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NEWSFLASH

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On Wednesday afternoon (October 18), Robert Charles Gregg, a sheep farmer from York Plains in the Midlands of Tasmania, will face the Hobart Magistrates' Court on several charges under the Animal Welfare Act. Gregg is charged under Section 7 ("use an unsatisfactory method of management (of an animal)"), Section 8, cruelty to animals, and Section 9, aggravated cruelty. It is alleged that Gregg allowed more than 150 sheep to starve to death on a property near Oatlands. Media reports at the time the animals were found indicated that, amongst the dead, were dozens of sheep so ill that they had to be destroyed, some so weak that their eyes had been pecked out by crows.

Live Export Shame Tasmania is calling for the maximum penalty, including imprisonment, and a lifetime ban to ensure that Gregg never again has charge of an animal. Spokesperson Suzanne Cass said:

"This must be one of the worst cruelty cases Tasmania has ever seen. The suffering that these animals endured over a period of many weeks is simply indescribable. People near the property must have seen what was happening, but it wasn't until over 150 sheep were dead and dozens more dying that the matter came to the attention of the authorities. Some of the animals who had to be destroyed had had their eyes pecked out by crows, so weak were they.

Live Export Shame has also condemned those members of the Midlands community who chose to turn a blind eye to the mass suffering of the dead and dying sheep. With regard to Gregg, the organization insists that nothing less than the maximum penalty under the law should be applied.

"How people were able to watch this tragedy unfold without reporting it is beyond belief, continued Ms Cass. "It was even reported that this man was out drinking as these animals died. Clearly, he should never be allowed near any animals again. If ever there was a case that warranted imprisonment, and a lifetime ban, this is it. It is the sort of case that we rely upon the judiciary to do the right thing, and ensure that the punishment fits the crime.

"There is never - ever - an excuse for animal cruelty. And cruelty on this scale occurring in Tasmania is really something to be alarmed about", she concluded.

Gregg appears before Magistrate Helen Wood at 2.15p.m. on Wednesday.

For further information, please contact Suzanne Cass, Live Export Shame Tasmania, on 0414 726935.