



CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

29 November 2019

Cattle Council of Australia's submission on the implementation of the ASEL by sea Review Recommendations

Cattle Council of Australia (Cattle Council) appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the implementation of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL).

Cattle Council is the peak industry body representing Australian beef cattle producers and advocates on behalf of the broader cattle industry, including the families and communities whose livelihoods depend on the future of the livestock export industry. With over 1,095,325 head of Australian cattle annually exported (to over 23 countries), at a value of A\$1.2 billion (export value), it is vital that Australia has an efficient and clear set of standards that enable ASEL to be easily understood and utilised by those in the livestock export industry.

As a member of the Northern Australian Live Export Working Group (NALEWG), Cattle Council endorses the submission to the review provided by the NALEWG. There are however, a number of points that the Cattle Council would like to reinforce, that have been articulated in previous submissions to the ASEL Review.

Cattle Council are supportive of Recommendation 7:

“That the standards require that cattle and buffalo over 500kg may only be exported in accordance with a heavy cattle/buffalo management plan to be agreed with the department. The welfare of cattle and buffalo over 500kg should also be monitored over the coming 12 months to assess whether an absolute upper weight limit is needed in the standard.”

Increased mortality risks and poor animal welfare outcomes associated with transporting heavy buffalo by sea are of concern to Cattle Council. Cattle Council asserts that feral buffalo over six years of age or over 500kg should not be exported as these animals pose the highest mortality and human health and safety risks.

Weighing individual animals is supported by Cattle Council, as group weighing could potentially allow too many out of specification animals (too heavy or too light) in a consignment. It would be reasonable to allow for a tolerance factor either side of a weight specification, although as live buffalo exports present a specific risk profile, it is the belief of Cattle Council that every individual buffalo must meet a weight specification prior to export.

As buffalo have a different metabolism to cattle, they are more prone than cattle to suffer heat stress during a voyage at sea. Cattle Council contends that they should be allocated the coolest and best ventilated area of the ship to mitigate against poor animal welfare outcomes.

Cattle Council considers that all feral or free-range buffalo should spend at least 14 days in an approved RP before export, and that each individual buffalo should be inspected in the RP prior to loading. To ensure optimal animal welfare outcomes on the voyage, it is in the exporters best interest to be the party responsible for reporting mortality incidences.

40
YEARS

**CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF REPRESENTING
AUSTRALIAN BEEF CATTLE PRODUCERS**

Cattle Council of Australia Ltd (ACN: 625 194 096)

Cattle Council of Australia Incorporated (A2929)

Locked Bag 9 KINGSTON ACT 2604 Ph: 02 6269 5600

E-mail: cca@cattlecouncil.com.au Web: www.cattlecouncil.com.au



Cattle Council have asserted in previous submissions to the ASEL review that a 30-day limit for valid pregnancy testing apply. Therefore, Cattle Council supports Recommendation 16 that states:

“That the standards allow the department to extend the validity of a pregnancy test beyond 30 days only where necessitated by circumstances outside the exporter’s control and where the exporter can demonstrate that the extension will not impact on animal welfare outcomes. That decision should be delegated to regional veterinarians, rather than requiring a formal dispensation from the Canberra office.”

Cattle Council maintains that the rate should be maintained at 30 days with a tolerance factor for exporters and registered premises (RPs) that experience delays. Cattle Council believe that extending the validity of a pregnancy test beyond 30 days as the norm, could call into question the accuracy of the testing, as well as encouraging poor practice and potentially poor animal welfare outcomes.

Cattle Council is supportive of Recommendation 19, which states:

“That the standards require that a mortality report be provided for each consignment at the time it leaves the registered premises.”

It is the belief of Cattle Council that it is in producers’ best interest to have as much information as possible, including mortality information from the RP, to assist in identifying possible supply or voyage issues.