



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 18, 2006

What price immeasurable animal suffering?

Today in the Hobart Magistrates' Court, a sheep farmer from the Midlands region of Tasmania escaped any meaningful punishment after starving more than 150 sheep to death. 1,000 more were in such poor condition that they were scored at 2 ('emaciated, near death') by a government veterinary officer. Robert Charles Gregg, of York Plains near Oatlands had pleaded "not guilty" to charges under Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Tasmanian Animal Welfare Act.

Charges under Sections 7 (using an unsatisfactory method of management of an animal), and Section 9 (Aggravated Cruelty) were dismissed; however he was convicted under Section 8, the Cruelty provisions of the Act. Magistrate Helen Wood sentenced him to a one month wholly suspended term in prison, which would only come into effect if he breaches the Animal Welfare Act again in the next 18 months. She took the view that he had not "intentionally" starved the animals, and that it was a "mistake".

Animal activists reacted angrily outside the court, and television media apparently agreed, with WIN and Southern Cross News services showing again the distressing footage of the dead sheep, and others dying, with four so weak their eyes had been pecked out by crows. Those animals had to be destroyed on the spot by the RSPCA.

Gregg's lawyer said that his sheep were 'his livelihood' and that he was an 'avid animal lover'

Live Export Shame's Suzanne Cass described today's judgment as a "farce".

"Gregg has now been given a clear message that it is okay to abuse animals like this, and it's absolutely fine for him to go right out there and do it all again. It sends the same message to other farmers. God help any animals that this man hates, if he claims to be an 'animal lover'." she said. "He wasn't even fined, because of his "financial situation" because he had "sold *one* of his properties. And that says it all, too".

On being questioned by journalists about whether Gregg should have been imprisoned for what Magistrate Wood described as a "mistake", Ms Cass said:

"If your sheep have been shorn in the middle of July, you are feeding them less than a third of what they need to survive the prevailing conditions, and they are dropping dead in numbers like this from obvious starvation, it is much, much worse than a 'mistake'. Of course he knew what was happening, and there is never - ever - any excuse for this sort of cruelty. Other

people in that community must have known what was happening as well, but did not report it to the authorities until it was sheer carnage. Those animals suffered terribly, for weeks.

“He should never, ever, be allowed to have any control of any animals again. If the DPP does not appeal on this, it is a travesty”, she concluded.

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