

Year in review 2008

Our commitment

In Australia

Increased volumes and contribution

Overseas demand for healthy, quality Australian cattle delivered record returns and surging volumes with a 20% increase in live cattle export numbers contributing record-breaking A\$644 million to the Australian economy.* Australia exported 869,545 cattle last year, an increase of 150,000 from the 719,482 head exported in 2007. The total value of all livestock exports for 2008 including cattle, sheep and goats was A\$974 million for the year.



Australian livestock export industry



Stevedore training

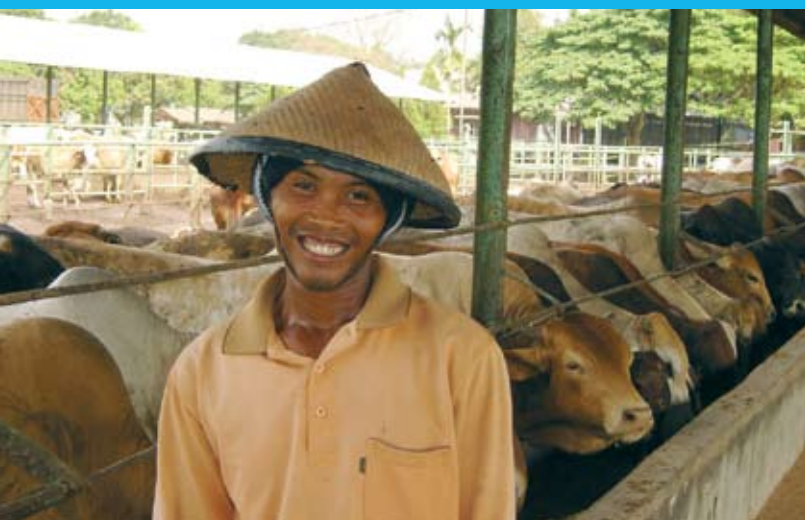
During 2008, 47 stevedores with responsibility for loading livestock vessels attended industry stevedore training courses. These courses equip stevedores with the latest techniques in animal handling to ensure good animal welfare and efficient loading.

Vaccinator training

26 sheep vaccinators were trained to administer vaccines to livestock on farm and prior to loading for the Saudi Arabia market. Qualified vaccinators are required to treat sheep with the appropriate vaccinations to enable entry to Saudi Arabia..

Community awareness

The livestock export industry's new display and support material was launched at the Perth Royal Show in October 2008. A replica pen with sheep stocked to shipboard density was on display and industry members including exporters, stockmen and producers spoke to the public about the livestock export industry, its commitment to animal welfare and importance to the livelihoods of Australian farming families and communities.



* Australian Bureau of Statistics

In overseas markets

Australian Government investment

This year the Australian Government invested over AUD\$2 million in projects in Oman, Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Indonesia and Malaysia. These projects are focused on delivering animal welfare improvements; and projects are supported by funds from Australian producer and exporter levies. Projects included the development and delivery of animal welfare training courses to improve management and handling of animals, installation of infrastructure such as port ramps and abattoir facilities and feedlot design improvements such as shade, water and ventilation. Overseas markets rely on Australian sheep and cattle to feed their local populations and these funds are helping develop the required knowledge and infrastructure to improve animal welfare outcomes.



Port ramps in Indonesia

During 2008 six new port ramps were constructed and installed at the main Indonesian ports of Tanjung Priok, Panjang, Chilichap and Surabaya to enable livestock to move quickly and easily from the ship to the livestock transport truck. A further two ramps are being constructed for other ports.

Port ramps in Oman, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait

New discharge ramps were built and delivered to Muscat Port, Jeddah Port and Kuwait Port to improve unloading of animals into Oman and Saudi Arabia. The new ramps increase the unloading speed of the animals, as livestock walk with ease from the ship to trucks. They are then transported to the feedlot and are quickly back onto feed and water, which optimises animal welfare.

Industry and Bahrain Livestock Company (BLC) transport policy

The 'In the ute, not the boot' initiative was launched in December 2008 during Eid Al Adha to ensure the proper and appropriate transport of Australian livestock and will continue year-round. During the year, sheep are transported from the vessel to the feedlot where they have constant access to cool clean water, shade and fodder. The majority are then transported to an abattoir, while some go to local markets for sale. During Eid Al Adha families and communities purchase livestock for religious reasons, and many are unaware of how to properly transport Australian sheep. The BLC/MLA/LiveCorp education campaign to improve animal handling and transport consisted of advertisements in local papers, posters and signage around the feedlot, instructions on purchase receipts and a team of Australian animal welfare experts based in the feedlot and surrounds to ensure sheep were only transported in appropriate utes or trucks. This initiative successfully ensured all Australian sheep were transported properly from the BLC feedlot. The program will be taken to other markets to improve the transport and handling of Australian sheep across the Middle Eastern region.

Kuwait infrastructure improvements

Kuwait is now the largest importer of Australian sheep, purchasing approximately 1 million sheep per year. Several projects focused on improving animal welfare from the port through to processing were delivered in Kuwait with Industry and Government funding.

Upgrades to the quarantine port shed have made significant improvements to animal welfare through improved airflow and access to water prior to transport to the feedlot, particularly in the warmer weather.

Upgrades to the Kuwait abattoir delivered improvements to four unloading ramps, fixing ramps to make them non-slip and construction of a shade structure over the main receival ramp.

Sheep talkers

These long handled plastic 'flappers' were made by the Australian animal welfare team and distributed to feedlots, ports and transporters across the Middle East. By using the movement of the sheep talkers, stockmen and locals working with Australian animals can move and direct them without having to use noise or force. Locals are trained in how to use the sheep talkers, which are now an essential welfare tool in our overseas marketplaces. Sheep talkers provide a simple and practical method of moving livestock without creating unnecessary stress on the animals.

South East Asia goat workshops

Goat production workshops were held in Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei targeting local farmers who receive Australian goats. These workshops are designed to improve animal welfare through enhancing production techniques, delivering positive outcomes for Australian livestock and helping to ensure the sustainability of the trade.

Middle East training and education

During 2008 our Middle East-based Australian animal welfare experts trained stockmen, veterinarians, feedlot workers and port staff in animal handling and livestock management. Training programs are designed to teach locals the proper techniques for low-stress livestock handling and increase awareness of the importance of good animal welfare.

Indonesian animal welfare improvements

During 2008 the APFINDO (Indonesian Feedlotters' Association) Animal Welfare Taskforce continued to deliver animal welfare improvements in Indonesia. The Taskforce of local Indonesian and Australian animal welfare experts work with abattoir management and staff to improve animal handling and deliver appropriate infrastructure for the humane slaughter of cattle in Indonesia.

Minster Burke's Indonesian visit

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke MP visited Jakarta during August 2008 and toured a local livestock feedlot, viewing Australia's commitment to animal welfare in overseas markets and the importance of the trade to local Indonesian families and communities.



Indonesian animal welfare workshops

An Australian animal handling specialist conducted low-stress cattle handling workshops for over 185 staff in 13 feedlots in Java and Sumatra. Regular reviews and advice on feeding, ration formulation and livestock management were provided by an Australian ruminant nutritionist to feedlots in Indonesia. These workshops are assisting our trading partners improve their management of Australian livestock and deliver good animal welfare outcomes.

Butcher training in Indonesia

Training has been delivered to a range of Indonesian butchers in traditional markets and retail outlets during the year. The training focuses on meat handling, slicing and presentation and is conducted in conjunction with sales promotion programs being delivered in traditional markets and supermarkets.

Australian beef promotion in Indonesia

A campaign to promote beef and help butchers increase sales by highlighting its versatility and nutritional benefits was launched in 2008. Cooking demonstrations gave consumers ideas for beef recipes, posters promoted the nutritional benefits of eating beef and those purchasing 500 grams or more of beef received a free cookbook.

Reopening Australia's cattle trade to Egypt and Libya

The new livestock facility at the port of Sokhna was opened in January 2008. The brand new, high quality facility is known as a "closed system", meaning the entire process from vessel to feedlot to processing facility will be managed in one location by livestock experts and highly trained locals. The first shipment of cattle will arrive Sokhna in 2009.

38,000 Australian cattle were exported to Libya during 2008. This was a result of industry improvements to infrastructure which enabled the recommencement of trade to the Libyan market. Libya is the third biggest export market for Australian cattle and it is expected that strong demand will continue.

Breeding cattle

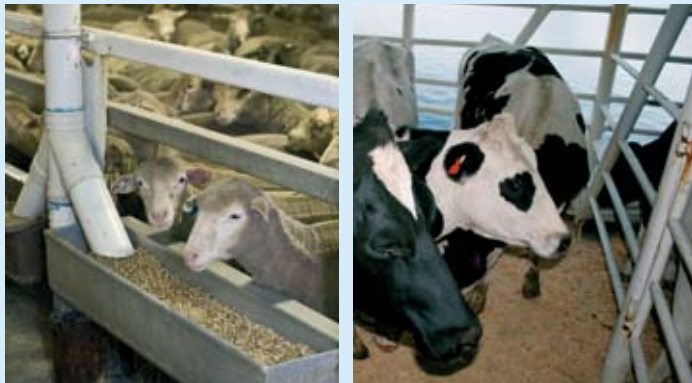
Breeding cattle were again in demand during 2008. The high quality, easy care and disease free status of Australian beef and dairy heifers continue to attract attention from producers and governments around the world. The post arrival performance of Australian cattle is helping to build additional commercial opportunities and furthers the reputation of Australia as a leader in livestock production.

to animal welfare

During transport

Ongoing high success rates

During 2007/08 over 99% of cattle, sheep and goats transported overseas arrived fit and healthy at their destination. This continues the industry's ongoing high success rate for livestock export. Australian animals are cared for on board vessels by a crew of qualified stock-handlers, an AQIS accredited Australian vet (on voyages to the Middle East) and accredited Australian stockmen who monitor animal welfare and care for the livestock on board. All animals have constant access to food and water, space to lie down, ventilation and veterinary care for the entire voyage.



Stockman training

During 2008 32 stockmen and women attended the industry's Stockman Training Course, receiving training and accreditation in all aspects of shipboard animal handling to ensure effective leadership in animal welfare on board vessels.

Air transport

While most Australian animals travel to their destination on livestock vessels, many dairy cattle, sheep and goats are also transported to overseas markets by air. In 2008 over 10,000 dairy cattle, 76,000 goats and 10,000 sheep arrived fit and healthy following a flight to their destination.

R&D priorities

During 2008 existing research and development projects were reviewed and a list of priority projects for 2009 were identified to enable us to further improve the already high industry voyage success rates. Priorities include investigating causes and treatment of salmonellosis/inanition complex, post-arrival livestock management procedures in the Middle East and improving welfare outcomes of shipments of sheep and cattle to the Middle East.



The Livestock Export Program is funded by producers via MLA and exporters via LiveCorp. The program is dedicated to improving animal welfare and providing in-market services to support Australian farmers and exporters.

For more information please email livestockexport@mla.com.au or visit www.liveexportcare.com

