

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

20 October 2014

### **MEDIA STATEMENT**

#### **SUPPLY CHAIN IN GAZA**

**[From Mr Ahmad Ghosheh, Managing Director, Livestock Shipping Services]**

Livestock Shipping Services (LSS) is aware of allegations around a possible supply chain breach in Gaza during the recent Islamic religious festival, Eid al-Adha.

LSS takes these allegations very seriously and does not tolerate the mistreatment of animals in any way. LSS is focused on the welfare of all livestock that it exports and is committed to supporting the ESCAS principles as a framework within which it can work closely with importers, customers and the industry to make improvements to the way livestock are transported and handled around the world.

LSS has been working closely with the Department of Agriculture (DoA) over the past 11 months to identify and resolve issues within the LSS supply chain in Gaza. LSS formally advised DoA on 5 November 2013 that the company had concerns relating to the supply chain in Gaza. Following this, the company immediately took a number of steps to deal with the possible issues. This included:

- Self-reporting of the problems within the supply chain in Gaza to DoA;
- Immediate voluntary suspension of exports to specific facilities;
- Commencement of a detailed internal investigation into the supply chain in Gaza;
- Ongoing efforts to manage and reconcile the livestock numbers remaining on hand in the supply chain;
- Commencement of remedial work at the Gaza abattoir and review of the restraint box and processes to improve slaughter outcomes;
- Instruction to the importer that no cattle were to be slaughtered at the Gaza municipal abattoir until remedial works were complete and approval by DoA was obtained to proceed and per DoA advice the importer was notified that no cattle supplied by LSS were to cross the border from Israel to Gaza; and
- Deployment of additional consultants and staff to the region by LSS to monitor compliance at ESCAS approved facilities.

The last shipment of livestock directly to Gaza was in mid-October 2013 and LSS cattle continued to be legitimately transferred from Israel to Gaza until a direction by DoA was issued to suspend further transfer of cattle on 6 March 2014. Consequently, a significant number of cattle have remained in the supply chain since this time. LSS has been advised by its importer that as of 10 October 2014 there are no remaining LSS cattle in the Gaza supply chain facilities.

It has been a priority of LSS to humanely process the remaining Australian (LSS) cattle in the supply chain in Gaza and it has made every effort to facilitate this. However, the extremely volatile and dangerous working environment, coupled with the difficulties around entry into Gaza has made this extremely challenging. In addition to this, further challenges have included the partial destruction of livestock facilities during the recent conflict with Israel, and a black market campaign to reuse Australian cattle ear tags in order to improve market value of non-Australian livestock.

Until these issues are resolved and the supply chain can be assured, LSS will continue its voluntary suspension of exports to Gaza.

LSS is committed to supporting the ESCAS principles and will continue to work with the Department of Agriculture around investigations relating to a breakdown in the supply chain in Gaza and improving animal welfare outcomes for its livestock in its destination markets.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LSS:**

[www.livestockshipping.com.au](http://www.livestockshipping.com.au)

**MEDIA CONTACT**

Tara Taubenschlag

P: +61 2 6161 8627

M: 0404 887 804