

Labor to put test vote on phasing out live sheep trade

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Labor on Thursday will move an amendment to phase out live sheep exports, mirroring the private member's bill put up by Liberal MP Sussan Ley.

The amendment will be to the government's legislation to tighten the regulations governing the trade.

The Labor move will be a token stand because the amendment has no hope being passed. The ALP is several members down with the byelections, and some Liberals who might be willing to cross the floor on the Ley bill itself would not do so on a Labor amendment.

But attention will be on whether Ley votes for it. She said on Wednesday night that she had yet to see the amendment and would sleep on the matter.

Victorian Liberal Russell Broadbent, who last week warned that the live sheep trade was a vote changer, said he would not cross the floor on the Labor amendment.

The ALP move comes as footage has emerged of a load of Australian cattle landing in Israel last week in bad condition. They were on board the Bader III, which left Australia amid controversy in early May.

A local group, Israel Against Live Shipments, filmed the cattle. IALS spokesperson Anat Refua, said: "Our investigators were appalled at the condition of the animals arriving in Eilat from Australia during the intense heat wave (44+degrees). The stench was unbearable and the cattle were covered in faeces from head to toe."

Dr Lynn Simpson, former live export veterinarian who viewed the footage at the request of Animals Australia, said "These cattle show a high percentage of nasal discharge indicating they are experiencing a spectrum of respiratory disease. This is a common disease with sea transported animals. It is likely a contagious pneumonia, aptly called 'shipping fever'."

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Lyn White from Animals Australia said the footage showed “the stresses and unacceptable conditions these animals have endured.

“Even at a time that the live trade is under such scrutiny exporters are unable to prevent unacceptable outcomes such as this,” White said.

But the ABC [reported](#) that a federal Agriculture Department spokesman disputed the claims that that cattle were in a bad state, saying there had been daily reports from an independent observer on board.

“The footage does not reflect the conditions of the cattle throughout the journey. They were washed down every second day, but this cannot occur once the ship is in port and unloading took place over two days,” the spokesman said.

Michelle Grattan does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

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