

Animal Welfare Standards Public Consultation

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Submission from:

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I write to express my concerns in relation to the Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals: Land Transport of Livestock, particularly in regards to the standards and guidelines in relation to the transportation of cattle.

Standard SB4.8 Approved methods of humane destruction for:

- ii) *calves* are firearms, captive bolt, lethal injection or blunt trauma; blunt trauma must only be used when there is no other approved option for humane destruction, and only on calves that are less than twenty-four hours old.

This standard fails to adhere to the most basic principles of humane destruction. There is no clarification of the meaning of 'blunt trauma,' leaving it open to broad interpretation. The standards do not specify the type of material to be used in administering the blow, the part of the body to which the blows can be administered or the expected number of blows that should be administered in order to kill the calf. For example, this standard would allow for a calf to be killed slowly and painfully by a number of blows administered by an ineffective object. This standard does not reflect the expectations of the Australian people, the vast majority of whom would be shocked and disgusted that this was a legally sanctioned practice. This standard is in direct conflict with the policy objective of 'reasonable animal welfare outcomes.'

In order to fulfill the most fundamental objectives of the policy objective the only acceptable methods of destruction of calves are firearms, captive bolt or lethal injection. The handlers in the transportation of calves must be obligated to ensure that these options are readily available. The guidelines in GB4.19 are preferable to the above standards, as this ensures that cows and calves may only be killed using a forearm, however this guideline must be a standard if it is to have any significance.

Guideline GB4.2 A decision to transport cattle with one of the following conditions should be made after considering the welfare of the animal concerned and the treatment and management options. The condition include lethargy, profuse diarrhoea, disease, wound or abscesses.

This guideline is completely inadequate in addressing the basic premises of the policy objective. The guideline indicates that depending on the opinion of the handlers, it is acceptable for a cow or calf that is significantly sick, diseased or in pain to be transported for long periods alongside other animals. The expectation that the welfare of the animal concerned and the treatment and management options will be considered places little, if any, responsibility on the handlers, and allows the animal to be transported based on the judgement and decisions of people who are likely to be unqualified to make such decisions. In a situation where a cow is suffering from lethargy, profuse diarrhoea, disease, wound or abscesses, any decision in regards to potential transport of the cow must be made by a veterinarian. This guideline must be a standard if it is to have any significance.

I urge you to consider these suggestions, as I believe that they are representative of the opinions of the Australian community, who believe that we have a basic duty of care to the animals that we use for food. The above recommendations must be incorporated into the Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals: Land Transport of Livestock in order to meet the necessary specifications for the protection of livestock transported by land.

Regards

Katherine O'Grady