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Compensation or not, animals still pay the price

It seems to me that compensation for the cattle growers in the Northern Territory should come from LiveCorp from the millions that has been paid to this organisation by the cattle growers ("Farmers fight for pay-off on live trade ban", June 9). Where has this money gone? Certainly not to regulate the abattoirs to ensure the welfare of the animals being sent there. LiveCorp should hang their heads in shame that they allowed this to go on for years. The live export of cattle should be banned. If New Zealand can do it so can we.

Laraine Smyth Gynea

I can feel a livestock levy coming on.

Graeme Woodlands Scone

The last time I looked we lived in a free enterprise economy. Risk is the hallmark of free enterprise and reward comes only to those who are prepared to take risks. When the cattle industry decided to export live cattle it was aware it was a high risk pursuit because of the controversy surrounding it. The industry freely accepted that risk in the hope of making high gains. Those engaged in the industry did not donate their profits to the government when the going was good. They should now not be able to claim compensation when the going is bad.

Mario Bechelli Lambton

Ban will result in more suffering for cows

Meat & Livestock Australia and LiveCorp executives deserve to be handcuffed to chairs in bad Indonesian abattoirs for the next six months ("Farmers fight for pay-off on live trade ban", June 9). This will be suitable punishment as they watch hundreds of thousands more cows still being slaughtered in the most barbaric circumstances. The only difference now is that they won't be Australian cows.

Instead, Indonesia will be tempted to import South American cows, meaning live export shipping journeys many times longer, many more cows dying

Before people start feeling too smug about the cessation of live beef exports to Indonesia they should think about the logjam effect here in Australia. We have driven through Rockhampton, Longreach and the Northern Territory and we have seen these cattle trucks on their way to the ports. This sudden "red light" sees literally kilometres of live animals on the road that have to be watered and fed. Where to from there? Shouldn't they have reopened the Australian abattoirs or at least sent an army of inspectors to Indonesia to oversee opera-

tions rather than this situation, which is just as inhumane and a colossal cost to Australia. This has not been thought through and will surely become yet another huge embarrassment to the federal government, which would have to be the least of our worries.

Judy Jones Pennant Hills

Cruelty is going on to our own livestock – not just overseas. Last year I reported to the RSPCA and to the Pastures Protection Board that I followed a large brown unmarked truck through East Maitland and Greenhills.

along the way, and the possible reintroduction of foot and mouth disease into our region, which we eradicated from Indonesia 25 years ago. Meanwhile, Australian producers will have more than 500,000 cows bred for export and no market. The road journey to the closest abattoir is too long and too expensive, so many will just be forced to shoot them on site. This policy is a horrible humanitarian outcome.

We can only help to improve the practices in Indonesia if we use our considerable market power. We have just given away

our strongest card for nothing and many more cows will suffer as a result.

The 25 Indonesian abattoirs identified as being of international standard will now be punished when they should be rewarded with special access to our livestock. Unfortunately, it was well-intentioned cow-loving vegetarians like me who have forced this outcome due to knee-jerk reactions to make us all feel good about ourselves. We must assess the consequences before embracing simplistic "people power" protests in the future.

Karen Erdos Randwick

It was loaded several crates high, with dead and barely alive chooks, their heads and broken wings poking through the bars of the metal crates. The heads of the dead chooks were swaying about with the truck movements and those still barely alive were trying to lift their heads to breathe, suffocated by the birds packed on top of them in the crates.

I informed the board, who told me dead birds should be disposed of on site.

I was so upset that I did not have the presence of mind to follow the truck to its destination. It could

have been headed for the local processing plant for human consumption or pet food, a rogue takeaway shop, or it could have been headed to a composting/landfill site, well away from the prying eyes of the animal welfare folks. I never heard if the RSPCA prosecuted or if they are aware of what happens to worn-out egg-laying birds. All I found out was that this truck came from Sydney. I assume the local trucking companies refuse this horrific business and we all have mortgages to pay.

Sylvia Graham Maitland

Pigs don't know how lucky they are.
Geraldine Brown Northbridge

In 2010 live cattle export earnings were \$678 million with 850,000 cattle exported. It is also stated the trade provides 10,000 jobs in Australia. The alternative of establishing regional abattoirs across Australia would surely see the creation of tens of thousands of jobs, a similar number off the dole, taxes paid, boosts to regional towns and income for ancillary employment, such as packaging.

Exporting processed beef seems a much better option. The government should adopt a proactive role in establishing new markets.

John Hurrell Chatswood

I'm no Einstein, but does MLA = AWB?

Al Clark Belrose