

# Australian Live Export: the Data

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Vets Against Live Export



# Publicly Available Official Data

- High mortality investigation reports: 2004-2020
- ESCAS compliance reports: 2012-2020
- Parliamentary Reports: 2005-2020
- Independent Observer Summaries: 2018-2020
  - IO = appointed by Dept of Ag (DAWR)
  - IO sends daily reports, a voyage report (initial), then revisions, then a final report
  - IO Summary = the information that is release by DAWR to the public





# IO SUMMARIES

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- What do they tell us?
- How good are they?



# IO Summaries: Aust. to China

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- Incomplete data
- Limited information to:
  - assess voyage conditions
  - animal welfare
- Missing details often include:
  - temperature data
  - sea condition data
  - space/bedding data



# IO Summaries: Aust. to China

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- 22/37 (59%) voyages did not have a veterinarian (AAV) (mean 20 days)
- AAVs:
  - required on voyages to ME and beyond
  - not required on the majority of Australian live export voyages
  - employed/contracted by the exporter



# IO Summaries: Aust. to China

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- Food issues: 16/37 (43%)
- Food insufficiency: 10/37 (27%)
- Rationed/exhausted food supplies: 4/37 (11%) with an additional 2/37 possible based on extended voyage duration
- Water supply issues: 16/37 (43%)





# IO Summaries: Aust. to China

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- Heat stress detailed: 13/37 (35%)
- Heat stress likely: 9/37 (24%)
- Cold stress: 7/37 (19%) <2 degrees Celsius (lowest temp not usually recorded)
- Extreme temperatures (hot, cold or both) detailed: 19/37 (51%)

NOTE: figures are the minimum as sufficient detail unavailable



# IO Summaries: Aust. to China

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- Insufficient bedding: 15/37 (41%)
- Wet sloppy pads: 29/37 (78%)
  - accumulation of urine and faeces
- Insufficient space: 13/37 (35%)

NOTE: figures are the minimum as sufficient detail unavailable







# IO Summaries: Aust. to China

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- Rough seas: 11/37 (30%)
  - lameness, reduced appetite, poor pen conditions
  - not detailed in IO summary for 2/11 but detailed in the accompanying high mortality investigation reports

NOTE: figures are the minimum as sufficient detail unavailable





# IO Summaries: Aust. to China

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- Ship infrastructure issues frequent, including mechanical breakdown
- Animal welfare issues at discharge: 20/37 (51%)

NOTE: figures are the minimum as sufficient detail unavailable





# IO Summaries

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- Could the situation be worse?
- How much censoring occurs?





# CENSORED DATA: IO 197

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- routine low-mortality short-haul voyage
- chosen at random
- 6 applications required for IO documents under Freedom of Information
- only 2 documents released: initial and final IO Reports
- \$>600 and >6 months



# IO Summary vs IO Report: IO 197

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- Omitted:
  - the numerous incompetencies/concerns detailed for 1/5 stockpersons:
    - no sawdust bedding in hospital pens (plenty onboard)
    - lack of care to downer cattle
    - mishandling of animals resulting in death or pain/welfare issues
    - delayed/no euthanasia of cattle with pain, suffering and/or imminent death



# IO Summary vs IO Report: IO 197

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- Omitted:
  - a recumbent cow was left without food or water for 12 hours and died in a position that indicated that she was trying to reach water
  - a cow dead for >12 h was not removed from a pen despite the fact that it reduced cattle access to feed and water



# IO Summary vs IO Report: IO 197

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- Omitted:
  - an older cull cow consignment had 3.4% morbidity (mortality % redacted)
  - inappropriate drug handling and drug hygiene
  - incomplete and inaccurate record keeping



# IO Summary vs IO Report: IO 197

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- Omitted:
  - detailed descriptions of heat stress on Deck 6 and 7 (with dairy breeds excluded from description)
  - two cattle discharged with non-weight bearing lameness (ie not fit-to-load onto trucks)





# IO Summary vs IO Report: IO 197

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- Omitted:
  - smoking throughout the livestock decks in Jakarta despite the known extreme fire risk in live export ships
  - details of the non-compliant handling in Jakarta were omitted
  - details of the injury hazards for unloading in Jakarta and Panjang not detailed
  - details of unsuitable trucks



# IO Summary vs the IO Report: IO 197

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- Misleading Comments include:
  - “Communications between all staff were generally easy going and professional during the voyage”
    - the significant communication (and other) concerns with a senior stockman is not apparent to the Australian public
    - “all” staff = incorrect



# IO Summary vs the real IO Report: IO 197

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- Disinformation includes:
  - cattle standing in some pens with liquid effluent, fetlock deep for over 30 hours:
    - IO SUMMARY: no negative health or welfare implications
    - IO REPORT: conditions not conducive to good animal welfare, conditions contributed to heat stress and conditions were challenging for crew



# IO Summary vs the real IO

## Report: IO 197

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- Disinformation includes:
  - cow with one claw, swollen fetlock and non-weight bearing:
    - IO expressed welfare concerns and wrote not fit to load or discharge
    - DAWR said no observable negative health or welfare implications



# IO SUMMARY for *Al Kuwait* N Summer Voyage 2020

- Heat stress downplayed
- Sheep in videos with heat stress 2 and 3 described as “comfortable”



## 21 - Strait of Hormuz K25 IMG\_2628.mp4

Video displays a wet bulb temperature reading of 29.7 degrees Celsius. This video captures about 30 sheep in a pen on board the vessel. The video shows sheep comfortable at heat stress score 2, with a few sheep observed at heat stress score 3.



# IO SUMMARY for *Al Kuwait* N Summer Voyage 2020

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- Heat stress downplayed
- Sheep in videos with heat stress 2 and 3 described as “comfortable”
- Videos at peak heat not included
- Voyage success claimed by AAV, company and Govt





# THE FACTS

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- FROM the limited data we have
- FROM the country with the best standards for live ex in the world
- Live ex has a high incidence and prevalence of unacceptable animal welfare issues that are covered up by the Dept of Ag



# SHEEP Mortality

- Main causes:
  - inanition/salmonellosis
    - historically 75% deaths (role of heat unknown)
    - inanition = failure to adapt to pellets = starvation
  - heat stress (likely undercounted due to autolysis)







# Heat Stress

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- “heat crashes” in sheep recorded in 1996 ( Kelly PhD Thesis)
- heat stress not investigated experimentally till 2000s
- “heat crashes” occurred regularly on voyages to the ME until 2018





# Heat Stress

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- 2018:
  - “*Awassi Express*” footage shown to public
  - northern summer trade ceased
  - existing space allowances changed after McCarthy Report and AVA submission
    - industry defended space allowances from 1978-2018
    - “absence of evidence” of a welfare issue due to inadequate space was used as “evidence of absence”
      - sheep mortality % from 2018-2020 has significantly decreased with increased space allowance





# Heat Stress

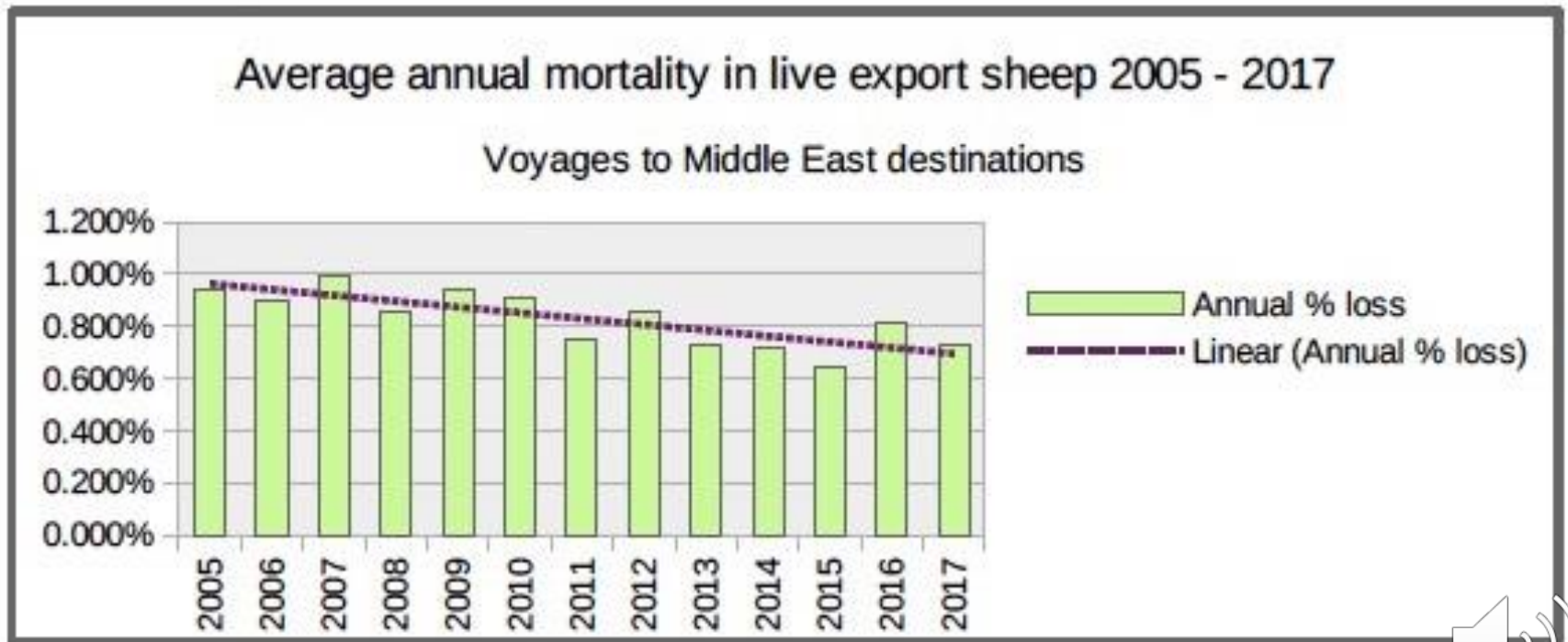
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- Industry claimed decreased voyage mortality as evidence of good sheep welfare
- Heat stress mortality been covered up or not noted by Dept of Ag due to averaged statistics



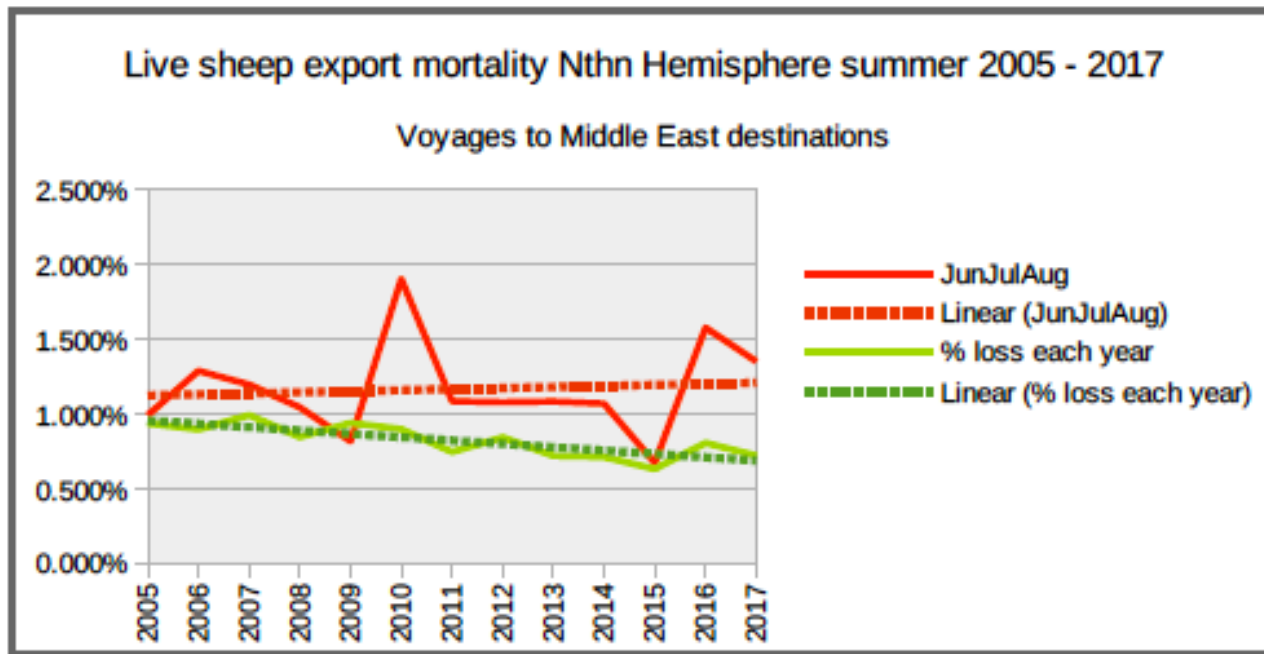
# Heat Stress

Graph 1. Average Annual Mortality in Live Export Sheep 2005-2017



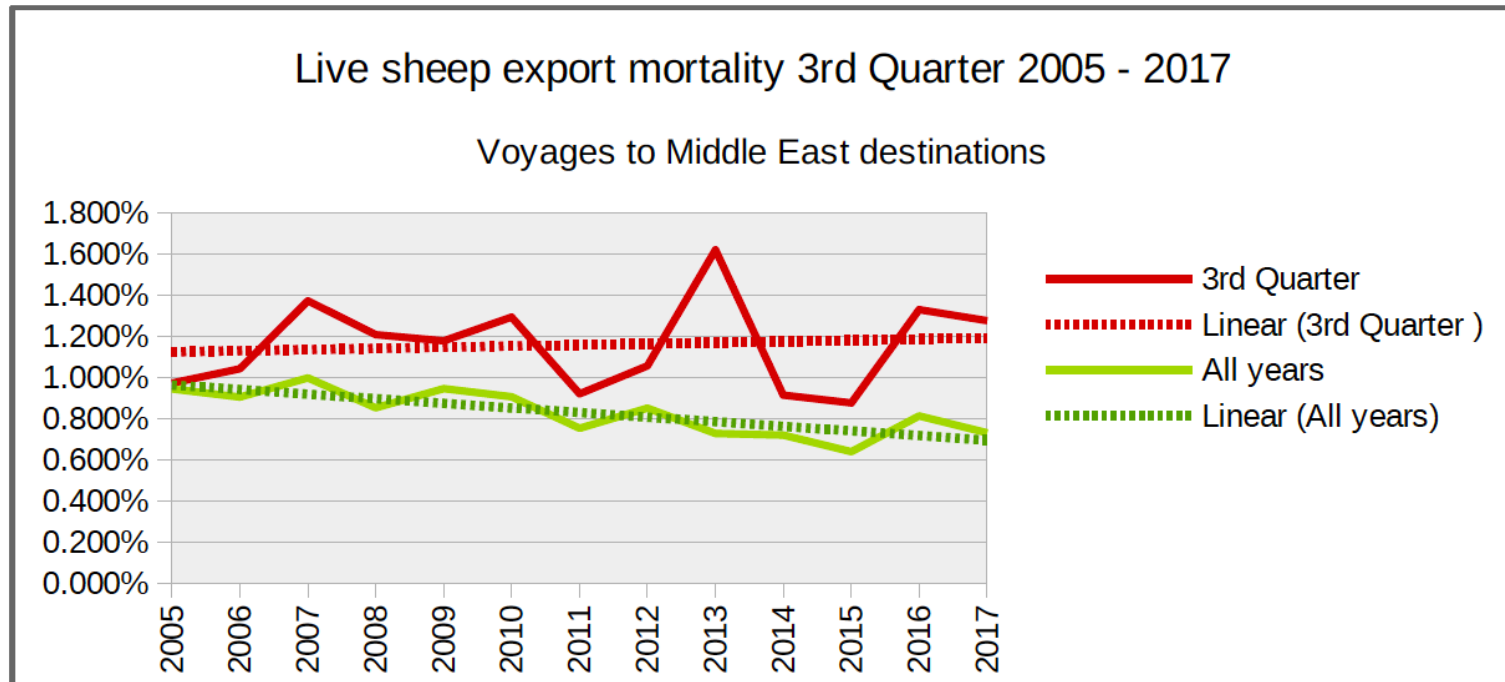
# Heat Stress

Graph 2. Live sheep export mortality in Jun-August 2005-2017



# Heat Stress

Graph 3. Live Sheep Export Mortality 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (Jul-Sept) 2005-2017





# Conclusions

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- Limited publicly available data
- Data available censored
- Statistics skewed
- Whistleblowers denigrated
- Critical analysis of information:
  - RSPCA and independent veterinary organisations (VALE, Sentient, AVA)





# Thank you

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