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## **Exporters call the live sheep trade world-class: we call it criminal**

Evidence released tonight from five routine live sheep voyages shows sheep baking in their own skin, gasping for oxygen, smothered in faeces, unable to lie down to rest, or even reach food or water.

The routine suffering of sheep at sea, documented by a courageous crew member turned whistle-blower, reveals what the live export industry has known about and accepted — for decades. It has also exposed extensive breaches of Australian regulations.

“The scale of neglect and the acceptance of suffering on these shipments is staggering. Sheep producers will be mortified to discover that animals born into their care have ended up literally being cooked alive on live export vessels,” said Lyn White from Animals Australia.

Footage across five shipments to the Middle East shows thousands of sheep suffering severe heat stress; succumbing to heat stroke; sheep caked in melted faeces and urine; injured and sick animals left to die slow and painful deaths; severely decomposed bodies left in pens with living sheep; and pregnant ewes giving birth in awful conditions, and their lambs dying.

“Time and again farmers have been sold barefaced lies by exporters — ‘world’s best standards’, ‘no fear no pain’ commitments — to keep them selling animals to the trade. The scale and deliberate nature of the deception is astounding.”

“And now we know why — the truth kills their trade. No farmer, no politician is going to support an industry whose day-to-day operations inflict such egregious and unnecessary suffering.”

**This export company, year after year, has filled ships with sheep knowing that the vessels will turn into ovens when they reach the heat and humidity of the Middle East summer.**

“Thousands of animals have been slow roasting on these vessels whilst still alive. I doubt whether a more horrific death could ever be inflicted on an animal.”

“Any suggestion that such suffering is not routine, or is a one-off failure of systems, is just a further attempt to deceive. The Directors involved in these shipments have had 37 voyages since 2005 on which over 1,000 animals have perished on each shipment.”

**Vision from all shipments shows that the basic needs of sheep — to access food, water and rest on three-week long journeys — are being severely restricted due to standard stocking densities.**

“One look at these overcrowded pens and you can see the ruthless disregard for the well-being of these animals. They are being treated like cargo, not living beings.”

“Regulations require the sick and injured to be promptly treated, yet they cannot even be found amongst the mass of sheep in pens. It is heart-wrenching to see the dead, dying and living co-existing in a bog of their own faeces when they reach the Middle East.”

**Evidence provided by the whistle-blower also reveals that mortality reports are being falsified and vets heading home on flights when sheep are still suffering on ships.**

“Why would anyone believe the mortality figures supplied by this industry when both the dead and living are being thrown overboard and Australian vets employed by the exporters are just reporting the figures they’ve been ordered to report?”

**Animals Australia has welcomed the strong statements from Ministers Littleproud and MacTiernan (WA Minister for Agriculture) but has called for a unified, urgent response.**

“The vision is shocking — but what is equally shocking is that each of these shipments was approved by the Australian government.”

“This is no longer about party policy, this is about laws being broken and repeat offending exporters getting the green light to subject sheep to further abuse. This cannot be allowed to continue.”

“The reality that this industry has been hiding from Australian farmers is nothing short of horrific. Sheep exporters have been making hundreds of millions of dollars and all the while subjecting animals to the most unimaginable cruelty.”

“Now that they have been caught out, their offer to reduce stocking densities just shows how shameless they are. Do they really think that Australians will accept putting 50,000 animals at risk of cooking alive rather than 60,000?”

“Most Australian sheep farmers do not export their sheep, and those who have supplied their sheep to this trade will be feeling very aggrieved today — their trust in the industry and the regulator is in tatters.”

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**FOOTAGE AND IMAGES:** <http://animalsaustralia-media.org/uploads/live-sheep-export>