



PO Box 252
BRIDGEWATER TAS 7030
Phone 0414 726935

Fax: (03) 6249 7726
Email suzannecass@iprimus.com.au
www.liveexportshame.com

NEWSFLASH

NEWSFLASH

NEWSFLASH

October 19, 2006

Live Export Shame Tasmania has learned that the voyage of the "*Al Messilah*" which left Devonport in February 2006 was a "reportable voyage" because it exceeded the "acceptable" mortality rate for the sheep on board. According to a mortality report from an investigation conducted by AQIS, **1683 sheep died** on the marathon 27 day journey to Jebel Ali, Bahrain, Kuwait and Doha. Of the **cattle already on board** when the ship arrived in Devonport, **0.76% died** as well. This reflects a higher mortality rate, and numbers, than the "*Al Kuwait*" case currently before the courts in Western Australia. The **26 year old** "*Al Messilah*" was previously investigated by AQIS in October 2002, when 2,173 sheep died on board, representing 2.82% of its load, and an **average 103 sheep died PER DAY** on that voyage, mostly from salmonellosis and what the industry calls "shy feeding" (that is, they starved to death).

Spokesperson Suzanne Cass said:

"Roberts led us, and the whole Tasmanian community to believe, firstly that it was 'just' sending 45,000 sheep on the "*Merino (aka Cormo) Express*", 'just' to Kuwait and the UAE, not a marathon journey - one of the longest in this six month reporting period to multiple ports like this. That became over 71,000, and the "*Al Messilah*" was brought in. We were told it would be empty, but it had cattle already on board. We are demanding that Roberts make the findings of the AQIS report available to us, to the government and to the public".

The live export industry regards a 2% mortality rate amongst sheep, and 1% amongst cattle (depending on the length of the journey) as "acceptable", and mortalities above those levels trigger an investigation by AQIS (the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service). The findings of such reports are not made public because they are protected by the government's "commercial in confidence" provisions.

"Every review of this morally bankrupt industry has called for more "accountability" and transparency", continued Ms Cass, "but it is still impossible to get these reports released

"The year before, in February 2005, 652 sheep died on the "*Al Shuwaikh*". How much longer is the State government going to allow Roberts to mislead the community with this trade in animal misery? We were even denied access to the trucks for 30 seconds to check on the animals this year, as we have always done in the past - perhaps this is the result. We did see sheep down, ill and injured, we have film footage of poor loading practices including a sheep being kicked - and that is just in the short window of opportunity that we had".

Devonport Police prevented animal advocates from stopping the trucks for 30 seconds, as has been an “unwritten agreement” to date, and this resulted in emotional scenes as protesters battled with the police.

Activists painted “death ship” on the hull of the “*Al Messilah*” while it was in Devonport.

Shortly afterwards, Animals Australia released the findings of its investigation into to the handling and slaughter practices in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Egypt - many countries in which the “*Al Messilah*” unloaded its sad cargo.

“Roberts cannot be trusted to tell the truth, and it certainly cannot be trusted with the safety of animals - in the state, or on live exports. The people who tagged the ship “death ship” were proved to be absolutely right. The then Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries, Steve Kons, tried to tell us what a great ship the “*Al Messilah*” is. How wrong was he?

“This all follows on from Roberts’ cruelty convictions in 2002, and is typical of Roberts’ attitude to animals. An episode as serious as this should be more than enough grounds for the State government to ban the trade from Tasmania”, concluded Ms Cass.

For further information, please contact Suzanne Cass, 0414 726935.



The “*Al Messilah*” in Devonport with “Death Ship” clearly visible on its hull.
(Photo from Animal Liberation Victoria)



The cramped interior of the closed decked "*Al Messilah*", built in 1980, and detained in Portland, Victoria in August 2005 for irregularities in the certifications of the Master and crew. The "*Al Messilah*" is also named in Hansard as a vessel of choice for (human) deserters.