

To Whom It May Concern in the Department of Agriculture and Other Reviewing Bodies:

RE: Middle East Sheep Exports Policy

Name: Lorellie Bow

My Interest in this Matter

I am an 'ordinary' Australian citizen. I grew up on a farm in southern Queensland, where I had ample opportunity to observe and learn about animals first-hand. Without ever being taught, and without any animal protection groups such as have taken up the cause today, I instinctively knew that the animals on the farm were 'people' in their own right. Certainly, they were different to me, but I saw their joy, their fear, their frustration and their suffering. I determined as a child that I would protect animals wherever and however I could. If there is a recommender or decision-maker in this matter who has not had the opportunity to view first-hand the emotions and suffering of animals, I would respectfully suggest that you have no place as a policy maker or recommender in this matter.

My Concerns

It is very clear, both from your processes (ongoing reviews, multiple requests for comment) and your subtle watering-down of recommendations and options, that the government is under extreme pressure from self-interested lobby groups who have no consideration whatsoever for the welfare of the animals under their control.

The very fact that your discussion paper places an emphasis on statistics tells the reader that you have no regard for these sheep and lambs as sentient beings who feel pain and suffer.

The fact that you even offer a 'do nothing, no prohibition' option with a miserably useless monitoring function, is evidence that you have been railroaded by those lobby groups. There are other options. They will take time, effort and money. But live export must eventually be stopped. It is cruel and unnecessary, and should have no place in a caring, civilised society.

Another observation I would make regarding the comment on P6 of the Discussion Paper is that **we should not be catering to cultural preferences of the Middle East**. Let's get our own house in order, and if they don't like chilled meat, that's too bad.

Proposed Policy Option 1

Anyone who has travelled through the Middle East knows that extreme heat last for far more than three months of the northern summer. For that reason, I fully support the assessment of 'shoulder' periods that might extend the prohibition beyond three months. **There should never be an option to reduce the prohibition below three months.** It has already been acknowledged that this option would have minimal further impact on the industry.

Proposed Policy Option 2

Option 2, with trade occurring over just 8 months of the year, is an improvement on Option 1, but still requires careful monitoring for unseasonal early or late peaks in temperature.

Proposed Policy Option 3

This is a recipe for a return to full-on torture of animals and should not be considered. The general public is cynical in the extreme about “HSRA models, thresholds, and so-called “agreed animal welfare indicators”. We simply do not believe that the exporters will comply, nor do we trust the Government to monitor and police such a weak policy.

Proposed Policy Option 4

No civilised and responsible government could countenance a return to this torture, given the outrage of its constituency when it was originally exposed. You will be open to further exposés, and will deserve to be thrown out of office at the first opportunity. There are standards of decency to which civilised people should adhere in this day and age. Whether other parts of the world do or do not, is not our issue, and you would debase yourselves and our country with you if you were to cave in to Middle Eastern demands and cynical, self-interested Australian lobbyists.

I don't have facts to present to you. You know them. What I do have is a view of the ordinary person, who understands now what has been hidden for so long, that animals are not less valuable than humans, just different species. Treat these defenceless beings well, give them at least a decent level of care and compassion.

Your standing as decent human beings is at stake.