

15 April 2014

MEDIA STATEMENT

ESCAS COMPLIANCE IN GAZA

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

Livestock Shipping Services (LSS) formally advised the Department of Agriculture (DoA) on 5th November 2013 that the company had concerns relating to the integrity of its supply chain in Gaza. Following this, LSS 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 and ultimately the entire supply chain in Gaza
- Commencement of a detailed internal investigation into the supply chain in Gaza
- A concerted effort to 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 and that no cattle supplied by LSS were to cross the border from Israel to Gaza, as advised to the Israeli authorities.
- Deployment of additional consultant and staff resources to the region by LSS to monitor compliance at ESCAS approved facilities

The last shipment of livestock to Gaza was in mid-October 2013. No further shipments will be exported to Gaza.

The Department of Agriculture (DoA) has received further complaints over recent months about alleged non-compliance with the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) in Gaza. DoA has advised LSS of these complaints and are working with LSS to ensure the remaining livestock are processed according to OIE standards.

Recent political difficulties in the region have made access to the supply chain facilities extremely difficult for LSS, however, specialist consultants have been on site in the past week to carry out the necessary remediation strategies required to ensure compliance with ESCAS for the processing of remaining cattle from this final shipment.

LSS is committed to ensuring best-practice in its shipping operations. 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 both DoA and the industry to make improvements to the way livestock are transported and handled around the world.

LSS will continue to cooperate with DoA's formal investigation into the complaint and the company has a strong track record of working closely with DoA to improve the welfare of Australian animals.

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