



15th February 2018
MEDIA RELEASE

ANOTHER MIDDLE EAST DISASTER FOR LIVE EXPORT TRADE

The live export trade is again under the spotlight after a disastrous voyage to the Middle East in August 2017. Two thousand four hundred sheep comprising 3.76% of the consignment died aboard the Al Shuwaikh. The exporter involved is Emmanuel Exports of Perth.

In July 2016, the same exporter lost 3027 sheep (4.36%) on a voyage from Fremantle to the Middle East aboard the Al Messilah due to heat stress. Although the cause of the deaths in the recent voyage have not been disclosed it is likely to be due to heat stress given the timing of the voyage.

VALE spokesperson Dr Foster stated “The cause of the high mortality voyage is not yet known but historically, over 30 years, disasters of this magnitude are usually associated with heat stress.

“The Department’s own records including shipboard performance and high mortality voyage reports all identify the significantly increased risk of transporting animals during the Middle East summer. Since 2009, each high mortality voyage to the Middle East has occurred in a peak heat period: August 2009, June 2010, July 2010, August 2010, June 2011, September 2013, July 2016 and now August 2017. The pattern is very obvious: 8 out of 8 Middle East disasters in 8 years occurred in summer/early autumn.

The Keniry Enquiry (2004) into animal welfare in live export recommended “exports should be banned in circumstances where the available evidence indicates that the risks of adverse outcomes are predictably high”

Dr Foster concluded “Clearly the Middle Eastern summer is a proven and predictable risk. The live exporters have not been able to prevent these heat stress events despite decades of opportunity. This is completely unacceptable to the Australian public. The responsible Federal authorities must not allow voyages to the Middle East during the Northern summer to continue.”

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