



**CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER**

Dr Sue Foster  
VALE Spokesperson  
Via email: [info@vale.org.au](mailto:info@vale.org.au)

Dear Dr Foster

Thank you for raising the matter of the minimum feed requirements for dairy heifers detailed in the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL). I appreciate your concerns regarding the risk of hunger and injury for this class of cattle. Dr Mark Schipp is currently on leave, and I am responding on his behalf as acting Australian Chief Veterinary Officer.

Following the completion of the 2023 ASEL update, due to be finalised in November 2023, the department intends to undertake a general fodder review as a priority project. It will focus on fodder quantity, quality and specifications and I understand it will also include a review of the current scientific research on maintenance nutritional requirements for livestock transported by sea, and a review of animal health and welfare data from voyage reporting provided to the department.

Voyage reporting is reviewed by the department daily, with any issues identified addressed with relevant parties while the vessel is on the water, or as soon as possible following completion of the voyage. I have been advised that there is no evidence of systemic injury issues related to fodder availability during voyages under the current export conditions, however the fodder review mentioned above will also analyse this matter.

Thank you for providing fodder calculations and scientific references in your letter. I have provided your letter to the relevant branch, and staff have recorded these references and will consider them in detail during the fodder review.

I appreciate your ongoing engagement with the department, most recently during the 2023 ASEL update. I can assure you that the department supports strong animal welfare standards and that all animals should be treated humanely.

We look forward to being able to provide you with more information following the outcomes of the department's fodder review.

Yours sincerely

Dr Beth Cookson  
Acting Australian Chief Veterinary Officer  
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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