



Preparing shipper sheep

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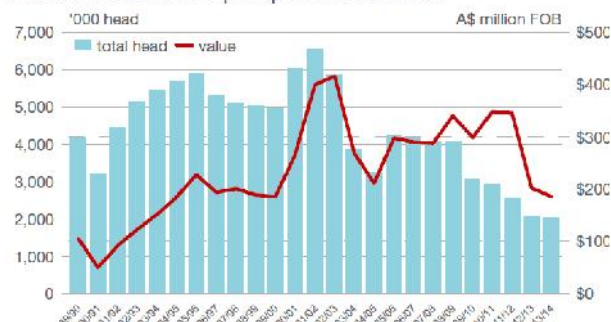
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Live export is big business

- 2013-14, Australia exported 2.02 million sheep. 97% sheep to the Middle East
- WA: 1.7 million sheep; \$154 million

Australian live sheep exports and value



(MLA, 2014)

Shipper sheep

- Generally wethers 1-4 years old, 40 kg+
- Destination markets: mostly Middle East
- Sheep spend time in registered premises before shipping (minimum 3 clear days)
- Ship voyage takes 2-3 weeks

Regulations - *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL)*


- <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/animal-plant/animal-welfare/standards/version2-3/australian-standards-v2.3.pdf>
- Healthy
 - not emaciated or over fat (BCS 2-4 out of 5)
 - walking, moving, behaving normally
 - no diarrhoea or bloat
 - no skin lesions
 - no respiratory infection (eg discharge, cough)
 - ewes not pregnant (Preg test within 30 days of export)

ASEL requirements - Wool

- S1.19 wool not more than 25 mm in length, 10 days or more off shears; or if shorn during the 10 days before export, must be in sheds on the registered premises.
- Have them shorn ahead of time – more than 10 days before sent, or allow time for them to be shorn at the registered premises.

S1.7 Rejection criteria

- Fail to meet requirements of protocol/import permit, such as sex, type, breed, tag number
- Sheep/goats: long horns greater than one curl
- Keratoconjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Scabby mouth
- Other diseases – listed clinical signs
- Exporters won't pay for these sheep if you send them



mla
MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

A national guide to the selection of animals fit to transport
Revised edition 2012

Is it fit to load?

ALFA AMIC CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA RSPCA SHEEPMATE WOOL PRODUCERS AUSTRALIA

https://nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/237688/lts-mla-fit-to-load-guide-2012.pdf

Unfit to load if:

- not strong enough to undertake the journey
- cannot walk normally, bearing weight on all legs
- severely emaciated or visibly dehydrated
- suffering from severe visible distress or injury
- in a condition that could cause it increased pain or distress during transport
- blind in both eyes
- in late pregnancy

Curfew

- S2.8 feed and water curfews before loading for land transport from the property of source:
 - livestock held off green feed (but may be given access to dry feed) for at least 12 hours; and
 - livestock may be held off water (but may be given access to dry feed) for up to 12 hours.
- If problems, longer curfew etc – communicate with the feedlot/exporters so they can look after them differently if needed

Problem: Inanition in sheep

- “Shy feeding”: sheep may not readily adapt to pelleted feed in feedlots and on ship
- 2-5% of sheep may not eat well in an intensive feedlot production system
- Health and welfare concern: can lead to low feed intake, weight loss, greater risk of disease
- Salmonella has previously been shown to cause disease in those that don't eat, or have an inconsistent eating pattern

Our tracking system

- Livecorp funded extensive research facility
- Multiple antennae at feed and water troughs throughout one side of a feedlot shed (4 large pens, ~ 2500 sheep)
- Sheep fitted with individual RFID eartags



Findings

- Sheep went to the feed troughs for an average of ~1.5 hours total per day
- Sheep that went to the troughs for less than half an hour per day were considered not to be eating adequately
- It took until day 6 for more than 95% of sheep to be spending more than half an hour per day at the feed troughs
- Important to ensure enough time for sheep to adapt to the new feed and situation

Causes of death

- Death was mostly due to intestinal problems – not eating, getting infections such as *Salmonella*
- Pneumonia – especially summer time

What to do to help?

- Vaccination – Clostridial diseases, especially pulpy kidney
- Scabby mouth vaccine
- Pink eye control
- Internal parasite control
- Limit dust and yarding in summer – linked to developing pneumonia
- Keep them eating consistently
- Vitamin E, especially young sheep
- Salmonella vaccine being developed

What/where to feed at feedlot?

- Our research found no advantage to putting them outside the sheds on hay
- Sheds off the ground appear to limit contact with contamination eg Salmonella
- Giving chaff on the pellets might attract the sheep to the feed

Good sheep cope better?!

- What is a good sheep?
- What makes a good sheep?
- Experience – what sort, when?
- Prior experience with supplementary feed
 - lambs feeding with the with ewes learn about different feeds
 - it take several days to adapt to a new feed, learning to eat it, plus gut flora change