



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment

## Maritime export of livestock from Australia:

Regulatory requirements  
for animal welfare and  
recent reforms



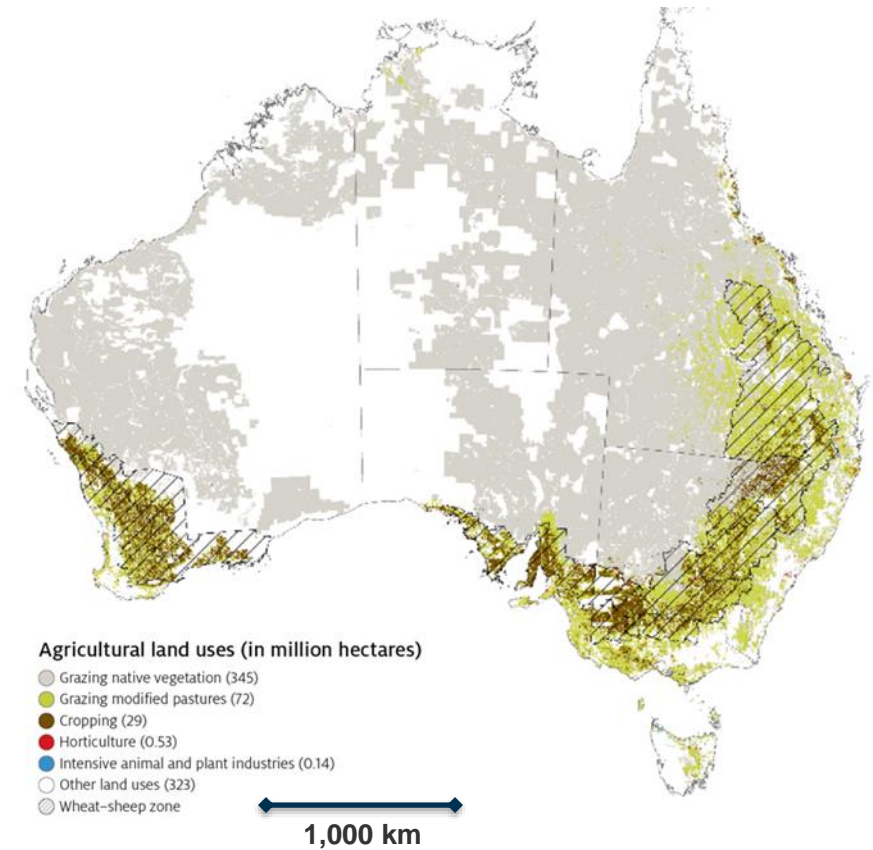
Dr David Kim, Consul (Agriculture), Dubai  
March 2020

# Australia is a major exporter of live animals

## Agricultural surplus

With a population of around 25 million people and 3.7 million km<sup>2</sup> of agricultural land, Australia produces a significant exportable surplus of agricultural commodities, approximately 70% of produce are exported. Australia exported 2.3 million head of livestock in 2018-19.

Production systems, particularly those remote from east coast population centres, are geared towards export of live animals, with cattle from northern Australia and sheep from Western Australia being major exports.



# Australia is a major exporter of live animals



## High animal health status and superior genetics

Australia produces high quality livestock, particular beef and dairy cattle, and wool and meat sheep.

The animals are popular for breeding and meat for consumption.

Australia's livestock export industry has a 150 year history with various levels of regulation.

Significant effort is currently being made to update the regulatory framework.

# Regulation of livestock exports from Australia

## Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Responsible for the regulation of livestock throughout the export chain.

- Exporters pay a fee for service to cover overall program cost, including veterinary services.

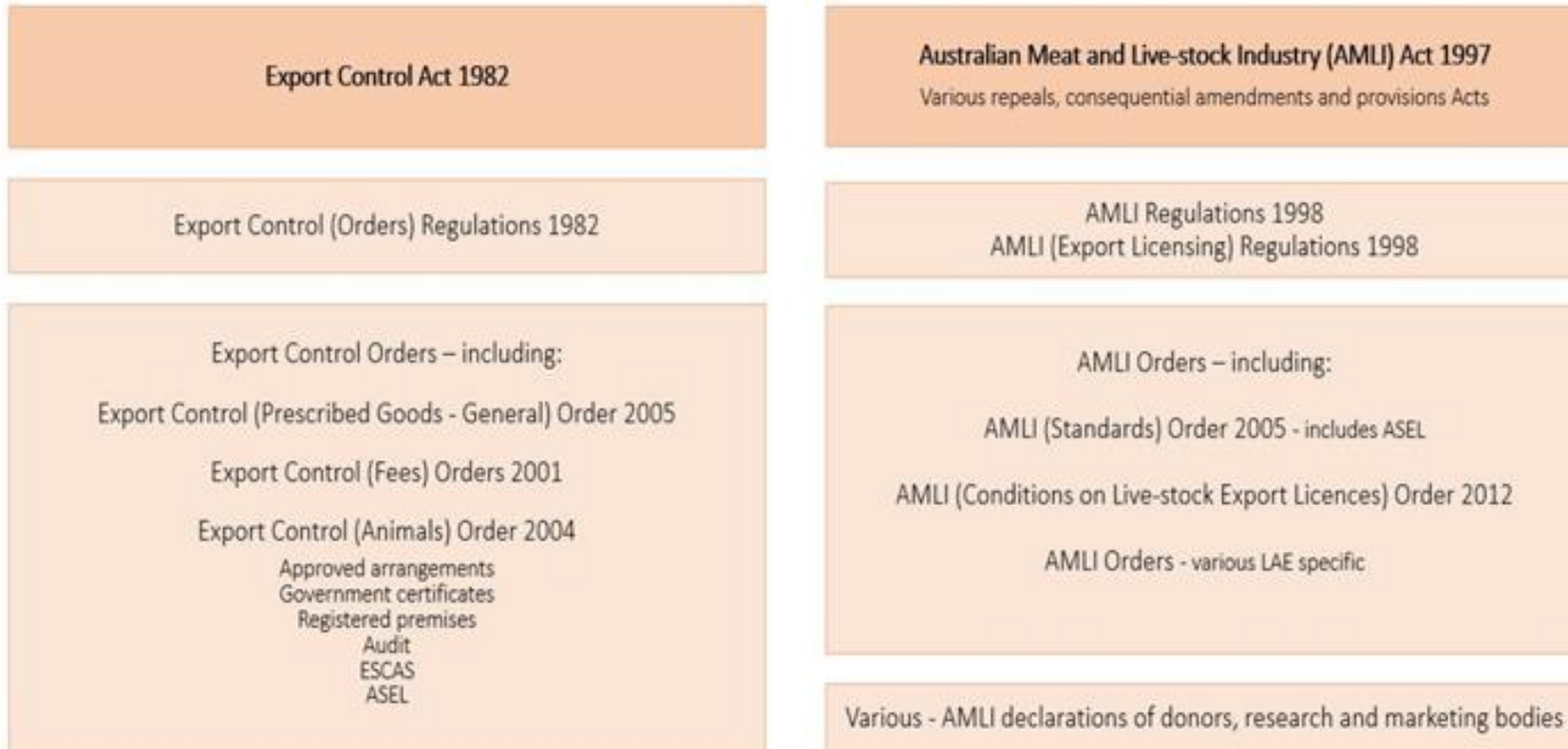
## Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Responsible for the regulation of livestock vessels.

- Ensure vessels are capable of safely transporting livestock.



# Agriculture's Regulatory Framework Summary



# Export Supply Chain Assurance Scheme (ESCAS)

## **Exported livestock must be traceable**

Exporters must deliver livestock into approved ESCAS facilities.

Facilities must be able to account for the whereabouts of animals at all times.

Movement of animals along approved supply chains must be recorded.

Breaches of these requirements may result in suspension of facilities.

## **Treatment consistent with OIE standards**

World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) animal welfare standards must be met.

This applies from unloading up to and including slaughter.

ESCAS does not apply to breeder livestock due to practical constraints.



# Review of Australia's livestock export regulation

Since May 2018, Australia has worked to improve animal welfare regulations for exported livestock, based on

- livestock heat stress assessment,
- improved animal welfare measures, and
- greater transparency.

## **Various improvements made as a result**

Sheep now have more space, better access to water and fresh air.

No export during the hot summer months (June, July, August and half of September)

Independent observers in addition to accredited veterinarians and stock people on-board.

Whistle blower provisions included.

# Independent Observers

## The government is committed to transparent regulation of the trade

Independent observers provide the department with direct insight into the conditions during livestock export voyages to support the effective regulation of the live animal export trade.

- This program commenced in April 2018, more than 200 summaries of Independent Observer Reports are available at [www.agriculture.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.gov.au)
- From October 2019, the requirement for independent observers to accompany low-risk, short-haul livestock export voyages was removed.

Publishing summary observer reports aimed at reassuring the public that any regulatory action required occurs in a timely fashion.

- Significant issues are addressed regardless of publication schedule.





# Australia's live animal import requirements

Australia has stringent requirements for live animal imports including:

- Companion, zoo and laboratory animals.
- Horses, birds and livestock.
- Reproductive material.
- See the following websites for detailed information.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/cats-dogs>

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/biological>

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/live-animals>



# Questions?

## More info

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/lae>

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/advisory-notice>

<https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/cargoes-and-dangerous-goods/transporting-livestock-australia>

NB agriculture is transitioning to a new website at <https://www.awe.gov.au/>

