



COPY

Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland

Ms Heather Neil
CEO
RSPCA Australia
PO Box 265
Deakin West 2600

Heather
Dear Ms Neil

Thank you for providing me with an edited copy of the footage taken of Australian cattle in Indonesia by Animals Australia earlier this year. Thank you also for providing me with the RSPCA's scientific assessment of this footage.

As you would be aware, I have ordered the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to conduct an urgent investigation into the footage and the animal abuses which they revealed.

In order to assist this investigation, I ask RSPCA and Animals Australia to provide all further evidence they have obtained in relation to this issue so that this evidence can also be considered.

Yours sincerely

Joe Ludwig
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Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland

3 May 2011

Dear Minister

On ABC radio's AM program this morning you asked for evidence of cruel treatment of cattle in any Indonesian slaughterhouses, I am writing to inform you that you already have that evidence.

There are approximately 750 registered slaughterhouses in Indonesia: 5 large scale facilities (slaughtering >100 head/day), 35 mid-scale facilities (50-100 head/day) and the remaining 97% slaughter only 5-10 head per day. There are also an unknown number of unregistered slaughter slabs. None of these facilities are subject to animal protection regulations, thus there is no means of preventing or prosecuting animal abuse in these facilities.

You already have details of the 10 slaughterhouses that were covered in the RSPCA report *The slaughter of Australian cattle in Indonesia: an observational study*. Table 1 of this report lists the name and location of each slaughterhouse included in the analysis. An eleventh slaughterhouse was visited and slaughter observed, RPH Pulogadung, a government facility in the suburb of the same name in Jakarta, which has at least two Mark 1 boxes installed. Major welfare concerns were also noted at this slaughterhouse. The facilities visited were chosen at random. Without exception, the treatment of cattle in these slaughterhouses was inhumane and breached multiple clauses of the OIE Code.

Meat and Livestock Australia will also be able to supply you with the list of the slaughterhouses visited during their March 2010 study. The study team visited 11 different locations, most of which were pre-warned, so it can be assumed that what was observed was their 'best practice'. The average number of throat cuts in these slaughterhouses was 4; in one location 18 cuts were observed. On average, cattle hit their heads against the concrete slab of the Mark 1 box 3.5 times. The sound and vision of animals slamming their heads against concrete is one of the images from Four Corners that members of the public have told us will stay in their mind for years to come.

There are over 50 locations in Indonesia where Mark 1 boxes are installed. RSPCA's analysis of the Mark 1 box concludes that it is neither an efficient nor humane restraint method. The pain and distress associated with roping and casting animals onto a sloping concrete slab means that this system of restraint is inherently cruel. The device has been condemned by the world's leading slaughter expert, Dr Temple Grandin, as 'appalling' and 'breaching every humane standard in the world'. In correspondence to RSPCA Australia, Dr Grandin stated that 'the handling of cattle in the Mark 1 restraint box is atrocious. A system that is designed to make an animal fall should NEVER be used'.

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The remaining 60 or so locations where Australia cattle are slaughtered in Indonesia will be using copies of the Mark 1 box, or traditional roping slaughter. It is abundantly clear that the roping slaughter of Australian cattle is a prolonged and tortuous process, involving multiple insults to cattle welfare as workers attempt to move and then incapacitate these large, terrified beasts. The fact that the industry cannot guarantee that Australian cattle will not be supplied to slaughterhouses where they will be subjected to traditional roping slaughter speaks for itself.

Unless you have been provided with reliable and independently validated evidence that a slaughterhouse in Indonesia meets internationally accepted slaughter standards, then it can only be concluded that they do not, and therefore that the treatment endured by Australian cattle in any Indonesian slaughterhouse will be no different than that documented during the Animals Australia investigation.

Yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Neil".

Heather Neil
CEO RSPCA Australia Inc