

21 May 2013



MEDIA RELEASE

Government admits new live export rules do not prevent cruelty to Australian animals overseas

The export supply chain assurance system (ESCAS) designed to protect the welfare of Australian animals handled and slaughtered overseas has failed yet again, and this time the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has seen it for themselves.

After Animals Australia's exposure in mid 2012 of Australian sheep being sold at a non-approved market in Kuwait and subjected to cruel slaughter practices, DAFF conducted two visits to Kuwait and confirmed the reports.

The three export companies involved at the time, Emanuel Exports, International Livestock Export and EMS Rural (all of which share the same two directors and shareholders, Graham Daws and Michael Stanton) said that the sheep could have been exported before ESCAS came into effect, or that the sheep might merely have looked like Australian sheep but come from elsewhere. They gave credence to this claim by saying that a veterinarian's report supported these possibilities.

But DAFF found that the sheep were "highly likely to be of Australian origin and were most likely exported under an ESCAS arrangement".

Dr Sue Foster, spokesperson for Vets Against Live Export, said: "This is the first time that DAFF has sent officers overseas to check on cruelty allegations, and more importantly it is the first time that DAFF has been prepared to reject the alternative explanations offered by the exporters.

"One of the most alarming things is that DAFF's investigation found what seemed to be attempts to disguise the fact that Australian sheep were being sent to unauthorised markets. Ear tags that would identify the sheep as Australian had been torn out."

"The exporters' paperwork, and so-called independent audits, claimed that the sheep had stayed inside the approved system. DAFF's investigation shows that this paperwork was probably inaccurate."

"ESCAS has failed again to ensure humane treatment of our animals overseas. This is hardly surprising, given one of the directors of the exporter companies, Graham Daws, wrote to the government some time ago saying ESCAS was way too ambitious. Clearly he was right."

ENDS

For more information contact Dr Sue Foster on 0423 783 689, info@vale.org.au