

# FACILITATING THE USE OF THE OIE STANDARDS FOR THE TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS BY SEA AND BY LAND

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The OIE standards provide an international benchmark to improve animal welfare outcomes for its Member countries. These standards promote low stress livestock handling and highlight the importance of understanding innate animal behaviours and using experienced and competent people to handle and move farm animals. The importance of well-designed and maintained yards and facilities are stressed and the responsibilities of everyone involved in land and sea transport are highlighted.

Land transport and sea transport of animals requires a comprehensive 'whole chain' risk management approach from the farm of origin through to the point of slaughter in the country of origin or of destination. The selection of healthy animals that are fit to load in view of the transport journey is a critical consideration.

Consistent with the recommendations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare (2008) Member countries should develop national legislation and standards that are harmonised as far as possible with the relevant OIE standards.

These standards need to define requirements for people and infrastructure. For example, standards should be introduced for ships transporting livestock and these ships accredited by the relevant maritime authority. Livestock vehicles and loading ramps and other infrastructure also need to be included in country standards. In Australia, the export of livestock by sea or air can only be done by entities holding a current licence for this activity. Exporters must comply with Australian export standards as a condition of holding an export licence. The maintenance of an export licence requires that exporters make commercial arrangements in importing countries to ensure the welfare of exported Australian livestock during all phases of transport to slaughter, consistent with the OIE standards. . Exported Australian livestock must be identified and results reported for each export consignment, with provisions for independent audit of outcomes.

Australia has implemented an exporter supply chain assurance scheme (ESCAS) that compels exporters and importers to deliver outcomes consistent with the OIE welfare standards.

**Keywords:** OIE– animal welfare standards – transport – Australian Exporter Supply Chain – assurance scheme.