



Opponents of live sheep trade head to Middle East

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Animal rights activists have taken their campaign against WA's \$200 million-a-year live sheep industry to the Middle East.

After intense lobbying since January, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has secured meetings this week with the United Arab Emirates Agriculture Minister and Qatar's director of agricultural research and development. The countries together buy about 340,000 WA sheep annually, worth \$27 million.

PETA spokeswoman Maya Linden said both responded "immediately" to PETA's letter campaign, also aimed at Egypt, Jordan, Oman and Bahrain. Ms Linden expected a favourable response: "They would rather the sheep were killed by halal means in Australia and imported as frozen meat," she said.

But WA Livestock Exporters Association chairman John Edwards said PETA was ignorant and arrogant. He and Pastoralists and Graziers Association spokesman Geoff Gare said WA frozen halal meat was too expensive for many Middle East clients.

Agriculture Minister Kim Chance said if WA live sheep exports ended, Middle East countries would buy from Somalia, where standards were lower.