

**Supplementary Questions for Dr Lynn Simpson
Portfolio Committee 4- Regional NSW
January 2025**

Question 1: The submission [assuming 'the submission' referred to is the one I submitted to this inquiry for the remainder of questions in this package?] criticises slaughter practices in importing countries. How does abandoning these markets help improve animal welfare overall?

Simply removing the Australian sheep from the live export trade helps improve their animal welfare overall- every one of those sheep formally 'earmarked' for live export will now experience a stunned kill v's an un-stunned importing country kill.

The Australian industry has not been able to influence stunned killing in the Middle East to date, why would that change now? It won't.

Failure to implement stunning after decades of pressure, coupled with the imminent loss of shipping capacity/live sheep trade, due to an ageing and dying global fleet of livestock carriers makes this "abandoning" or modernising as most see it, a redundant issue.

Sheep live exported to the Middle East are most likely destined to endure a fully conscious slitting of their throats (if they survive the voyage and subsequent in-country holding period), often having their throats cut after watching this happen to their immediate predecessor in the holding 'race' and witnessed by the animal behind.

The plastic curtains used to separate the race to the kill floor rarely shield the animals from watching their fate approach. As such they witness other sheep struggle and resist physical restraint, by the multiple workers used to hold them down, and once the cut is made the splash and splatter of blood from the neck and via leg kicking, is visible and can be smelled by all conscious animals. The dying animal generally then undergoes a period during the up to 20 odd seconds it can take to lose consciousness, whereby they thrash their legs around violently hitting other animals in various stages of dying and still witnessed by sheep awaiting this cruel treatment.

This is a very painful and stressful experience that a conscious sheep would avoid if possible.

Sheep killed in an Australian slaughterhouse have the relative luxury of having a legally mandated pre stunning, before the throat cut. The pre stunning renders the animal unconscious, therefore removing the fear and stress of the actual slaughter process. Slaughterhouses in Australia have a much more controlled and less dynamic slaughter process that removes pain and much stress associated with dying.

Australia removing itself from condoning this practice and providing safe, halal certified, high welfare meat via the chilled and frozen can lead by example. Example of ethics and by the example of a high-quality meat product to the end users.

After 57 voyages and thousands of post-mortems on livestock on the ships there is no way I would eat red meat in the Middle East for concern that the meat would taste like the tough stressed product it looked like (dark cutting), be diseased with microscopic contamination of pathogens in the meat especially from gastrointestinal or respiratory diseases commonly found on the ships- even in animals that survived the voyage. Or to ensure I wasn't eating meat that carried anti-microbial (anti biotic) residue as these drugs are commonly used on voyages as seen in the industry's own PR documentaries.

By leading by example (sheep meat exports Vs Live sheep) Australia has put itself in a powerful position to engage in global conversations with organisations such as the United Nations, World Organisation of Animal Health, (formally the OIE), about animal welfare matters globally without hypocrisy and with great evidence of a modern day alternative.

Australia is already being seen as a leader in welfare, based on the upcoming live sheep export ban.

I reiterate, there is a rapid decline in the number of ships available and able to carry live sheep long distances from countries such as Australia.

Small financially viable ships doing a 12 hour voyage from the likes of Sudan will provide better welfare outcomes for sheep V's the tyranny of distance and several weeks plus from Australia. The sheep from places like Sudan were never going to be afforded the relative luxury of a pre stunned slaughter- therefore their fate is a status quo, whilst Australian sheep have a massive animal welfare net gain. The Sudanese or Somali sheep are also already acclimatised so will not experience the extreme climatic stress that Australian sheep face when travelling from the Southern hemisphere, across the equator and into the Middle East.

Question 2: The submission argues local processing is the solution- how realistic is this when Australia already faces labour shortages in abattoirs?

Veterinary science is based on science. Animal welfare outcomes are well researched, documented and proven to be most positive with the shortest distance of travel and humane handling coupled with a pre stunned kill- all these things should be routinely provided for when being killed and processed as close as possible to the place of birth of an animal in Australia. Sending them on a ship, through extreme environmental conditions, in a floating metal box, to countries with poor or absent animal welfare laws, dubious 'industry' oversight and influence, and an un-stunned throat cut is the opposite of good animal welfare- a parameter of animal care the industry claims to value.

(a) Doesn't the push for increased local processing ignore infrastructure and workforce constraints?

It apparently depends on the postcode being addressed.

These have been arguments presented, however; mixed reports are available to the public. The live export trade says the sheep can't get into abattoirs due to oversupply and long wait

times- hence trade should continue (obviously regardless of the waning number of ships available), meanwhile as recently as several weeks ago, a sheep abattoir (owned by Minerva) in WA has closed it's second sheep processing plant since 2023 (well before the ban on live sheep was a reality) citing lack of sheep after the WA sheep flock had shrunk by over a third in the past 2 years due to producers leaving the industry to pursue other practices such as cropping. I assume this facility would like to see the sheep not sent away by sea... are they being compensated for natural trade attrition?

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-01-09/tammin-abattoir-minerva-foods-closed-for-review-sheep-wa/104795922>

The live trade was already depleted naturally by over 90% before the bill to ban it was passed in 2024. Sheep numbers were dropping, farmers were diversifying- it appears attention wasn't being paid to the established changes throughout the state and the resulting conflicting issues.

(b) How would smaller producers compete if processing costs rise?

This question is irrelevant to Veterinary Science, animal shipping logistics or my first-hand experience as a Veterinarian. A Veterinarians professional ethics are focused on animal health and welfare- I believe questions about business decisions and economic parameters are best left to whoever these disciplines are relevant to.

True Veterinary science is blind to cultural, religious and economic pressures. Whilst the general world we all live in involves these factors, Vets are primarily interested and involved in what is in the best interest for the animals they are professionally trained to provide health advice and care for. Vets are trained in and follow science.

Question 3: The submission says Middle Eastern countries have sufficient refrigeration- how does this claim align with reports showing limited infrastructure in rural areas?

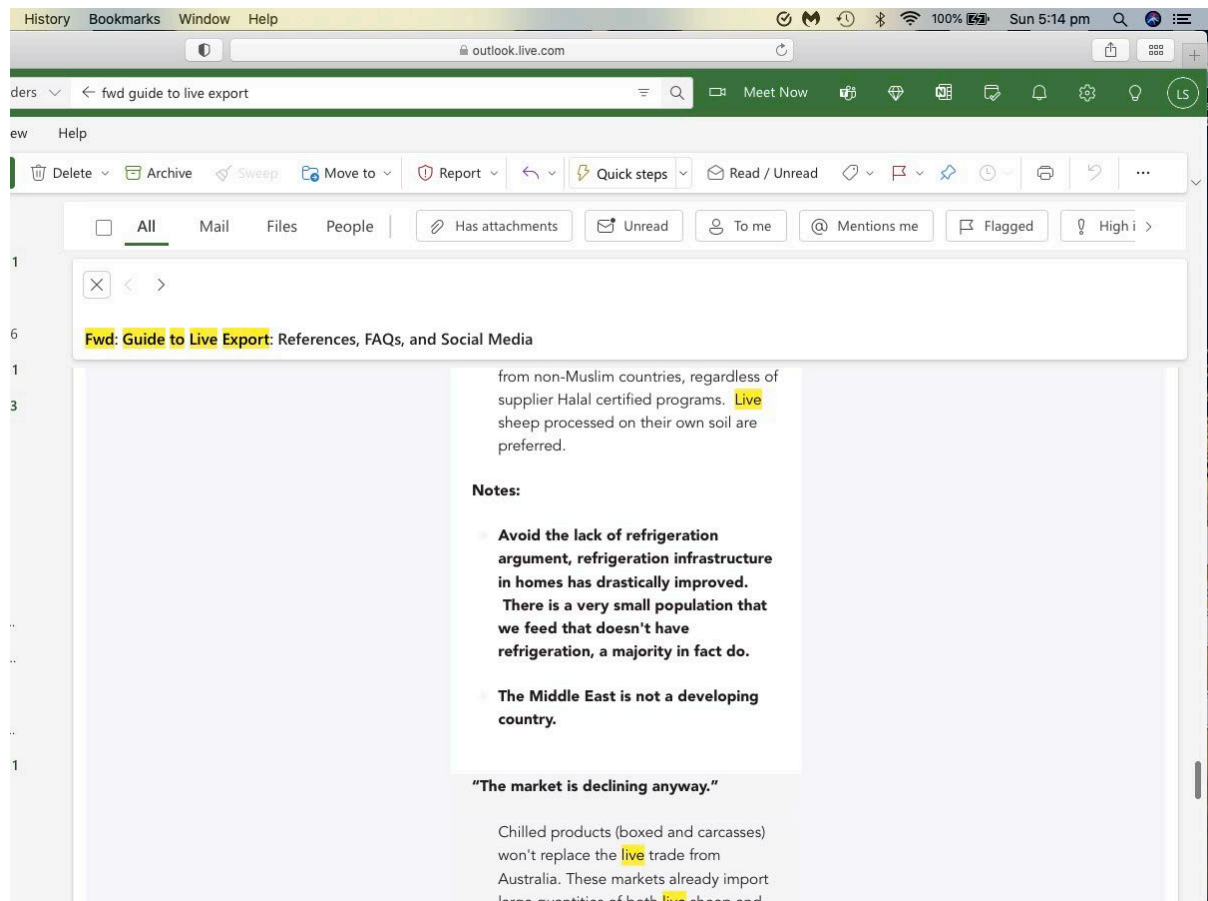
I have seen no such 'reports' showing limited infrastructure in rural areas.

In regard to the Middle Eastern cold chain I have heard 'lack of refrigeration' and 'food security' arguments made by financially invested live export industry representatives to justify the continuation of this cruel, draconian and dying trade, however they do not correspond with my own experiences or statements made as recently as early 2024 by the industry's own public statements. Statements such as when giving farmers and supporters advice on how to write submissions for the Federal government about the 'Ban of the live sheep trade', by 'The Livestock Collective'(TLC). A screen shot of which is inserted below.

In bold type TLC have gone to lengths to notify readers of the contrary position regarding refrigeration limitations.

“Notes:

Avoid the lack of refrigeration argument, refrigeration infrastructure in homes has drastically improved. There is a very small population that we feed that doesn't have refrigeration, a majority in fact do.”



(A copy of this email in its entirety has been sent to the committee for completeness)

To this I would add that this statement aligns with my lived experience whilst working and travelling widely throughout the Middle East since 2001.

The only place I have seen unrefrigerated butcher shop products were in Libya (where we no longer trade in live animals) and they (2 shops) were limited to areas where the fridges could not facilitate the length of the hanging of dismembered camel heads with the long necks attached- as such they hung from high rails out on the footpaths. These products for sale were always covered in dirt, dust, flies and other insects thus adding the potential for severe public health and safety risks- risks I do not believe anyone in Australia would like associated with the Australian imported 'food' reputation.

In regard to the TLC statement saying that there is a very small population that does not have refrigeration, I would wager that this 'very small population' consists mostly of Bedouin people. The Bedouin I have met, befriended, and observed, are nomadic or partially nomadic herders who still shepherd livestock freely, mostly native and north african sheep breeds and as such have very little, if any, want to purchase an imported live

sheep from Australia. The Bedouin slaughter, store and eat their own meat in accordance with their wants. As they are nomadic, some may not have refrigeration.

As for the refrigeration argument in relation to 'food security'- using current data available from Worldometer.com and DAFF statistics (calculations inserted below) the 'food security' provided to the Arabian Gulf Countries is approximately (likely to be lower as does not account for tourist appetites) 178 grams of 'live imported' sheep meat per person- for context the average, single, lamb shank, bought in the supermarkets in Australia weighs approximately 500 grams (2.8 times the 'food security' provided by live imported sheep annually per person). So basically one big chop/year/person.

Kuwait is an outlier in the Gulf states with an average of 1.41kg of live imported sheep meat per person/ year= 2.8 single lamb shanks /person/year. Kuwait is a highly developed country awash with modern air conditioned supermarkets with vast refrigerated meat storage- as with everywhere else I have been you can even buy a cold can of coke there.

Jordan is an outlier for the Middle East proper as it actually exports more sheep per year than Australia does. In 2023, according to the Worldbank.org, Jordan exported 1,322,960 live sheep, Australia exported 684,287 live sheep. Basic logic dictates that Jordan does not appear to need Australia for 'food security'.

Livestock exports to the GCC states (2023)

	Population	Sheep imports (heads)	Cattle imports (heads)	Live sheep carcass wt (MT)	Live cattle carcass wt (MT)	Total live animal carcass wt (MT)
Bahrain	1,620,517	0	0	0	0	0
Kuwait	4,934,507	271,162	625	6,779	156	6,935
Oman	5,281,538	52,876	0	1,322	0	1,322
Qatar	3,048,423	16,000	0	400	0	400
Saudi Arabia	34,187,310	5,000	0	125	0	125
UAE	11,145,122	70,000	734	1,750	184	1,934
Total	60,217,417	415,038	1,359	10,376	340	10,716

Notes:

1. Population derived from [Worldometer](#) estimate, 15 November 2024. Only counts residents, not visitors.
2. Sheep and cattle imports, from DAFF statistics.
3. Weight of sheep meat assumes an average [carcass](#) weight of 25 kg. No deduction for bones.
4. Weight of cattle meat assumes an average [carcass](#) weight of 250 kg. No deduction for bones.
5. Total weight of meat is an over-estimate as it assumes no mortalities during the voyage or after discharge overseas. [ie](#): all exported animals are slaughtered.

Bottom line:

1. In 2023, Australian live sheep and cattle exported to the Arabian Gulf countries provided approx. 10,716 MT of bone-in [carcass](#) meat.
2. For the Arabian Gulf countries as a whole, this amounts to [approx](#):
 - 178 grams of meat per person per year; or
 - Less than one quarter of one percent of total meat consumption.
3. Kuwait is an outlier, where Australian live sheep and cattle provide [approx](#):
 - 1.41 kg of meat per person per year; or
 - Approx. 1.6% of total meat consumption.
4. More MT of fodder was consumed delivering the animals than the actual weight of the animals at slaughter. Whilst a good proportion of that fodder was roughage (hay, cereal straw), there were also several thousand MT of lupins, cereal grains [etc](#) that could have gone directly into the human food supply chain rather than used to feed slaughter animals in transit. And don't mention food-miles or carbon footprint.
5. The Australian live export trade providing critical food security to the GCC countries is a myth!

(a) Isn't it misleading to compare refrigerated goods like Coca Cola to the complexities of meat storage?

No, it is not. Please see answer above-

In addition- The enormous quantity of chilled and frozen red meat that is imported into the Middle East from Australia and elsewhere dwarfs the Live sheep trade into near

obscurity, certainly into being easily replaced. Logic dictates this imported meat product has sufficient cold chain infrastructure to preserve its quality and safety or the trade would be shrinking, not growing exponentially.

To ignore the coexistence and growing success and uptake of this refrigerated imported meat trade and its cold chain capabilities is in fact misleading and disingenuous. The live export trade relies on people such as farmers and the general public not realising how enormous the red meat trade is.

I am constantly having conversations with people asking me “why can we (Australia) not work out a way to export pre slaughtered Halal meat instead of live sheep?”. When it is explained that we do, and to what extent, people soon see no reason to justify the live trade and all its ugliness.

(b) What evidence supports this blanket claim about refrigeration capabilities of all importing regions?

Evidence includes- Imported meat statistics freely available to anyone who thinks to look, with a dearth of associated reports of animal cruelty, meat wastage or associated deaths from infected/unhealthy animals, insect contaminated meat, meat containing drug residues from shipping related illnesses, and or storage problems.

Question 4: The report “Live Exports and the Australian Community 2024” published by Livecorp and VoconIQ was cited during the inquiry as demonstrating community support for the live export industry.

(a) What are your thoughts on this report?

I have not felt the need to read it.

I am satisfied with my own first-hand knowledge of the live export trade. And that information I can research independently, I do not rely on external industry players to tell me what I have personally lived, experienced and researched in regard to the live export trade since 1999.

(b) Does it indicate community support for the continuation of live exports?

No idea.

(c) Please give details about why you think it does or does not give an accurate indication of community sentiment on live exports.

See answer above.

Do you have any additional thoughts about this report or any concerns about the committee relying on the data contained in the report?

If the report is based gauging community support on questions such as those recently used in an online pro live export media article/ survey published in ‘The Land’, that were ridiculously open ended, poorly structured, allowing all answers to be easily manipulated, then I would be concerned if the committee relied on them for anything more than a record of participation.

The type of questions recently used on the general public to gauge ‘support’ were along the lines of – ‘does the income derived from live exports contribute to the Australian economy?’- A multitude of polar opposite answers could be derived from such questioning.

Conclusion:

Thank you for the opportunity to expand on my answers from the initial inquiry. It is evident that there are many mis-truths and mis/disinformation abounding around this issue.

One certainty is that NSW would benefit from any available money being spent on issues that are real, evident and actually happening in NSW in real time.

Any further NSW taxpayers money spent on the issue of the live sheep export ban should be considered a misguided and shameful grab for cash that is not owed or deserved.

NSW taxpayer money should be directed towards very real and pressing immediate issues such as health care, domestic and family violence prevention, homelessness, or a number of other reputable causes.

Sincerely
Dr Lynn Simpson

From:
To:
Subject: Fw: Guide to Live Export: References, FAQs, and Social Media
Date:

Hi

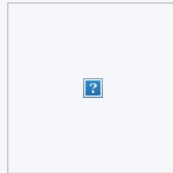
This is just an email I referred to within the supplementary question, answers I have provided, for completeness.

Regards
Lynn Simpson

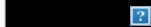
Subject: Guide to Live Export: References, FAQs, and Social Media

To:

Help us respond to live export questions on social media No images? [Click here](#)



Can you help us respond?



Guide to Live Export: References, FAQs, and Social Media Response Templates

With the incredible amount of support and coverage we have been receiving lately, many within the industry have asked for more information on various aspects of the industry or how they can help.

We **encourage everyone to share factual information** and respond respectfully to any questions, especially on news platforms where people outside the industry are asking questions or seeking information.

The priority is **you sharing your story, no one knows your story better than you**. Talk about how the potential

ban will affect you, your family, your business and your community. The live export industry is incredibly complex. This is just a snippet of it, but we hoped to create a resource for you to understand it better but also to feel confident in addressing any questions or people's areas of concern.

Below is some great reference documents we would appreciate it if you would become familiar with the correct response.

Reference documents

Community Sentiment - What does the community feel?

Key Statistics

- When asked whether live exports should be stopped regardless of the impact on farmers, 29% of participants agreed in 2023, while 42% disagreed (increasing from 37% in 2019).
- In 2023, 64% of participants agreed the industry supports the diet and nutrition to people overseas (increasing substantially from 55% in 2019).
- Agreement that "conditions for animals on live export ships are not in line with Australian animal welfare standards" decreased by 14.7%, from 53.7% in 2019 to 39% in 2023.
- On the question "the live export industry is prepared to change its practices in response to community concerns", 37% agreed in 2023 compared to 24% who disagreed.
- Around three-quarters of respondents believed the benefits of live export outweighed, or were equal to, the costs of the industry. (36% said benefits outweigh costs; 38% said costs and benefits were about equal; 26% said costs outweigh benefits)
- In the 2023 survey, six questions asked about livestock export generally were also adapted to examine attitudes toward the export of sheep, specifically. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the two sets of answers

How has the industry Changed? [Document Here](#)

Key Messages or Talking Points

- Animal welfare measures are now rigorously implemented on every voyage, contributing to growing community support for the industry.
- Mortality rates on ships are at their lowest on record, reflecting significant improvements in animal welfare outcomes.
- Industry initiatives, regulatory reviews, and research have all played crucial roles in achieving these improvements.
- Sheep are no longer shipped to the Middle East during the northern hemisphere summer, and they have more space available throughout the rest of the year.
- Improved ventilation systems and automated environmental monitoring have enhanced air quality and comfort for animals on board.
- Changes in management practices in pre-export preparation and on ships carrying sheep overseas have further improved welfare.
- To move beyond mortality as the sole measure of performance, a range of animal welfare indicators are now collected daily on ships.
- These indicators demonstrate that most livestock are coping well in their environment and exhibiting normal behaviour patterns.

Social Media Golden Rules

Do's

- Always be respectful, when replying you are replying on behalf of the entire industry.
- It's not just the person you are replying to that will see the answer, there will be many others who will read your reply and take away information from it.
- Redirect to industry websites such as LiveCorp or The Livestock Collective to learn more
- Ask for help or more information if required.
- If it is on your post, don't hesitate to hide comments.
- Always block someone if you need to!

Remember it is a privilege to know what you know about food and fibre.

Don'ts

- Assume knowledge
- Assume that is how everyone does it!
- Try to avoid technical industry jargon.
- Focus on other people's choices on what they eat.
- Focus on the 'disconnect' in negativity, it is an opportunity.

Examples

"What happens to dead animals?"

At sea there are people overseeing the welfare of the animals 24/7. When an animal dies the onboard Stockperson or Vet will complete a postmortem to determine the cause of death. This will be included in their daily report that is submitted to the department.

The onboard stock people, vet, officers and a member of the crew will have a daily meeting to discuss mortality rates and any issues relating to the health and welfare of the animals during the voyage.

If at sea and an animal dies the vessel will comply to MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) and dispose of the carcass overboard far as practical from the nearest land and at maximum water depth, but in any case, greater than or equal to 100 nautical miles from the nearest land.

** For more information visit AMSA - <https://www.amsa.gov.au/marine-environment/marine-pollution/discharge-standards>

Bitly link - <https://bit.ly/49qLQqV>

Why do animals die?

"Health and welfare of livestock are monitored daily. In large populations of livestock deaths are not abnormal. At sea there are people overseeing the welfare of the animals 24/7. When an animal dies the onboard Stockperson or Vet will complete a postmortem to determine the cause of death. This will be included in their daily report that is submitted to the department.

The onboard stock people, vet, officers and a member of the crew will have a daily meeting to discuss mortality rates and any issues relating to the health and welfare of the animals during the voyage."

What happens to manure?

The vessel will comply with MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) and dispose of organic matter waste far as practical from the nearest land and at maximum water depth, but in any case, greater than or equal to 100 nautical miles from the nearest land.

** For more information visit AMSA <https://www.amsa.gov.au/marine-environment/marine->

[pollution/discharge-standards](#)

Bitly link - <https://bit.ly/49qLQqV>

“What happens to livestock at the other end?”

We are responsible for their welfare until they are slaughtered. It is a requirement that the exporter ensures that all handling and slaughtering are in accordance with recommendations with the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Some links you can include in your comment:

- [Department ESCAS link](#)
- [Video of viewing platform](#)
- Video of Nick Crichton, a supply chain consultant, explains the process of what happens when livestock arrive overseas. Link [here](#).
- [Video of facilities in Kuwait & Indonesia](#)

Any other videos that are relevant on The Livestock Collective social media platforms.

Other great resources

- LiveCorp in [Market](#) programs and Services.

Vessel ventilation

"The ventilation systems on livestock vessels are continuously running during loading, voyage and discharge.

All vessels must meet minimum airflow standards, measured as "Pen Air Turnover" (PAT), which calculates the time for specific pens to be completely replaced with fresh air, The ventilation is measured per cubic metre per hour and are independently audited by specialist engineers."

“Animals are suffering on ships”

"What is your specific area of concern?" Address their specific area of concern.

"The industry is always working hard to improve, a range of animal welfare indicators are now collected daily on ships that are provided to the department and then made public."

"The industry has changed so much" Refer to changing documents.

“Nobody wants Live export anymore/ you’ve lost public support.”

From 2019 to 2023, a comprehensive series of national surveys was carried out to gauge the sentiments of the Australian population regarding live exports, revealing a nuanced and intricate relationship between the public and this issue.

The research was undertaken by Voconiq, a CSIRO initiative, and was commissioned by the Live Export Program, a joint initiative between LiveCorp and MLA. For more information, click the link <https://bit.ly/44KK4b4>

Why can't we just send boxed meat?

- Due to many different factors, from cultural, religion, to food security reasons there will always be a demand for live animals that will compliment boxed meat. Many countries do not have the capacity to maintain breeding flocks to sustain protein consumption and food security.

- Boxed meat and live exports complement each other by creating market competition for farmers.
- In the Top End of Australia, where Brahman are produced, there is no demand for their meat within Australia. However, this is exactly what consumers in Indonesia want.
- Live export has created jobs and industry in receiving countries. For example, some feedlots in Indonesia are providing up to 150 jobs.

From a Middle East consumer perspective:

- It's about having the choice of Halal processed – access to fresh meat daily is preferred. Unlike Western society, people in the Middle East purchase and cook fresh meat daily – killed in the morning and eaten at lunch or dinner time – for them fresh meat tastes better.
- Religious sacrifice requires a live animal – chilled or frozen won't suffice (Eid Al Adha).
- There is a strong preference for fresh meat versus frozen. Just as Australians do not like frozen bread, milk or seafood, Middle East customers do not like frozen meat.
- From a religious perspective, there is greater "Halal confidence" in locally processed livestock vs imported meat from non-Muslim countries, regardless of supplier Halal certified programs. Live sheep processed on their own soil are preferred.

Notes:

- **Avoid the lack of refrigeration argument, refrigeration infrastructure in homes has drastically improved. There is a very small population that we feed that doesn't have refrigeration, a majority in fact do.**
- **The Middle East is not a developing country.**

"The market is declining anyway."

Chilled products (boxed and carcasses) won't replace the live trade from Australia. These markets already import large quantities of both live sheep and chilled meat from numerous countries. The live and boxed trades complement each other well because they cater to different market segments. Live and boxed meat trades cater to distinct consumer needs, making it a misguided notion to replace live sheep with chilled products—it simply won't happen. Live animal exports are essential for ensuring food security, respecting cultural and religious preferences, and boosting economies.

Food security is crucial for Kuwait and the broader region, linking it to national security and social stability.

The Kuwait government prioritises the availability of nutritious and affordable food year-round.

Import of live sheep is vital for ensuring fresh meat availability to citizens.

There is a strong preference in Kuwait and the Middle East for fresh meat over imported frozen and chilled meat.

Local processing of live sheep is preferred over meat imports.

Shifting to meat imports in place of live animals is not a feasible option for these markets.

It is inappropriate for Australia to dictate changes in meat import preferences to Kuwait and other markets.

Kuwait and other markets would source live sheep from elsewhere if necessary, but they prefer disease-free sheep imports from Australia.

Assurance of fresh meat availability is best maintained through continued live sheep imports from Australia.

"Addressing concerns over the Awassi incident"

- "The Awassi mortality incident was due to an unprecedented weather event that occurred in the region before sheep could be discharged. The exporter immediately reported the event and corrective actions put in place. The moratorium to not ship sheep at this time of year again was led by industry and has now been mandated by the government. Further significant changes have been made - check out the LiveCorp share the changes document to see all the changes implemented."
- "There was an incident that was reported and investigated. The industry has addressed this by making some massive changes and improvements" - refer to changing industry documents [here](#).



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