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Continual improvement and transparency underpin festival livestock sales

AUSTRALIAN livestock exporters and their in-country partners have been proactive in Middle East and South-East Asia markets during Festival of the Sacrifice celebrations in the past week, offsetting the risk of poor animal welfare and supply chain breaches.

Australian Livestock Exporters' Council CEO, Simon Westaway, said that while Australian exporters had played a significant role in achieving further progress in festival markets this year, they had also identified some instances of Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) non-compliance and had reported a number of breaches to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR).

"Where any Australian sheep were detected outside of approved facilities, including in countries like Malaysia, Oman and Kuwait, our exporters have pro-actively reported the breaches to the regulator and outlined the immediate steps taken, where possible, to return animals to approved supply chains," Mr Westaway said.

Under ESCAS, Australian livestock must not be sold outside of approved supply chains and cannot be purchased for home slaughter or for slaughter at facilities that have not been approved as meeting international animal welfare standards. Special control systems were implemented for Australian sheep in markets celebrating the religious holiday, over and above ESCAS requirements.

"Streamlined supply chains, carcass-only sales and the supply of smaller volumes to many markets has reduced the risk of oversupply and demonstrates that Australian exporters' highest priorities are control, traceability and the welfare of livestock," Mr Westaway said.

"The continual improvement Australian industry is achieving is hard-earned and reflects a genuine determination to realise our 'no fear, no pain' animal welfare objective."

Mr Westaway said proactive reporting of breaches by exporters was upholding the integrity of ESCAS and embedding accountability into Australia's \$230 million-plus live sheep trade. He pointed to the release this week of the latest DAWR [Regulatory Performance Report](#), as timely evidence of industry transparency.

"Poor welfare outcomes are never acceptable and the relevant powers regulating Australia's livestock export industry should be exercised in response to any deliberate welfare breaches," Mr Westaway said.

"ALEC welcomes the extra scrutiny on Australia's livestock export supply chains during these busy festival periods because we do not shy away from the risks inherent during these challenging peak demand periods."

"Australia's sheepmeat industry should be proud of its role, especially during the Festival of the Sacrifice, in delivering high-quality, healthy Australian sheep to our overseas customers in a way that combines long-standing cultural traditions with the world's best control, traceability and welfare standards."