

[REDACTED]

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We are farmers with 18,000 sheep in [REDACTED]

Our family owned and run business [REDACTED], we have extended family [REDACTED] dependant on the farm for income. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as full-time employees along with their families. [REDACTED] Contracting does \$150k contracting, [REDACTED] does \$240k cartage, [REDACTED] does \$20k cartage, [REDACTED] does \$195k contracting and its 14 employees are here for a month, [REDACTED] \$40k, plus preg testing, lamb marking, crutching contractors directly employed just for the sheep enterprise let alone other local enterprises connected like plumbers and electricians etc. This is just one business and an indication of how many peoples lives this decision will affect dramatically.

We have 2500 wethers on our farm at present that we are unable to sell, the season is going against us, they would have usually already have gone via live export, indicative price (if we can sell them) will be \$60 less than last year, and \$70 less than the previous year.

Still have 500 cross breed lambs on hand, 300 to go next week (23/5) 2 months late. They, like the 1200 I have only just been able to sell (2 months late also) have been trucked east due to no local abattoirs having space for a booking. They are around \$100 less than last year. I exported that profit to an Eastern State grower.

Our 2000 surplus ewes took well over a month extra to sell due to lack of kill space in the local abattoirs at least a \$50 reduction in price from the previous year.

The lack of confidence already in the sheep market due to this policy is making the store sheep/ grazier type sheep market worthless- there is no market for those small/ poorer types of sheep of which every farm has a percentage. They have no worth, the bottom 5-10% of any flock. You could put surplus rams in that category as well. We have killed an extra 150 'No commercial value' sheep. (we are not equipped to do this as humanely as an abattoir)

**This is a \$500,000 reduction in income for our business this financial year. (If we can sell them) Our feeding costs of keeping extra sheep on hand has gone past \$55,000 so far this year and counting. We have reduced our cropping program by 200 hectares to allow for more sheep to be on the farm, because we still have an unknown sale date for our wethers and excess cross breed lambs that are ready for sale now. That is \$100-200k in Gross Margin lost income. We will sell down our breeding ewes instead, as we hopefully can get them into an abattoir. This will reduce our future earning capacity.**

**Current 2023 actual to budget is conservatively \$700,000 lower in income.**

Where is the seasonal pressure relief valve that is live export. Welfare issues transferred back to the farm and live export hasn't even been phased out yet! Where will this figure end up. This is only due to government policy induced lack of market confidence so far.

I could handle some of the price decline being down to market forces, but the fact that the price in the supermarket has barely moved is very disheartening.

The sheep meat market is quite 'corrupt' with 2 buyers dominating the Western Australian industry. The outcome of live export ban will create a more centralised duopoly. They overuse their power already. A whole new third large dominant player needs to enter the market. (The market already needs it, even before Live Ex closure) The expectation that the abattoir owners/operators are upstanding citizens acting in the best interests of the industry is a fallacy.

The ACCC needs to have a proper look at this market. If they cannot see anything wrong with this market, they are inept.

How is this transition going to happen with lack of labour and housing already an extreme concern. It will take a lot of government intervention/ subsidisation. (Government has a terrible track record in this space, good luck)

One large new abattoir operator needs to come into the state, and a second abattoir needs to arrive and work for 6-8 weeks in a late break to the season so to not transfer the welfare issue back to the farm. How long will that take to get up and running with associated housing and labour shortages?

Where are the new markets for these locally processed sheep and can we get our product out of the state in a timely manner? What type of sheep do they want so we can make long term breeding decisions?

On farm, we will remove shelter belts and trees to reorganise paddocks that were very good stock paddocks. They will be made ready for cropping and the associated wide machinery to run in straight autosteer lines. Our chemical and synthetic fertiliser use will increase by approximately 35%. We will remove 70% of our perennial pasture paddocks to make way for monoculture cropping. The newly hired stock manager may be looking for a new job. Trees are a huge positive for the sheep industry and a huge negative to the cropping industry. You fail to give us a choice.

We had adjusted our sheep flock and management for the airfreight market, preparing for the possibility of a Live Ex ban, but as you can easily see the market can't cope and has failed. We are not sure where to go next. It is hard to make long term decisions in such an upended market.

This is going to take at least 7 years to wash through, and hopefully we will have market signals to know what to do with long term breeding decisions in the 10-15 year time frame.

What is 'inherently cruel' as the animal welfare groups claim? Is it compared to paddock welfare? Feedlot? World standards? PETA? (have you looked up their death rate) I wish I could provide the equivalent care and death rate as Live ex on farm. What is the baseline? The paddock paradise is a fallacy. How hot do they get in the paddock in summer? They vary in weight over summer, are they been 'starved' is this part of nature, or cruel? We do not have the labour to monitor sheep as intensely as Live Ex.

The animal welfare argument doesn't wash, why would you take the ONLY country out of the supply chain that has any interest in lifting welfare standards? Where is the science behind the closure decision. Agriculture is a science. It is the basis of our industry on which all decisions are made till this point in time. The precedence been set by this decision is scary for agriculture.

This is just one of the arguments animal rights people have with the industry that feeds the world and just a start of their campaign to end all animal farming and ownership.

I'm sure you will read submissions from all over Australia, but if they carry the same weight as the people who are taking the financial and emotional hit from the closing of the trade it is truly insulting.

The timing (seeding) of this panel, submission consultation process is incredibly disappointing. This is a huge decision for our industry, with very large implications. Will the next part be during harvest? Maybe Christmas eve? This has been poorly advertised, poorly executed, and has given a real sense of bias against the industry.

What is the industry base line from which this phase out is based on? When Australia was exporting 1,000,000 sheep or an already distorted market that we are in now. The current sheep price now that it has been undermined? The impact on our business is already happening due to lack of confidence in the sheep industry that the government has created. The industry baseline for our business for which compensation should be calculated from must be before the Labour election announcement was made.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]