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Confirmation of Australia-China live sheep export protocol welcomed by industry

AUSTRALIAN livestock exporters have welcomed confirmation today of new conditions for the export of live feeder and slaughter sheep and goats from Australia.

The new feeder/slaughter protocol broadens access to the Chinese market for Australian sheep producers and exporters, complementing existing breeder sheep and sheepmeat trades.

Australian Livestock Exporters' Council CEO Simon Westaway said livestock exporters acknowledged the Federal Government's ongoing support for the live trade as an important rural industry and export earner.

"Today's [announcement](#) by Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Luke Hartsuyker, creates a new opportunity to develop Australia's already strong livestock export relationship with China, which was worth \$173 million in 2016," Mr Westaway said.

The livestock export industry's service provider, LiveCorp, also welcomed the announcement, with its CEO Sam Brown saying the outcome was the result of a genuine partnership between the industry and government.

"This has been a hard fought and welcome outcome and shows the benefits of industry working closely and in alignment with government to provide further opportunities for Australian livestock exports," Mr Brown said.

It was also confirmed today that the 10 per cent tariff on slaughter and feeder cattle and slaughter sheep would be eliminated by 1 January 2019.

"Australian exporters and producers have identified great potential in the trade of feeder and slaughter animals to China, so we welcome improved access to the market and the removal of tariffs," Mr Westaway said.

"For example, the live feeder/slaughter cattle trade to China is now gaining momentum after initial air consignments last year, two seaborne shipments so far this year and further trade expected before Christmas.

"This trade with China represents new, closed-loop supply chains, with the highest levels of control, traceability and animal welfare in keeping with the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS)."

The protocols were signed at today's sixth Sanitary and Phytosanitary High-Level Dialogue meeting between Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and Chinese officials in Sydney.

"Greater market access and diversification are high priorities for our industry," Mr Westaway said.

"That's why today's announcement is important and why we will continue to pursue further trade opportunities like the resumption of sheep exports to Saudi Arabia. Historically, the Saudi trade has played a significant role in our sheep exports and we're working with the Federal Government to re-open that market.

"Significant results can be achieved when industry and government work together, as today's news regarding China demonstrates. We're hopeful of a similar breakthrough regarding Saudi Arabia in the near future."