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TASMANIA ... the capital state for animal abusers, says Live Export Shame Tasmania.

Live Export Shame Tasmania has expressed contempt for a justice system that allows hundreds of animals to be shockingly abused while the perpetrators virtually "get off scot free". Two farmers in as many months who have starved animals to death in their hundreds have been given nothing more than short suspended sentences, while in November in Western Australia, a farmer was fined \$25,000 and prohibited from owning sheep for 10 years over 11 dead and another six dying sheep. A NSW farmer was recently convicted on 77 charges of the Cruelty to Animals Act, and was fined \$10,000 plus \$40,000 in court costs, and banned from owning livestock for two years for his treatment of 2,500 sheep.

Live Export Shame Tasmania spokesperson Suzanne Cass said:-

"We are just appalled by this latest travesty. Richard Rainbird, from near New Norfolk in Tasmania's south, pleaded guilty to cruelty charges involving an unknown number of cattle who were found dead and dying, and many were in a shocking condition. As well, he had 180 sheep who had not been shorn for 18 months, exposing them to threats of disease. For all that, he got nothing more than a 28 day wholly suspended sentence. He wasn't even fined, because that would have "left him unable to provide for his animals" - who clearly should have been seized, and he should never be allowed to have control of animals again. Just like Robert Charles Gregg, he can go right out there and do it all again".

Robert Charles Gregg, from York Plains in the Midlands of Tasmania, was convicted in October of animal cruelty, after charges of "mismanagement" and "aggravated cruelty" were dismissed. More than 150 sheep on his property starved to death, and 1,000 more were rated by a State Government veterinarian as "emaciated, near death".

"A number of Rainbird's cattle had apparently just died where they lay, unable to even get out of their own faeces", continued Ms Cass. "80% of a herd of 90 found on his property were also in a 'very poor condition'. For all this carnage, these people get to go home, and do it all again. No fines and no ban from having charge of animals again. The clear message is: if you want to seriously abuse animals, come to Tasmania to do it. With other high-profile animal cruelty cases due to come before the courts soon, we have absolutely no faith in the judiciary which trivializes such terrible animal suffering and consistently fails to meet the community's expectations in these matters".

*Ends. For further comment, please contact Suzanne Cass, Live Export Shame Tasmania
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