

Media Statement

3 May 2013

## **Shocking cattle cruelty in Egypt**

Australia's livestock export sector has today been shocked and deeply distressed by video footage of extreme animal cruelty in Egypt.

Industry spokesperson Australian Livestock Exporters' Council (ALEC) CEO Alison Penfold said today:

"I feel distraught. These acts are horrific. The outrageous cruelty has left me and my industry colleagues disgusted and horrified.

"No one in our industry, and no Australian, accepts such treatment of animals, and I believe the Egyptian authorities will not tolerate this."

The videos are extremely disturbing:

- One shows the vicious, cruel and clumsy emergency slaughter of an injured animal
- The other shows appalling practices during the slaughter process.

Though yet to be confirmed through the investigation process, it is believed the cattle came from Australia last July – when Australia's Egyptian exports halted pending resolution of unrelated issues regarding HGP usage.

Ms Penfold said current information indicates the cruelty was videoed at two Egyptian abattoirs: one last October, and one in April this year. Those cattle are owned by Egyptian interests.

Ms Penfold said she has been in constant contact with the Australian Government, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Australian exporters.

"We completely support and will assist the fullest possible investigations in both countries of how these events could be possible, and how to stop a repeat of this behaviour," she said.

"While such cases are very few, and the vast portion of live export achieves high standards, such unconscionable cruelty cannot be tolerated and our industry will eradicate it."

Ms Penfold said the sector has voluntarily suspended exports to the facilities until there is evidence that practices and procedures comply with international animal welfare guidelines.

"This means no cattle exports to Egypt in the foreseeable future," Ms Penfold said.

Cattle exports to Egypt were banned for some years after 2006 when cruelty was discovered at the Bassateen abattoir there. Export resumed under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Egyptian governments designed to prevent cattle being shipped to the Bassateen abattoir.

Ms Penfold said she understood that Animals Australia had provided the video to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in the last 48 hours. Livestock export sector bodies were provided access to it today.

“The welfare of the remaining 3,000 Australian cattle held in these facilities is our highest priority,” Ms Penfold said.

“Exporters are working now with the Egyptian operators of the facilities to address the welfare issues immediately and we await further information from the Australian Government as to the Egyptian authorities’ response,” Ms Penfold said.

The two supply chains to the abattoirs in Egypt operate under different and complex commercial arrangements.

The Australian livestock export industry sector, including representative bodies ALEC, National Farmers’ Federation and Cattle Council of Australia, remain committed to working with the Australian Government and through the international animal welfare agency, OIE, to achieve continuous improvement in global animal welfare.

**Ends.**

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