



Live export

IN support of the northern cattle industry and last Thursday's rally held at Roebuck Plains station, Broome, on the same morning, at the Great Southern Saleyards, I took signatures for a petition requesting the re-opening of the Indonesian live export trade.

Over 70 signatures were obtained in a short period of time and the general feeling from all that were present was the decision to close the industry was unfair and the consequences not considered adequately.

The farmers, cattle buyers and livestock agents present came from all over the Great Southern and it was interesting to see how upset they were, not only because the influx of northern cattle will impact on prices in the south but because they genuinely thought the decision had been grossly unfair.

The financial impact on northern Australia cannot be underestimated as the repercussions affect a broad range of industries.

In addition, it must be remembered, "this year's steers have to make way for this year's calves".

Many places, if unable to shift their cattle, may become overstocked and this in turn will impact upon the health and wellbeing of the remaining stock.

LINDA GRAY
Farmer and ex-pastoralist
 Redmond

G'DAY Australia,

Let me introduce myself.

I am a primary producer. For my entire life I have been involved in primary production.

I would like to think that this qualifies me as a professional in my trade. So what does my trade involve?

Well firstly, I produce livestock. This makes me a whole host of things. The three most important and relevant of these qualifications are thus:

Firstly, that I am a responsible carer of animals. I do this to the best of my abilities.

My job, therefore, is to ensure I produce healthy, happy and well-cared for livestock and that, in the process, these animals have the best

life afforded to them as possible.

So, I guess that makes me an animal liberationist. If I was not then I would go broke.

Secondly, I am responsible for maintaining land, be that farmland or rangeland (I have and will continue to work in both).

My job here is to maintain that land to the best of my ability.

I do this for three reasons:

- For the environment
- Because good land management has a positive affect on the quality and welfare of my livestock
- And finally so that I do not go broke.

So therefore I also regard myself as an environmentalist.

Thirdly, I am a father and loving husband.

I have a responsibility to provide for my family to the best of my ability and for the sake of their and my well being. And also so we do not go broke.

I do these things because I love my land, my animals and my family.

To continue to achieve all of this, I must rely on markets and common-sense work practices that I and others around me deem fit for me to operate with.

Do I care about live export and other animal welfare and environmental issues? Of course I do!

However, if someone else is making these decisions for me then my opinions are irrelevant.

Do I care what happens to my livestock once they leave my property? Of course I bloody well do!

And I would like to think the people that I have trusted to take them on, for whatever reason that may be, are professional, know their responsibilities and will carry on the work that I have begun with the same enthusiasm as I have.

In most circumstances I have found this to be the case.

I, as did my whole family, saw the Four Corners footage and totally agree that it was not acceptable in any way, shape or form.

However, we must work diligently to weed out these few, very rotten eggs from what is otherwise a relatively healthy and ever improving basket.

Yes we should take action, but it must be controlled and take into consideration all aspects of the industry.

We must be proud of the fact we are world leaders in animal welfare reform.

A point that is constantly overlooked in this debate. Live export will continue the world over, consumers of the world demand and require this, but not necessarily with the same care and effort to reform that Australia is attempting to achieve.

Any animal be they human or otherwise must be afforded this right.

We, as Australians, are, or at least were, and in many instances still are, showing the way.

Decisions should be based on fact and this is a fact.

As a producer, what does concern me is when people, be they Governments, activists, do-gooders, marketers, journalists or even the general public, start making ill-informed, biased, one-sided decisions that result in the mistreatment of my, or anyone else's animals.

If these decisions are detrimental to the degradation of lands, mine or anyone else's livestock, or the livelihood and welfare of mine or anyone else's family, be that here, or in any country, then those people will and should be held accountable for their actions.

So, make your "well-informed decisions", go to your rallies, vote for your politicians.

This is a democracy.

But be warned, the decisions you make have consequences.

And I plead with you, think before you act, as these consequences may be detrimental to what it is you are trying to achieve, they may be lasting, and not only will you have to live with them, you will also have to pay.

I ask this of all of you for the sake of the country, the people who maintain care for and love this country, and the ultimate welfare of the animals you are trying to protect and that we love so much.

IAIN NICHOLSON
 New Norcia

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MAKE no mistake, Lyn White is not just about stopping cruelty in abattoirs in Indonesia, for which I do applaud her.

Nor is she just about stopping the live export trade, which has been unjustly touted as cruel in itself.

Animals Australia is about making protein production from animals unviable for farmers so we all have to become vegetarians or worse — bloody vegans.

It is about inflicting their ideals on the rest of the community.

Well get this Lyn, human beings are omnivores, which if you did not realise means that they eat meat to survive.

So if this is all about stopping cruelty to animals are you now going to turn your attention on the rest of the animal kingdom and stop them from being cruel to other animals.

And when you have that sorted out are you going to then go on and campaign for the poor plants that have to be eaten for other species to survive.

The pain and the anguish they must have to go through having to pass through another creature's digestive system.

Lyn, stick to what you are good at which is exposing real animal cruelty and highlighting it so it can be stopped.

But stop inflicting your personal ideals of being a vegan on the rest of us.

JOHN HASSELL
Pingelly

HOW fortunate for the Government! The Four Corners exposé of cruelty in some Indonesian slaughterhouses has taken the climate change nonsense off the front pages of the papers. This is a scandal of gigantic proportion; it has the capacity to devastate large areas of rural Australia, particularly in WA.

Someone has to be made accountable and that should be Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA).

This unrepresentative organisation, which meat producers are forced to fund, either knew or should have known what was going on in a small number of Indonesian abattoirs.

I have spoken to a well-regarded

person in the trade who tells me that he went to see MLA in 1988 about a new slaughter box that would have substantially upgraded killing facilities and was bluntly told that they were very happy with the status quo.

This organisation is a cosy bureaucratic club, and like all bureaucrats, they talk to other bureaucrats.

MLA bureaucrats obviously do not get down to the lower levels where the processing takes place.

If they did, they would have known that the Indonesian slaughtermen work with very cheap and inadequate hoop iron knives.

Allowing this is, in itself, an indictment of MLA.

It should be condemned and it should be wound up and replaced with a body composed of people whose heads were on the block if things were not right or obviously improving.

Secondly, the role of Animals Australia and Four Corners needs to be examined.

They made no attempt to provide any balance by visiting any of the many abattoirs that meet acceptable standards.

They sat on their footage for four months before they showed it to the industry, therefore they can hardly claim that they have any deep concern for animal welfare.

It should be remembered that these cattle were not shipped to the abattoirs - they were all sent to feedlots for about four months to be fattened.

In these establishments the animals are treated well, a fact attested to by the obvious good condition of the animals filmed.

I have no doubt that appalling conditions exist in some slaughterhouses but they are the antithesis of Islamic culture that requires animals to be treated with respect.

Given the enthusiasm of Indonesian workers for appearing on TV, it is entirely conceivable that they were encouraged to exaggerate the process.

I am reminded of the film "Good Bye Joey," a film in the eighties that was supported by the Greens and purported to show how kangaroo culling was conducted.

The film did enormous damage to the industry.

Not much publicity was given to a court case some 18 months later

which saw people convicted for cruelty to animals and the whole film was shown to be a fraud.

Thirdly the role of the Government needs to be reviewed. Its knee jerk reaction in banning all shipments does not distinguish between the good and the bad.

It was diplomatically foolish and will, unless quickly resolved, prove to be detrimental to animal handling in Indonesia and devastating to rural Australia.

While this is a section of the community from which they do not garner many votes, it is vitally important to all Australians and to Indonesian consumers.

What we should have from Canberra is consultation not precipitous action designed to placate their Green partners.

GRAEME CAMPBELL
Kalgoorlie

THE Federal Government should use commonsense and compromise to keep the live cattle trade industry functioning.

Like everyone else who has seen the videos of animal cruelty in some Indonesian abattoirs, I was appalled and disgusted.

As a farmer who has processed my own sheep for family meat I know there is a right way and a wrong way to handle animals.

However, I understand that there are some abattoirs in Indonesia which already use stun guns and satisfy Australian handling standards.

For the sake of producers whose incomes are at risk, I implore the Federal Government to consider a compromise to at least allow export to those approved facilities while a broader solution is implemented.

My overwhelming preference is that Australian cattle only be shipped to sites where stun guns are used.

However, I recognise that this is not likely to occur in some of the smaller abattoirs where only a few cattle are processed each day, and I support the suggestion of the president of the United Beef Breeders Association (*Farm Weekly*, June 9) that tipping cradles could be installed to humanely immobilise those animals.

The cradles are sturdy, easy to



transport, need little maintenance, simple to operate, and don't require a power supply.

A permanent, expanded Australian inspectorial service should also be set in place to routinely monitor handling and halal procedures.

I recognise that the Federal Government is trying to buy some time to come up with an overall solution, but in the meantime producers are hurting and cattle still need to be fed and maintained.

Surely a sensible and humane compromise involving approved facilities is not too much to ask to keep the industry moving in the interim.

BRIAN ELLIS
MLC

THE Coalition like all Australians is appalled at the treatment of animals in the abattoirs in Indonesia featured

on the ABC's 'Four Corners'.

We will not tolerate the mistreatment of animals.

We support the suspension of trade of Australian live cattle to facilities that fail to comply with acceptable practices.

However this matter has been poorly managed by the Gillard Government.

The Government has known about the practices in Indonesia for a month (before 'Four Corners' aired its story) and yet failed to address these issues in a targeted and timely way.

The Minister should have investigated the claims, and where proven, immediately suspended live trade with the abattoirs that fail to comply with the declared standards.

Instead, the Government's failure to act promptly, has led to the unfortunate circumstance today where they have applied a blanket suspension across all Indonesian abattoirs - those

that have failed to comply with appropriate standards and those that have complied and operate consistent with animal welfare practices.

By acting in this way, the Gillard Government has put at risk Australia's entire live cattle trade with Indonesia which represents almost half (47 per cent) of Australia's total live cattle market.

There was a better way to handle this issue - Labor could have suspended rogue abattoirs and instead restricted trade to abattoirs that meet our animal welfare expectations (only).

This failure to act prudently and in a timely way has left cattle producers and exporters unnecessarily twisting in the wind.

RICK WILSON
Liberal Candidate for O'Connor