



Melissa Parke MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FREMANTLE

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

2 February 2011

To Whom it May Concern,

Bobby Calf Time-off Feed RIS Submission

I write to add my strong support to the submissions made by Animals Australia and RSPCA Australia in calling for Animal Health Australia (AHA) to retain the existing regulation with respect to the permitted time-off feed for bobby calves, and to reject extending the maximum time-off feed for bobby calves during transport to 30 hours.

I strongly oppose the proposal made by the Australian dairy industry to allow bobby calves to go without liquid feed for up to 30 hours before slaughter. The Australian public is largely unaware of the way in which the dairy industry operates and it is essential that bobby calves, an economically low-end by-product of the industry, are treated humanely and ethically in the course of their short lives.

It would be unethical and cruel to apply a standard that allowed calves to go without food for 30 hours when they would normally suckle five times a day, or once every 4-5 hours. The existing relevant standard (5.11.2) in the Code of Practice for Cattle states that calves should not be deprived of feed or water for more than 10 hours. Reform in this area ought to be directed at the general issue of compliance and enforceability, rather than at weakening the existing unenforceable standards.

Animals Australia and the RSPCA have recommended in previous submissions on the *Guidelines* to AHA that a strict standard be imposed to ensure that bobby calves are at least 10 days old when transported. At present there are no standards to this effect, and most farmers strive to transport calves at five days old, when they are still weak and vulnerable to exhaustion and hunger. Further, as there is no

Attadale

Atwell

Aubin Grove

Banjup

Beaconsfield

Beeliar

Bibra Lake

Bicton

Cockburn Central

Coogee

Coolbellup

East Fremantle

Fremantle

Hamilton Hill

Hammond Park

Henderson

Hilton

Jandakot

Kardinya

Munster

North Coogee

North Fremantle

North Lake

O'Connor

Palmyra

Rottnest Island

Samson

South Fremantle

South Lake

Spearwood

Success

Wattleup

White Gum Valley

Willagee

Yangebup

requirement within the *Guidelines* for the farmer to record the time of the last feed and communicate that to the transport agent, there is the potential that time-off feed could stretch to a considerably longer period than the 30 hours that is proposed.

Consequently, as Animals Australia have outlined, even though bobby calves are produced and dealt with as an almost waste product of the dairy industry, it should be expected of agricultural production in Australia that bobby calves are fed regularly, transported, handled and slaughtered as humanely as possible.

As the representative of the Fremantle electorate, a community which on a number of issues has expressed its strong support for higher animal welfare standards and regulatory systems, I call on the AHA to reject a revised 30 hour time-off feed standard for bobby calves. I also call on the AHA to recommend a maximum of 10 hours off feed for bobby calves, with better enforceability provisions and compliance resources, and an explicit requirement that feed times be communicated between producer and transport agent.

Yours sincerely,

Melissa Parke MP

Federal Member for Fremantle



cc: Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry