

Minister for Agriculture

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES QUESTION

Question No 12

Mr Thomson asked the Minister for Agriculture, in writing, on 3 December 2013:

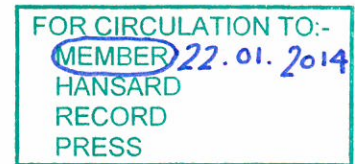
(1) In respect of a recent Federal Court hearing (*Animals' Angels e.V. v Secretary of Department of Agriculture*) concerning a live export voyage which occurred in 2008, is he able to confirm that the court heard that (a) his department was allegedly aware of evidence that there had been overstocking of animals on the voyage, and that a representative of the exporter concerned, International Livestock Export Pty Ltd, was said to have told the onboard vet that overstocking of animals was a regular practice in the live export industry; and (b) an investigator from his department had allegedly heard from two highly experienced live export onboard vets, Dr Lyn Simpson and Dr Mike McCarthy, that overstocking was routine during live export.

(2) What action has been taken by his department against the exporter concerned, or any other exporter who has been proven to have overstocked live export ships.

Mr Joyce – The Minister for Agriculture has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) In the Federal Court hearing on *Animals' Angels e.V.* and the Secretary of Department of Agriculture, I can confirm that the applicant made submissions to the court to the effect that the department was on notice of being informed of overstocking on the voyage and that there was a practice of overstocking live animal export vessels. The applicant also made submissions to the court to the effect that a departmental investigator had spoken to both Dr Lyn Simpson and Dr Mike McCarthy about live animal export practices. The judgment has not yet been handed down.

(2) The allegations of overstocking on the voyage were not proven so no action was taken against the exporter concerned.
The department has applied an additional condition to approvals for livestock export consignments for an exporter previously found to have overloaded a live export ship. This condition requires additional oversight of the loading process by Department of Agriculture staff.



Minister for Agriculture

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES QUESTION

Question No 13

Mr Thomson asked the Minister for Agriculture, in writing, on 3 December 2013:

Can he indicate the Government's position on overstocking in terms of animal welfare, particularly where there is the potential for heat stress or heat stroke, as often occurs on voyages to the Middle East, and what investigations has his department conducted to establish the extent of overstocking of live export ships by exporters.

Mr Joyce – The Minister for Agriculture has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

It is a requirement of the approval of an application to export livestock by sea that the exporter provides the Department of Agriculture with a load plan. The load plan must comply with stocking densities as prescribed by *Standard 4: Vessel preparation and loading* within the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)*.

Load plans for consignments destined to, or through, the Middle East are calculated using Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) software, known as *HotStuff*. Department of Agriculture officers attend the loading of livestock vessels to check that livestock are loaded in accordance with the HSRA and load plan before an Export Permit and Health Certificate can be issued.

The Department of Agriculture has not conducted investigations about overstocking of livestock vessels.