

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stockies accreditation fast-tracked

Accreditation of livestock handlers is being fast-tracked to ensure enough experienced staff are available to protect the welfare of sheep and cattle on live export vessels.

Under the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL), there must be at least one stockperson accredited by LiveCorp on board each vessel. Their primary role is the care and management of the livestock, working with the crew to ensure feed and water are always available, and treating any health problems.

However, LiveCorp CEO Sam Brown says some stockpersons are nervous about signing up for voyages given global travel restrictions due to COVID-19.

“It’s understandable that not everyone wants to leave the country, knowing they probably won’t be allowed off the ship at the other end to fly home. It means travelling back on the vessel, and facing up to 14 days of self-isolation when they arrive in Australia,” Mr Brown said.

“At the same time, our trading partners are emphasising the importance of the live trade because passenger flights which often also carry chilled and frozen meat have been cut back. Unlike Australia, which produces enough food for three times our population, many of our customers overseas rely on imports for their food security.

“Keeping the livestock export trade moving, along with the rest of the red meat supply chain, will also give the Australian economy a boost by protecting the jobs of a diverse range of people in regional communities.”

The stockperson accreditation will remain valid until 30 September 2020, subject to changes in approval from the regulator and advice on COVID-19.

Mr Brown says the welfare of animals and humans on the vessels and back in Australia is paramount.

“The process we’ve put in place recognises prior learning, as do many other training courses. In this case, that’s experience in areas such as care of livestock and giving them health treatments. Just like the face-to-face course we usually run, everyone has to pass an exam before being accredited.

“The enquiries we’re received so far include provisionally accredited stockpersons, stockpersons who’ve let their accreditation lapse, and people who’ve been working with livestock for many years, both on and off vessels.

“It’s important to note that all vessels have a medically trained person in the crew and carry medical supplies as a matter of course, as well as being able to access expert advice over the phone if necessary.

“Already stringent biosecurity regulations, to ensure vessels are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before being allowed into Australian ports, have also been stepped up.”

For more details and a copy of the stockperson application form, check out the LiveCorp website at www.livecorp.com.au or email livecorp@livecorp.com.au

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