

Purpose: *Submission to the TAC on whether provisions in the UK-Australia FTA that relate to trade in agricultural products may affect the maintenance of UK regulatory standards*

Prepared by: *Lucy Ozanne, Industry Strategy and Public Affairs Manager*

Contact: lozanne@qmscotland.com

Quality Meat Scotland is a Non-Departmental Public Body. This advice is provided under the Quality Meat Scotland Order 2008 Schedule 1 point 18 ‘Advising on any matters relating to the red meat sector (other than remuneration or conditions of employment) as to which the Scottish Ministers may request Quality Meat Scotland to advise, and undertaking inquiry for the purpose of enabling Quality Meat Scotland to advise on such matters’. This advice is freely available and further information can be provided by the designated contact above.

QMS is the public body responsible for helping the Scottish red meat sector improve its efficiency and profitability. We market the PGI labelled Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands in the UK and abroad and will therefore be responding to this call for views in relation to sheep and cattle.

1.0 Animal welfare

1.1 Journey time limits. There is a considerable difference in maximum journey time limits and rest periods in the transportation of sheep and cattle, particularly when considering Defra’s new proposalsⁱ for animal welfare in transport, as outlined in the table below. It should be noted that Australia’s Land transport of livestock: Standards and Guidelinesⁱⁱ refers to ‘time off water’ as opposed to Defra’s ‘maximum journey time limits’. The significant margin in timings permitted by each country reflects a stark difference in the welfare experienced by the animals in the respective countries.

	Maximum journey time: UK	Maximum time off water: Australia	Rest period: UK	Rest period: Australia
Cattle	- Up to 9 months old: 9 hrs - 9 months+: 21 hrs	- 30 days-6 months: 24 hrs - 6 months+: 48 hrs	7 days	- 12 hrs - 36 hrs
Sheep	21 hrs	- Under 4 months: 28 hrs - 4 months+: 48 hrs	48 hrs	- 12 hrs - 36 hrs

1.2 Temperature. Whilst Australia’s Standards and Guidelines indicate that measures should be taken in extreme weather to protect young calves, it does not specify what measures should be taken or mention measures for older animals. Similarly, only lambs and

recently shorn sheep are highlighted as needing protection from wind chill, sunburn and heat stress, with the suggestion that they should be “transported in vehicles with enclosed fronts”.

Unlike Defra’s proposal that no livestock journeys take place if the forecast external temperature is outside the range of 5-30° (unless the vehicle is able to regulate the internal temperature within a 5-30°), Australia’s Standards and Guidelines does not indicate an acceptable temperature range for the transport of livestock. This leaves it open to interpretation by the individual, which could lead to inconsistencies in the level of treatment of animals across the country.

1.3 Common practices. Australia’s standardsⁱⁱⁱ on the use of pain relief for disbudding, dehorning, castration, spaying and tail docking are more relaxed than those of the UK. Museling is also commonly practiced, which is illegal in the UK. CCTV is not required in slaughterhouses in Australia whereas in England, CCTV has been mandatory in slaughterhouses since November 2018.

2.0 Environmental protection

2.1. Environmental legislation. Under the division of powers between the Australian Government and the states under the Australian Constitution^{iv}, it is the state governments that have the primary responsibility for environmental protection. The regulation of proposals that will impact air quality, noise, odour, general amenity or animals that are not listed as threatened or endangered, are conducted at state level. This means that there is a lack of cohesion and the potential for environmental standards to vary from state to state.

2.2 Deforestation. Illegal practices in the UK such as deforestation in order to grave livestock are still widespread in Australia, with states like New South Wales, one of the biggest beef and lamb producing states, relaxing its native vegetation laws in recent years^v. The New South Wales Government reported that “the 2019 figure continues to exceed the 2009–2017 average at 38,800 hectares. Woody vegetation loss attributed to agricultural activity remained higher in 2019 than the average observed under the previous legislative framework (2009–2017).”^{vi} This results in significant biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to poor water quality.

The Rural Centre, Ingliston
Newbridge, Midlothian, EH28 8NZ

Tel: 0131 510 7920

Email: info@qmscotland.co.uk

www.qmscotland.co.uk



References

ⁱ https://consult.defra.gov.uk/transforming-farm-animal-health-and-welfare-team/improvements-to-animal-welfare-in-transport/supporting_documents/consultationonimprovementstoanimalwelfareintransport.pdf

ⁱⁱ [Land-transport-of-livestock-Standards-and-Guidelines-Version-1.-1-21-September-2012.pdf \(animalwelfarestandards.net.au\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Sheep-Standards-and-Guidelines-for-Endorsed-Jan-2016-061017.pdf \(animalwelfarestandards.net.au\)](#)

^{iv} <https://www.awe.gov.au/environment/epbc/about>

^v <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-vegetation>

^{vi} <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-vegetation/landcover-monitoring-and-reporting/2018-landcover-change-reporting>