



Global report targets Australia as world leader in live export cruelty

A new report, *Beyond Cruelty. Beyond Reason. Long Distance Transport and Welfare of Farm Animals (2008)*, highlights Australia as a world leader in the cruel live export trade of animals for slaughter.

The report into the worldwide long distance transport of animals coincides with a campaign by the Handle with Care coalition, an international alliance of animal protection groups calling for governments to end the practice.

The Handle with Care coalition will release the report at its campaign launch today – Monday, February 11 – at 9.30am on *The South Steyne*, Darling Harbour (near the Australian National Maritime Museum).

International attention is now on the Rudd Government to act and bring an end to the trade – particularly the export of sheep to the Middle East – and work to expand the current trade in chilled and frozen meat from animals humanely transported and slaughtered in Australia.

“The Rudd Government is intent on righting the wrongs on several key issues, and this is now its chance close a dark chapter in our country’s history,” said Handle with Care spokesperson Dr Hugh Wirth. “The live export trade puts to shame Australia’s outstanding record in many other areas of animal welfare, and tarnishes our otherwise good international reputation.”

As the world’s largest exporter of sheep for slaughter, Australia is a major player in a trade which inflicts suffering on millions of animals every year. In 2006 alone, more than four million Australian sheep endured gruelling journeys to the Middle East. Almost 37,000 of these animals died on the trip.

During the journey from Australia to the Middle East, heat stress and diseases such as scabby mouth, pink eye and salmonellosis are common. For sheep that survive the trip, a much crueller fate awaits them in the hands of countries that have no or unenforced animal welfare laws. Despite Australian industry claims that it is helping improve welfare standards in the Middle East, it is common for sheep to be horrendously handled and slaughtered in ways that would neither be legal nor tolerated within Australia.

“The live export industry makes misleading claims about improved transport standards, and handling and slaughter education programs in the Middle East, when in fact their interest is in maximising profits,” Dr Wirth said. “There is no need for this cruel and unnecessary trade, as countries across the Middle East already accept Halal-certified meat from sheep more humanely transported and slaughtered in Australia.”

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For more information and to take action, go to www.handlewithcare.tv/au

Interviews with Dr Hugh Wirth and representatives from the Handle with Care coalition partners will be available. Footage/images will be supplied.



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