Analysis Of Animal Rights In Australia

Imagine travelling long distances in a ship with a stressful and unfamiliar environment, with constant noise and movement from the seas. It is hot, with hardly any space to breathe, as everyone else is stacked up together. There is no room to rest or lie down, so you must stand until your legs give up. It is unsanitary, which leads to contamination of the little food provided for you. You are denied basic needs such as proper access to food, water, rest and care. You witness others around you distressed and dying from these conditions. You are fearing for your life, just waiting for your time to come.

This is the harsh reality for many Australian animals on board live exporting ships. Every year, around three million live animals are exported from Australia for slaughter overseas. This money making, decades-old industry imports cattle, sheep, goats, cows, buffalo and even alpacas to be shipped long distances in conditions which result in illness and death for a significant number of individuals. This industry entails unnecessary pain and suffering for all the animals involved and should be banned for good.

Exported to countries with no laws to protect them, these animals can suffer unspeakable abuses. The first exports of live sheep from Australia took place over 150 years ago. These animals are living cargo and are valued only for the meat their bodies can produce. These live animal exports deny the protection of cruelty laws against animals and take Australian animals outside the reach and protection of Australian animal welfare laws and regulations. It would be distressing to most to know that these animals are being killed while fully conscious. As an Animal Rights Activist, my goal is to expose animal abuse and mistreatment within live animal exporting and gain public awareness to empower and inspire the community to adopt cruelty-free lifestyle choices.

First of all, this is an ethical and moral issue. It has been proven that animals have the ability to suffer physically and psychologically and be consciously aware, meaning they deserve to be respected and protected from harm — as we would wish for ourselves.

The issue is that live exporting has become a big business. Australia's beef cattle exports are worth $1.35 billion annually, with dairy cattle exports being worth about $170 million, sheep exports being worth $250 million, and goat exports valued at about $10 million. In short, it is a huge money-making business. Although some may argue this is beneficial to the economy, animal welfare regulations are being violated, costing millions of innocent lives.

Australia's live export industry has experienced significant scrutiny by animal welfare groups since 2003, with the RSPCA opposing this issue. Over 550,000 animals are reported to have died en route during live export journeys between 2000-2012. During 2017 alone, Australia exported 2.85 million living animals in shipping containers and airplanes.

Although Australia is the only country that requires specific animal welfare regulations for livestock exports, the outcomes just aren’t good enough, and are often ignored.

Dr Lynn Simpson, former live export veterinarian, was one of Australia’s most experienced and

respected live export veterinarians. She sailed 57 voyages, worked for every exporter in the country and consulted widely to industry. Dr Lynn was legally authorized to monitor and report conditions that she was seeing for Animal Health and Welfare onboard the ships. From her first voyage she had concerns about the treatment of animals on board the live export ships. Dr Lynn described the ship to be unsanitary, with animals in appalling conditions, where there is pain and suffering stating these findings are inexcusable and confronting. Rivers of faeces contaminate drinking water and food tubs. Animals covered in waste, suffocate or die of heat exhaustion. Inadequate bedding causes injuries which can lead to euthanasia.

The problem is that there is still no legal requirement for an independent veterinarian on board these ships, meaning most of these ships travel without a veterinarian at all. Proposed new live export shipping standards still won’t protect animals from extreme suffering and death.

So, what can we do to help solve this issue? We must start by acknowledging that every animal exported for slaughter is an individual. They breathe, feel and yearn. They fear violence and pain every bit as intensely as we do. The goal is to live in a world where all animals are treated with compassion and respect and are free from a life of cruelty. Make your voice heard for the victims of live export. Sending a message to your MP or donating to supporting organisations can assist in change. Will you join thousands of caring people to help end illegal animal abuse – before another death ship leaves our shores? Let’s help change their world together, for a kinder humanity.