

Joint statement

11 December 2012

Unacceptable treatment of cattle in Israel

Inhumane animal handling in an Israeli abattoir, as seen tonight on ABC's 7:30 Report, is unacceptable, says the Australian livestock and livestock export industries.

The treatment of animals seen in the Bakar Tnuva abattoir in Israel is especially disappointing, given the facility was deemed suitable to receive Australian cattle earlier this year.

“The abattoir has taken swift and decisive action which has included the removal of the abattoir manager and other staff seen in the footage mistreating the animals,” said Jock Laurie, President of the National Farmers' Federation.

“We understand that CCTV cameras are to be installed, and at the request of the importer, industry-funded training consultants are currently on the ground in Israel to instigate a comprehensive training program at the facility.”

The Israeli Ministry of Environment and the Department of Police are currently investigating whether criminal charges are to be laid under Israel's *Cruelty to Animals Law*.

The welfare of animals is of paramount concern to the Australian red meat and livestock industry. Australia is the only country, from more than 100 countries across the world that export livestock, which actively works in overseas markets to help improve animal welfare conditions and associated infrastructure and training.

Significant improvements in animal welfare have been made in facilities across Australia's livestock export markets in Asia and the Middle East through the implementation of the new animal welfare regulatory framework – the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) – which will cover 100 per cent of markets by the end of this year. Under ESCAS, all facilities that are approved by the Federal Government to receive Australian animals are regularly monitored to assure the agreed standards of animal welfare are maintained.

The Australian industry strongly supports the Federal Governments regulatory framework and will continue to deliver initiatives that encourage and assist compliance.

“The industry is committed to improving animal welfare,” Mr Laurie said. “Achieving positive results requires a long term investment in animal welfare across all markets. Importantly, we are also seeing Australia's higher standards leading to better treatment of non-Australian livestock in a number of our export countries.”

It is important that Australia remains a part of the livestock export trade, continuing in its role as a world leader in the delivery of positive animal welfare outcomes.

Ends.

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