



PRESS RELEASE

(for immediate release)

TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK BY SHIP

The Red Meat Industry Forum (RMIF) took note of the urgent interdict by the NSPCA to prevent the export of livestock from South Africa to the Middle East.

The RMIF is an umbrella organisation consisting of 13 nominated members, each representing the interests of representative sector specific organisations within the red meat value chain, from the primary producer to the consumer. The Forum seeks to foster the demand for red meat and the image of the meat industry as a whole; it also seeks to command the confidence and respect of the public in general.

The RMIF has a direct and substantial legal interest and might be prejudicially affected by the judgment of the court as the Forum seeks to protect and advance the interests of the red meat industry, including the image of the industry. The conduct which the NSPCA seeks to interdict, if proven to be correct, directly impacts upon and threatens the red meat industry in South Africa. Such conduct is viewed with the utmost seriousness and concern by the Forum.

Should the Forum not decide to participate in the application, and should it be seen condoning such cruelty – which it does not – the image of the meat industry might be seriously tainted, and the confidence of the general public as a whole, and consumers of meat, will be eroded, in some instances irreparable.

For the above reasons, the Forum has opted to being part of a solution for our industry as the custodians of the red meat industry and has taken the following stance :-

Any action to prevent the transport of livestock should be supported if any basis of cruelty can be proven. The OIE Code on Transport of Animals by Sea, Chapter 7.2. is currently the guiding document for this purpose.

The blanket ban on the transporting of sheep or livestock by sea is however not supported. In the absence of our own policy or protocol determining the rules for the transporting or exporting of sheep by sea, the Forum is of the opinion that export should be allowed in terms of the OIE Code on Transport of Animals by Sea, Chapter 7.2, which is an international agreement by which South Africa is bound.

Permits should only be issued on the basis of strict compliance with the OIE Code. Furthermore, there should be a government-formulated policy dealing with the export of not only sheep but all livestock and the RMIF will support a protocol based on scientific principles to regulate transporting or exporting of live animals by sea. These guidelines must be adapted for South African conditions.

All movement of animals poses a certain disease risk and for such movement it requires the issuing of a health certificate. This forms the basis of international trading of animals and animal products. The health certificate being issued by a government veterinarian who occupies a position of trust in this process of ensuring the safety of animals and animal products.

The RMIF had no access to either the veterinary health certificate or import permit to ascertain compliance with the OIE code prior to joining the court procedure. Moreover, the Forum has not had access to the import permit, if any. We submit that any import permit and health certificate should only have been issued if there has been compliance with the OIE Code.

Should the export of livestock for slaughter purposes (In addition to accepted welfare protocols), prove to be disruptive for the red meat industry, trade avenues will be followed to prevent such disruptions.

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ENQUIRIES:

**Mr Koos van der Ryst
Chairman : Red Meat Industry Forum
Cell: 083 303 7926**

**Mr Simon Streicher
Manager : Red Meat Industry Forum
Cell: 082 565 7910**