

Livestock Export Review

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Summary of MPI Discussion Paper No: 2019/10

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is reviewing New Zealand's livestock export system. The objectives of the review are to improve the welfare of exported livestock and protect New Zealand's reputation.

MPI has identified four options to strengthen our livestock export system.

You can read more about the options in the full Livestock Export Review discussion paper at www.mpi.govt.nz/livestock-consult.

MPI is consulting on the options

We want to hear which options you think will do the most to improve animal welfare and protect New Zealand's reputation, and how the options might affect stakeholders, animals, rural communities, and New Zealand's reputation and economy.

Submissions close on Wednesday 22 January 2020.

The review covers cattle, deer, goats and sheep

Animals are exported from New Zealand for many reasons, from pets being relocated with their owners to livestock being exported for breeding. This review focuses on livestock – cattle, deer, goats and sheep.

Livestock export is controlled under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act)

The Act recognises that animals have the capacity to perceive and feel, and requires people to attend properly to their welfare. Under the Act, the Government can make regulations about livestock export. There is a regulation that places a conditional prohibition on export of livestock for slaughter. Since 2008, only breeding livestock have been exported.

Exporters usually need an Animal Welfare Export Certificate (AWEC), issued by the Director-General of MPI, before they can export livestock. MPI is required to consider a comprehensive list of matters when making decisions about AWECs, including information on how animal welfare will be safeguarded during the journey, and the animals' final destination. MPI also conducts a thorough pre-export certification process, and can place a range of conditions on any AWEC, including requiring the exporter to provide post-voyage reports.

To read the full discussion paper and make a submission go to: www.mpi.govt.nz/livestock-consult

New Zealand does not have jurisdiction over the livestock it exports once they are unloaded into the importing country.

The livestock export review suggests four options to improve the system

Option one: total ban. No-one could export livestock. A total ban could apply to all livestock, just certain species, or just certain aspects of export (such as journey length or whether the animals travel by sea or air).

Option two: conditional ban. The approval of the Director-General of MPI would be required before someone could apply to export livestock. The Director-General would have to be satisfied that the risks could be mitigated to the welfare of the animals being exported, and New Zealand's reputation. A conditional ban could be very broad (applying to all livestock exports) or very narrow (applying only to specific types of export).

Option three: new regulations to enhance the export system. Powers to make regulations under the Act are broad. Instead of a ban, regulations would be used to enhance the export system. The discussion paper gives two examples: independent monitoring and an exporter registration scheme.

Option four: continuous improvement. Most changes under this option would not require a formal rule change. The discussion paper gives three examples: removing livestock from existing AWEC exemptions, an Export Destination Approval Process, and new operational policy.

Each option has advantages and disadvantages

The discussion paper proposes criteria to assess each option. There is uncertainty about the impacts of any changes, partly because the impacts will depend on the detailed design of any rule changes and how they work in practice. For some options, detailed design could include cost recovery (charging exporters fees for the costs of ensuring their exports meet all standards). MPI may undertake targeted consultation before finalising any changes.