



June 2023

## ***Australian Standards for Export of Livestock (ASEL) – Update 3.3***

### **Competent stock handler on aircraft**

Standard 6 relates to the sourcing, preparation, land transport and export of livestock by air.

The proposed amendments to the standard/s appear below in tracked changes. Text proposed to be deleted will appear struck out.

#### **General and all species requirements**

6.1.24 ~~[deleted] Unless the exporter has approval under Standard 6.1.25, on flights where livestock are accessible during the flight, a competent stock handler who is employed or contracted by the exporter must accompany consignments to oversee the welfare of the livestock during the flight. Compliance with this standard will be delayed until further notice by the department.~~

6.1.25 ~~[deleted] An exporter may apply for an alternative arrangement to Standard 6.1.24 when providing a NOI under the Export Control Act 2020 and the Export Control (Animals) Rules 2021. The alternative arrangement may be approved where the Secretary, or delegate, is satisfied that the international transport arrangements for the livestock are adequate for their health and welfare.~~

6.1.26 Livestock must be checked by a competent stock handler appointed by the exporter to ensure they remain healthy and fit to travel for all flights:

a) at the last reasonable opportunity before departure of the aircraft; and

b) ~~[deleted] if there is a competent stock handler travelling on the flight, and where feasible:~~

i) ~~—within 60 minutes of commencement of the flight; and~~

ii) ~~—at least every 3 hours during the flight; and~~

c) at the first reasonable opportunity after landing, including during transit/transshipment stops; and

d) at the last reasonable opportunity before departure during any transit/transshipment stops.

6.1.27 ~~During the air export journey, A~~any livestock ~~for export~~ identified ~~prior, during, or immediately after transport by air~~ as being distressed or injured must, where feasible:

a) be given prompt treatment; and/or

b) be euthanaised without delay as necessary; and

c) arrangements must be made to remove or separate sick or dead livestock from pens carrying multiple animals in transit. If animals need to be unloaded, arrangements must be made to ensure the health and welfare of the animals.

6.1.29 Contingency plans ~~for an air export journey~~, including details for contacting the exporter, must be prepared in writing for each consignment that address:

- a) unavailability of the aircraft to be used for the air transportation; and
- b) mechanical breakdown, including partial or full disablement of the ventilation system; and
- c) rejection of the consignment, by the importing country; and
- d) diversion and landing at a location different from the intended transit stop(s) or destination and how the welfare of animals will be overseen; and
- e) euthanasia on board the aircraft if livestock are accessible and it is safe to do so, or as soon as possible after unloading from the aircraft.

For preliminary discussion – We are seeking feedback from stakeholders on the feasibility and practicality of using data loggers inside air crates to monitor environmental conditions such as wet bulb temperature. We seek comments on factors including:

- suitable placement of loggers inside crates so they cannot be damaged by livestock and accurately reflect environmental conditions
- timing of placement, retrieval and return of loggers
- integration of data logger use, and the information generated, into voyage reporting
- any other comments.

## **Rationale**

It is proposed to remove Standard 6.1.24 and the associated Standard 6.1.25.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) noted “that the opportunity for, and welfare benefits of, inspecting livestock during flight are limited. Livestock in netted crates are difficult to inspect and attempts to do so may unduly agitate the livestock and have negative welfare affects”. Airline protocols and International Air Transport Association (IATA) regulations also impose restrictions on accessing cargo holds during flights. This limits the ability to access animals or to provide treatments. Additionally, mortality rates during air transport are negligible (close to 0%). These factors indicate there is limited justification for having a stock handler on board.

We therefore propose removing standards 6.1.24 and 6.1.25 as there is limited evidence that enforcing these standards will improve animal health and welfare.

The TAC identified that in-air livestock inspection may create higher stress levels in animals. IATA regulations and industry best-practice research echo this view, that livestock travel best if they are disturbed as little as possible during the flight.

We therefore propose removing standards 6.1.26 (b) as this does not align with IATA regulations and industry best practice.

Standard 6.1.27 is clarified to align with ASEL’s existing definition of ‘air export journey’.

Environmental monitoring using technologies such as data loggers may provide additional information on environmental conditions experienced by livestock. However, practical considerations may make this proposed new standard challenging to implement. Issues include the ability to place loggers in confined crates so they cannot be damaged by livestock, and identifying who would be responsible for placing, retrieving and returning the loggers. The regulatory burden of this proposed new standard needs to be balanced with the risk the standard is addressing.

We welcome comments, particularly on the practicality of this proposed new standard.

## More information

Learn more about [Australian Standards for Export of Livestock - Update 3.3](#)

Read more about [Best practice for the export of livestock by air](#)

Web [agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/animal-welfare/asel-updates](http://agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/animal-welfare/asel-updates)

Have Your Say [haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/australian-standards-for-the-export-of-livestock-asel-2023-update](http://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/australian-standards-for-the-export-of-livestock-asel-2023-update)

Email [aselreview@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:aselreview@agriculture.gov.au)

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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