



Wellard

MEDIA RELEASE
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Cattle set sail for the Egypt aboard the MV Ocean Shearer

A Wellard Rural Exports shipment of 16,460 cattle will depart for Egypt today, the first shipment to be exported under a new, improved animal welfare code.

The 16,460 cattle are due to depart from Fremantle this evening aboard Wellard's MV Ocean Shearer, and are expected to arrive at the Port of Ain Sokhna in approximately 15 days.

Mr Meerwald said Egypt was another important export destination for Australian livestock producers, as it provided a market for a different class of cattle to that typically exported to Australia's northern neighbours in South East Asia.

"Egypt represents a significant new market for Wellard's live export business and will be hugely beneficial to Western Australia beef producers, given the impact this shipment has already had in the market place in the South West," he said.

The live export trade to Egypt has recommenced after the Australian and Egyptian Governments signed a Memoranda of Understanding which has established stringent protocols for the handling and slaughter of Australian livestock in Egypt

Under the strict conditions of the agreement, Australian livestock must be exported into a closed system which only permits the use of a new world class feedlot and abattoir at the port of Ain Sokhna in Egypt, which has been inspected and approved by Australian authorities.

Wellard Rural Exports Managing Director Steve Meerwald said the new protocols provided Wellard with the confidence to resume exports to Egypt.

"The enhanced animal welfare and meat processing protocols in Egypt, combined with our own commitment to the highest standards of animal welfare for preparation and shipment, mean Wellard is ideally suited to commence exports to Egypt," he said.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the State and Federal Department of Agriculture, Meat & Livestock Australia and LiveCorp have worked extremely hard to

establish a system which effectively transfers Australian animal welfare standards to Egypt, and this shipment is testament to that work.

“Having personally inspected the new facilities at Sokhna I can absolutely confirm that they are first class and would rival some of Australia’s best feedlot and processing plants.”

Mr Meerwald said that the livestock would be handled and slaughtered in accordance with international standards for animal welfare.

“Australian officials and industry representatives have assessed the abattoir and are satisfied that the facilities will comply with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines,” he said.

“The re-opening of this trade is a perfect example of where Australia has worked with an importing country to achieve better animal welfare standards.

“This provides a superior outcome than if Australia had simply vacated the market and left supply to countries with lower animal welfare standards.”

The Egypt shipment marks the end of a busy month for Wellard, after the successful launch and maiden voyage of its brand new, state of the art, livestock vessel, the MV Ocean Swagman in late January.

The inaugural voyage was extremely successful, with almost a 1% weight gain from the 5625 cattle on-board.

The MV Ocean Swagman is now en route to Darwin to load cattle after successfully transporting a shipment of 26,000 sheep to the Middle East.

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For further information please contact:

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Background – Wellard Rural and Trading

Wellard Rural and Trading is the Wellard Group’s agriculture and international trade division.

Its two largest subsidiaries are, Wellard Rural Exports, Australia’s largest livestock exporter and ship owner, and Wellard Agri, a mixed farming land owner and operator specialising in the production of grains, legumes and livestock.

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

The company's flagship carrier, the MV Ocean Drover (formerly the MV Becrux), 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.

Its other vessel, the MV Ocean Shearer (formerly the MV Stella Deneb) can carry 125,000 sheep or 23,000 cattle, or a combination of both.

A new, technologically advanced, purposed built vessel, the MV Ocean Swagman sailed on its maiden voyage in January 2010. The Swagman's sister ship, the MV Ocean Outback, is due for launch in mid-late 2010. In August 2008 Wellard and Siba Ships announced a US\$250 million contract to build an additional two new livestock vessels which will be able to carry 17,000 cattle or 70,000 sheep or a combination of the two.

Wellard Agri owns and operates seven farms across two agri-hubs, one located at Watheroo in Western Australia's central midlands and one located at Kojonup in the Great Southern region of WA.

Its total landholding is more than 18,000 hectares, of which 14,000 hectares is cropped to a variety of grains and legumes. The remaining land is devoted to sheep production, including the famous Hyfield Poll Merino stud at Kojonup.

In November 2009, Wellard Agri announced it was entering the farm machinery sector, when it commenced management of the CLAAS Harvest Centre at Katanning for the Landpower range of farm machinery.

For more information visit: www.wellard.com.au