



Dr Sue Foster BVSc MVClin Stud FACVSc
Spokesperson, Vets Against Live Export
c/- Lady Barron Post Office
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Dear Dr Foster

Substitution of vets for accredited stockpersons on live export voyages

Thank you for your letter of 5 December 2012 in which you requested information about stockpersons and veterinarians on livestock export voyages, and in which you specifically refer to the November - December 2008 voyage of the MV *Hereford Express*. I regret the delay in responding.

As background, the basis of an accredited stockperson accompanying a livestock export voyage is S5.1(a) of the *Australian standards for the export of livestock* (ASEL), which states:

An accredited stock person must accompany each consignment of livestock and must remain with the consignment until the vessel has completed discharging at the final port of discharge.

Some time after the voyage, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) was alerted to the fact that there was no stockperson onboard during the Fremantle to Singapore segment of the December 2008 voyage of the MV *Hereford Express*. The voyage report of the AQIS Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) demonstrates that together with the vessel's crew, he was able to deliver the level of care that a stock person would have delivered, in addition to conducting his veterinary responsibilities. At the time of the 2008 voyage of the MV *Hereford Express*, the department did not require exporters to list the stockperson in their application for approval of their Notice of Intention (NOI) to export livestock.

Since this time the department has strengthened its processes; in December 2009, the NOI application form was changed to require exporters to name the accredited stockperson who will accompany the voyage and this would then be checked against a list of accredited stock persons. More recently, with the July 2012 adoption of the Tracking Animal Certification for Export (TRACE) system, an NOI application cannot be submitted unless the exporter nominates a stockperson with current LiveCorp accreditation.

The Independent Review into Livestock Exports conducted by Bill Farmer AO also examined the role of both AAVs and stockpersons and made a number of recommendations which have been accepted by the government. AAVs now submit their reports to the department directly. The daily and end of voyage reports are monitored closely by the department and any issues of significance are followed up as appropriate, this would include any indication that the approved person was not on board. The department has also implemented greater engagement of AAVs. These changes have contributed to more robust regulatory oversight of livestock exports.

If you have information to substantiate your assertion that substitution of veterinarians for stockpersons has occurred in the past, and may still be occurring, I strongly urge you to provide this information to the department.

Please note that there are AAVs who are also LiveCorp accredited stockpersons. There may have been instances where an AAV has accompanied a consignment as a stockperson.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Irwin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rebecca Irwin
First Assistant Secretary
Live animal Exports Division
5 February 2013