



MEDIA RELEASE  
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## Wellard invests in live export shipping fleet

Perth-based Wellard Group has achieved complete quality control of the live export supply chain, from farm gate to export destination, by purchasing two of the world's flagship livestock vessels, the MV Becrux, the world's most technologically advanced livestock carrier and the MV Stella Deneb, the world's largest livestock carrier.

The vessels will now be operated by Wellard subsidiary Oceanic Livestock, increasing Wellard's already unrivalled investment in live export infrastructure and the future of the live export industry.

Wellard Rural Exports is Australia's largest livestock exporter and the investment of in excess of US\$100-million to purchase the two vessels is the biggest investment in livestock shipping by an Australian livestock exporter.

"Until now Wellard had an existing and substantial investment in pre-export facilities, a feed mill and in infrastructure in importing countries, but we did not own the ships," Wellard Rural Exports Managing Director Steve Meerwald said.

"The purchase of the two ships enables Wellard to gain complete vertical integration, giving us total control of the live export chain."

Mr Meerwald said the investment was a reflection of Wellard's confidence in the future of the live export industry.

"Wellard will continue to invest in new technology and in crew training and education – with the single purpose of improving animal welfare on-board," he said. "Australia is a world leader in animal welfare, and we want to be at the forefront of that animal welfare commitment."

Both Oceanic Livestock vessels have also undergone names changes to reflect their importance to the Australian livestock industry and to provide them with a uniquely Australian identity.

The MV Becrux will now be called the MV Ocean Drover while the name of the MV Stella Deneb, has been changed to the MV Ocean Shearer.

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WA Agriculture Minister Terry Redman helped unveil the new names at the Fremantle Port today, as the MV Ocean Drover loaded sheep for export to the Middle East.

“When the Drover and Shearer pull into any port around the world we want Australia’s commitment to the animal production industry to be showcased,” Mr Meerwald said.

“The vessels’ new names pay tribute to Australian icons shrouded with rural history. Although their names have now changed, the focus on delivering quality Australian sheep and cattle to their destination in better condition than when they left remains unwavering.”

For further information please contact:

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### **Background – Wellard Rural Exports**

Wellard Rural Exports is Australia’s largest livestock exporter, with an investment in the live export industry without peer. It has supplied quality Australian dairy and beef cattle and sheep and goats to the world for 30 years. Based in Fremantle, the company’s operations cover every aspect of the export chain, including feed and high fibre milling, road transport, feedlot facilities and modern shipping.

The company’s flagship carrier, the MV Ocean Drover, is a purpose-built livestock carrier capable of carrying 75,000 sheep or 18,000 cattle from Australia to major markets around the globe. She was commissioned in 2002.

The Ocean Shearer can carry 125,000 sheep or 23,000 cattle, or a combination of both.

Two new vessels, the MV Ocean Swagman and the MV Ocean Outback, are due for launch in the second half of 2009. In August 2008 Wellard and Siba Ships announced a US\$250 million contract to build two new livestock vessels which will be able to carry 17,000 cattle or 70,000 sheep or a combination of the two.

For more information visit: [www.wellard.com.au](http://www.wellard.com.au)