legs are held, pressed together by two cushioned trays. The box is then tipped on its side so the animal’s head falls back. Its throat is then cut. It must be an extremely frightening experience for the cattle.” (\*33)

**8.12** Sheep are kept and slaughtered by individuals who have no concern for their welfare. Witnesses have reported half dead animals running around after an amateur has hacked at their throats. (\*34)

**8.13** An eyewitness who spent considerable time in the Middle East reported that some sheep are tethered until needed then their throats are nicked sufficiently to allow the animal to bleed, but not sufficiently to allow it to do so quickly. The animal may take the entire day to die. (\*31)

**8.14** Australian sheep are killed as sacrifice by boys as young as 12. (\*39) It takes a number of attempts before the boys are reasonably proficient so the animals suffer a lingering death.

**8.15** During the Hajj thousands of sheep are slaughtered then bulldozed into a pit for burial. These carefully reared animals have endured this long journey merely for sacrificial slaughter.

## **CONCLUSION**

Much of the information contained above is a reiteration of the findings of the 1985 Senate inquiry into the trade. They are still current as is confirmed by more recent witnesses. In fact there is now more cruelty and suffering with live exports as ewes and lambs are being exported, and the number of cattle being exported, particularly to the Middle East, has increased dramatically. The Senate Inquiry recommended reforms to reduce animal suffering but conceded that “the implementation of reforms will help to reduce but not eliminate stress, suffering and risk during transport of sheep to the Middle East. Therefore a long term solution must be sought.” Most of those reforms have been ignored and the recommendation to

replace the live trade with a carcass trade has been totally disregarded. Even with the most stringent reforms there is no realistic possibility of effectively safeguarding the welfare of the sheep and cattle after they have unloaded in the Middle-East.

***“The heart of the matter is that because the live sheep export trade causes an unacceptable level of suffering; from an animal protection viewpoint it is morally wrong and therefore indefensible. The industry may be profitable but it is not humane (\*20) Harris***

Live exports are a blight on the morality of all Australians. Regardless of the reason given to continue the trade, it must be stopped. There is an alternative

And to quote Senator Janet Powell 8th May 1987 "To say nothing is to be party to this inhumanity".

Live exports are a blight on the morality of all Australians.  
We cannot defend the indefensible.

Further information on the horrors of live exports can be found in the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare, Export of Live Sheep from Australia, June 1985.

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