



Media Release

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For immediate release

Livestock export industry commitment to Australian farmers and community: We are caring for your animals overseas

Australian exporters, producers and industry have rejected claims by an animal activist organisation that Australian sheep are regularly mishandled in the Middle East.

CEO LiveCorp, Cameron Hall highlighted the industry's commitment to animal welfare, the work of Australian animal welfare experts based in the region and the significant improvements to animal welfare delivered via investment from farmers, exporters and the Australian Government.

"We want to reassure the Australian community and the thousands of farming families and communities that rely on the trade for their livelihoods that we are committed to the welfare of Australian animals in the markets they are exported to, he said.

"This care is demonstrated through training and education programs for the stockmen and feedlot staff who handle Australian sheep in the Middle East, animal welfare seminars for veterinarians, government representatives and importers, infrastructure programs to improve facilities such as loading ramps and feedlots, the purchase of livestock trucks for "home deliveries" and many other ongoing initiatives.

"We recognise we need to improve animal handling during the three days of the Eid al Adha festival and we're working with importers, feedlots and abattoirs to deliver a program over the next month to improve animal handling during this period."

MLA and LiveCorp's Livestock Services Manager for the Middle East, Peter Dundon, lives and works in the region:

"I live 15km from the feedlot and work there on a regular basis as part of the livestock export industry's animal welfare program. I can assure you that Bahrain Livestock Company Feedlot has good yards and loading facilities and around 1,700 sheep each day are quietly walked onto a single deck semi-trailer and transported the three minute journey to the abattoir that's less than 2km from the feedlot.

"Over 99% of sheep from Bahrain feedlot are handled and transported each year in what we would all consider as being acceptable conditions; no different from walking sheep onto a truck at a farm, saleyard or feedlot in Australia. There's no hitting, dragging or throwing and the good design of the loading facilities makes the process quite easy and stress free.

"During three days of one week of the year, the normal loading process changes as people require live animals for the religious festival, Eid Al Adha. Sheep are sold as "private sales" and do not go directly to the abattoir in the company's truck. It's during this three day period that poor handling footage was taken last year in Bahrain. This period continues to present an animal handling challenge and we are working with feedlots across the region to improve animal handling at this time of year.

The livestock export program is jointly funded by the livestock exporters and producers of Australia

“Our team of animal welfare experts is improving animal welfare in the region, and whilst there are challenges during this particular time of the year, what activists show is not the norm.

“I can assure you that we are caring for Australian animals overseas and are committed to working tirelessly to deliver even further improvements in the countries we export our animals to.”

– ENDS –

- Cameron Hall and Peter Dundon are available for interview
- Images and video footage of Middle Eastern improvements, feedlots and normal animal handling available.

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