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Live export: 10–15% more space would achieve nothing

In response to the footage of sheep with heat stress on the *Awassi Express*, the industry has stated that they will look to increasing space by 10–15% on these voyages.

VALE's spokesperson Dr Sue Foster said, "While high stocking density and tiny space allowances exacerbate heat stress, this response to address the problem is ignoring science. With the climate conditions for this voyage in August 2017, it is very possible that had the *Awassi Express* only carried one sheep, it would have died."

"Government and industry now say more research is required. It isn't. It has been done under best case scenarios using healthy, summer acclimatised sheep in ideal conditions – with more than twice the current space allowances, individual pens, low stocking density and good ventilation. These experiments showed that sheep in ideal conditions will develop heat stress when the wet bulb temperature (WBT) exceeds 26°C. The temperature invariably exceeds this on routine voyages to the Middle East in summer. The WBT on the *Awassi Express* was 31°C from Days 5–21 (16 relentless days). At one stage the WBT reached a shocking 37°C, a temperature incompatible with life for many sheep on land let alone at sea.

"Space allowances can be changed. Conditions in the Middle East cannot be changed. These sheep cannot be cooled. Shipboard ventilation merely moves the ambient air around and through the pens, at the ambient temperature and humidity. Shipboard ventilation does not alter WBTs. The results from these industry-funded studies are clear. Industry and government just refuse to utilise the findings from their own studies," said Dr Foster.

Mr Seabrook, President of WA Pastoralists and Graziers Association, is reported as saying "we just need to make damn certain the system is improved to the point where exporters do not put stock in a situation where this can happen again".

In response, Dr Foster said, "The animal science and climate data are all there. The only way we can avoid stock being 'put into that situation' is by stopping live export voyages from an Australian winter to a Middle Eastern summer.

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