
Live export summary:

- Decision to ban live export based on political grounds rather than scientific or economic.
- The WA sheep flock will see a decline in the critical mass of the sheep flock, threatening withdrawal of essential parts of the supply chain. A sustainable and self-replacing sheep flock requires between 13-14 million sheep.
- Once the trade goes, numbers drop which will jeopardise the entire processing industry.
- In the Electorate of Roe, most of the small towns are heavily reliant on the sheep industry and I am very concerned about the demise of our local schools and health facilities which would result in a transition to grain and the loss of many families directly tied to the sheep industry.
- Humane killing of sheep, cattle and pigs is part of human survival and Australia does it better than anyone else.
- In 2019, WA contributed 97% of the live export trade from Australia.
- Live export trade in WA contributes over \$136 million to the economy.
- Australia has the highest level of animal welfare standards in the world and leaving the trade will just mean other countries with lower standards fill the gaps eg South Sudan, Ethiopia.
- Sector supports a plethora of small businesses reliant on the trade.
- For example, regional pellet producers have tens of millions of dollars of turnover attached to the live export trade. They are extremely concerned.
- The livestock shipping industry for example, in Australia underpins the employment of approximately 13 000 people throughout Australia.
- More than 4000 sheep producers in WA which will all be affected by the ban at some level.
- There will be a loss of at least 3500 jobs. They will not go to the abattoirs to work. They will take their families probably to the mining towns and the regional towns, shops and schools will shut.
- The demise of the wool industry and other related industries is a real threat if the live export is stopped.
- The welfare of the animals is paramount to farmers and through the changes required through the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance Scheme, the sheep coming from WA are protected. The Australian Government demanded the changes, and the changes were made in good faith at significant cost to industry.

- The panel keeps talking about an oversupply of sheep – there isn't an oversupply. These are sheep bred for a unique market which if gone, will see thousands of sheep with nowhere to go (I understand now there are well over 500, 000 wethers on farm that need to be moved off farm and farmers are justifiably concerned with the lack of kill space).
- The difference between sheep produced in the east and ours in the west is that the eastern states have a domestic market able to absorb the numbers. They have a different landscape for supporting sheep and feedlot most animals. WA is less likely to do this as the cost is prohibitive and we are unable to find sufficient domestic markets for boxed meat.
- WA is almost 100% dependent on the export market, via either live export or boxed meat so the loss of the live export option would be particularly damaging.
- The sheep market in WA already trades at a long-term average of 8-23% discount to the eastern states so the profit margins in WA are much smaller than in the East.
- Wethers comprise 50% of the lamb drop with ewe lambs being kept for breeding and wool, and wethers going to the export trade provides another opportunity to market the other 50% of the flock.
- Not enough abattoirs have available kill space now, so without enough ships they will be costly to keep on farm putting the farmer at an economic risk as well as an animal welfare risk with added costs of feeding the sheep. Sheep are being freighted now for four days to the eastern states for processing which presents further animal welfare concerns.
- In the past decade, many abattoirs have shut down in WA. To build up to a sustainable number of abattoirs, find the labour, house the labour – will take another decade at least, even if the business sector could see value in establishing the abattoir in the first place.
- The overseas market wants our live sheep because they have limited refrigeration and they have religious beliefs that warrant a live sheep.
- Currently, the largest processor in sheep meat is being forced to send freezer trucks over east to be put on ships as there is a shortage of shipping capacity. Not only does there need to be an increase in killing room, there also needs to be an increase in overseas freight shipments.
- Farmers are already seeing a lowering of sheep prices. What was once a \$110 price for one sheep, is now down to \$85 and even as low as \$35 per head. If this continues, the option will be to grow more crops.
- Southeast Asia is home to 640 million people who all need a protein source, our Australian meat essentially, critical to the nutritional requirements of this population. Without our meat, there is a risk to their food security and ours in Australia.
- Farmers use live export as an option during drought conditions. Our summer months are not like the New England Tablelands in NSW for instance where summer rain is their norm and their stock enjoy green grass pretty much all year round. In WA, we supplementary feed our stock for over six months in a good year let alone a drought. WA

farmers are incredibly efficient in their stock management and should be congratulated, not crucified.

- Legal action is being spoken about and after the debacle of the live cattle trade and subsequent class action, the chance of legal action is very real.

- **Impact on grain growers:**
 - The loss of the live sheep trade will seriously undermine the economics of running sheep, inevitably leading to a significant reduction in the WA sheep flock.
 - The flip side of that is that it will cause a massive shift towards cropping, potentially adding another 1 million hectares of crop or 3-4 million tonnes in WA, which will overload an already overloaded supply chain (currently costing growers \$2-3 billion each year in discounted grain prices).
 - There will be a much-reduced market for lupins in WA as majority of lupins grown are sold to the sheep industry.
 - For many grain growing businesses, their sheep enterprise provides them with a degree of risk diversification giving their business some resilience in the event of crop failure due to frost and/or water logging and drought. If the economics of sheep do not stack up, that will be lost.
 - Lupins and legume-based pastures are important rotational tools which, among other things return nitrogen to the soil, reducing the need for the application of inorganic nitrogen to the following grain crop. Again, if these tools are not economic, they will be lost from our system.
 - A lot of WA farming land is not arable, but rateable. Sheep provide another option to utilise this land.

- **Impact on mental health in the sector:**
 - We've seen the impact created with the live cattle shutdown – why is this not a red flag to those in politics making these decisions?
 - A generation of farmers have felt the impact of reducing flock numbers. In the early 1990's, we had no option but to shoot hundreds of thousands of prime ewes during the Flock Reduction Scheme and for those who witnessed this and did the shooting and the filling in of the pits, we will never forget it.
 - Regional access to medical professionals is already stretched. There is very limited access to mental health professionals, and this is a very real concern.