



Wednesday, 2 February 2011

Bobby Calf TOF RIS Submissions
Animal Health Australia
Suite 15 26-28 Napier Close
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Submission regarding the proposed standard amendment to sB4.5 – which amendment would be incorporated in the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines – Land Transport of Livestock (‘the Standards and Guidelines’)*

I write on behalf of the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre’s Animal Law & Education Project (‘the Project’). The Project is comprised of lawyers, law students and animal carers. It seeks to advance animal welfare through the legal system and to engage in law reform and community education activities to improve the legal protection of animals.

The Project writes formally to advise you of its concerns regarding the proposed amendment to the treatment of Bobby calves in sB4.5 and to be incorporated in the *Standards and Guidelines*.

It is the Project’s view that the proposed changes are cruel and thus can not to be incorporated into the standard. Denying Bobby calves liquid food and water for thirty hours has been identified as cruel under the current Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Cattle.

- CI 5.11.1 Young calves are very susceptible to stress and disease and should not be exposed to management procedures which aggravate this situation.
- CI 5.11.2 ... Bobby calves being transported or awaiting sale or slaughter *should not be deprived of appropriate liquid feed or water for more than 10 hours.*

Concerns regarding the scientific study

The Project also has concerns about the scientific assessment of the welfare effects on Bobby calves deprived of nourishment for thirty hours during transport. The focus of the scientific study appears to have been whether the

16 Carrington St, Lismore, 2480 PO Box 212 Lismore 2480
Administration & Legal Service 02 6621 1000 Fax 02 6621 1011
Tweed Valley Office PO Box 683 Murwillumbah 2484
Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service 02 6621 1022 1800 649 135 Fax 02 6621 1033
Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service 1300 720 606 Fax 02 6621 1055

ABN 98 071 395 652



thirty hours caused any stress *additional* to transport and not whether it is itself a stressful practice or has any associated welfare effects.

The Project's strong view is that, for a valid welfare conclusion to be drawn, the nutrition and hydration issues must be examined in isolation as well as in combination with the transport issue. Furthermore, the study's conclusion was not that there were no effects but that there were no significant effects. Some effects, most notably those related to blood glucose, were noted and were also attributed to the deprivation of nutrition for thirty hours. The Project also notes that the term 'significant' is a value judgement that requires an overall assessment to be made in the context of all the facts. Whether the effects were significant or not was determined in part by reference to existing minimum standards which, themselves, have already been questioned from a welfare perspective.

Section 8(2) of the *Prevention of Cruelty To Animals Act 1979* (NSW) imposes of positive duty to provide animals with adequate food, water and shelter and introduces a test for a breach of this duty; namely, that the animal/s must have access to clean water during a 24 hour period. While there are exemptions for stock animals in drought conditions, the clear legislative intent is to establish prima facie cruelty when animals are denied food and water for more than a 24 hour period. It is common sense that such a restriction would be experienced even more harshly by young suckling animals.

The Project notes that the RSPCA and Animals Australia have already observed that the proposed changes prioritise economic advantage to the dairy industry over significant and unnecessary suffering to young animals. For the same reasons of animal welfare and animal ethics, the Project also opposes the proposed amendment.

Consistently with these peak bodies, the Project urges Animal Health Australia to reject the proposed amendment to sB4.5 of the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines – Land Transport of Livestock*.

Yours faithfully,

Angela Pollard
Centre Manager