

Management practices and potential welfare impact

- Please review section 6.7 on animal welfare standards and guidelines
- POCTA
- S & G (CoP) – sheep
- S & G (CoP) – goats



Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019

- The POCTA Regulations 2019 aim to protect the welfare of animals in Victoria. They support the State's primary animal welfare legislation to prevent or minimise harm through regulation of specific activities.
- The regulations cover:
 - transport of animals
 - prohibited devices
 - pain relief for mulesing and overgrown wool on sheep - must administer pain relief
 - fruit tree netting
 - electrical devices including electronic collars
 - traps and oxy-LPG devices
 - rodeos
 - use of animals in scientific procedures and teaching.
- Animal Welfare Victoria developed the POCTA Regulations 2019 to replace the expiring POCTA Regulations 2008.

Sheep and goats standards and guidelines

- General responsibilities (education and application of knowledge)
- Feed and water requirements
- Risk management – environment, predation, disease etc
- Appropriate facilities and equipment (doesn't need to be new)
- Handling and husbandry
- Tail docking and castration (disbudding/dehorning goats)
- Mulesing (not for goats)
- Breeding management
- Dairy management (goats)
- Intensive sheep production systems (intensive goat systems)
- Humane killing

Table 9.1 Minimum space allowances

Single pens	Minimum space allowances (m ²)
Wether or dry ewe	0.9
Ram, pregnant ewe or heavy wether	1.0
Lamb	0.6
Ewe with lamb	1.5
Group pens	
Less than 8 sheep	0.9
8–15 sheep	0.8
16–30 sheep	0.6
31 or more sheep	0.5
Outdoor feedlots	
Lambs up to 41 kg	1.0
Adult sheep	1.3
Heavy wether	1.5
Ewe and lamb(s)	1.8

Standards and guidelines

- Base level requirement that MUST be achieved (standards)
- Guidelines are what most of industry achieves
- Challenge to formulate these sorts of guidelines across a country with dramatically different production systems – hence the variation

Livestock transport – Land transport S & G

- Fit to load guidelines

'Is it fit to load' checklist

Before livestock are loaded, ensure you complete this checklist.

Remember, it's your responsibility to ensure animals are fit to load and fit for the intended journey before they are loaded.

The animal:

- ☐ can walk on its own by bearing weight on all four legs
- ☐ is free from visible signs of severe injury or distress or conditions likely to further compromise its welfare during transport
- ☐ is strong enough to make the journey (i.e. not dehydrated or emaciated)
- ☐ can see well enough to walk, load and travel without impairment or distress (e.g. it is not blind in both eyes)
- ☐ is not in late pregnancy or too young to travel (refer to the Standards to determine limits for late pregnancy)
- ☐ has had adequate access to water prior to loading to meet the maximum time off water standards (see page 15).

Note: If the animal was grazed on lush green pasture, ensure it was removed from the paddock well in advance of loading and provided with access to adequate roughage (where possible).

Prior to the journey commencing all required paperwork must have been completed for the movement (e.g. LPA NVD, Waybill, Animal Health Declaration).



<https://www.integritysystems.com.au/globalassets/isg/pdf-files/fit-to-load.pdf>

Image from @GusWhyte

Role of the veterinarian and POCTA & Standards and Guidelines

- Veterinarians have important role in a number of situations
- Private practitioner
 - Advise on optimal methods/drugs for range of husbandry procedures
 - General production systems advice – disease, risk mitigation (predation, weather), vaccination, drench etc
- Government vet or RSPCA – investigation/legal
- Industry – products to improve husbandry
- Research – better options for husbandry and define welfare

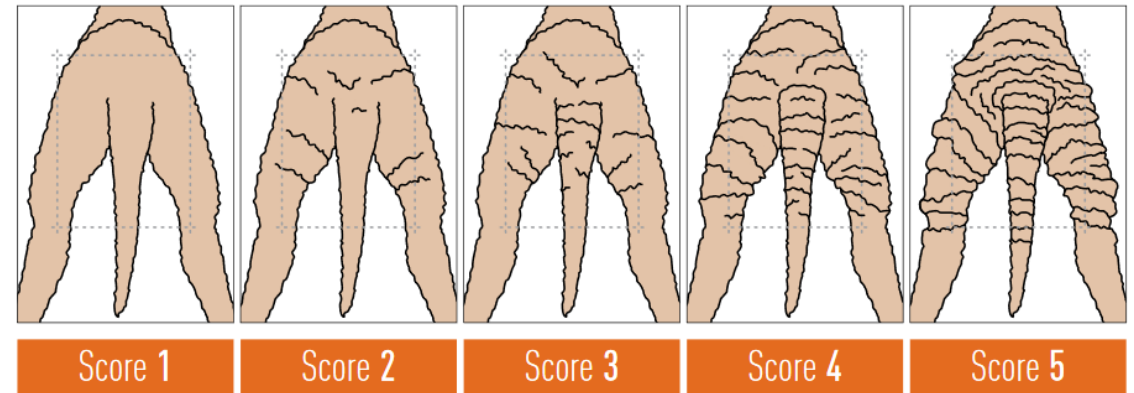
Improving animal welfare

- Controversial procedures
 - Mulesing
 - Live sheep export
 - Castration/docking

Mulesing

- Sheep mulesed to remove wrinkle
- Can also be achieved over a number of generations by genetic selection
- In Victoria MUST use analgesic at time of mulesing

BREECH WRINKLE – LAMBS (BRWR)



<https://www.wool.com/globalassets/wool/sheep/welfare/breech-flystrike/breeding-for-breech-strike-resistance/visual-sheep-scores-producer-version-2019.pdf>

Summary of available analgesics and anaesthetics, Aug 2020

	Action	Application	WHP	Mulesing	Tail docking with knife/hot knife	Castration with knife	Tail docking with rings	Castration with rings
TRI-SOLFEN®	Short acting local anaesthetic	Fan spray application to the wound (effective in less than 1 min)	90 days	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
BUCCALGESIC®	Longer acting analgesic	Oral with custom applicator – gel applied inside the cheek (effective from 10 mins)	10 days	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
METACAM 20®	Longer acting analgesic	Subcutaneous injection into muscle high on neck (effective from 10 mins)	11 days	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NUMOCAINE® (NUMNUTS® DELIVERY)	Short acting local anaesthetic	Injection with Numnuts® device (effective in less than 1 min)	0 days	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗

<https://www.wool.com/sheep/welfare/breech-flystrike/analgesia-anaesthesia/>

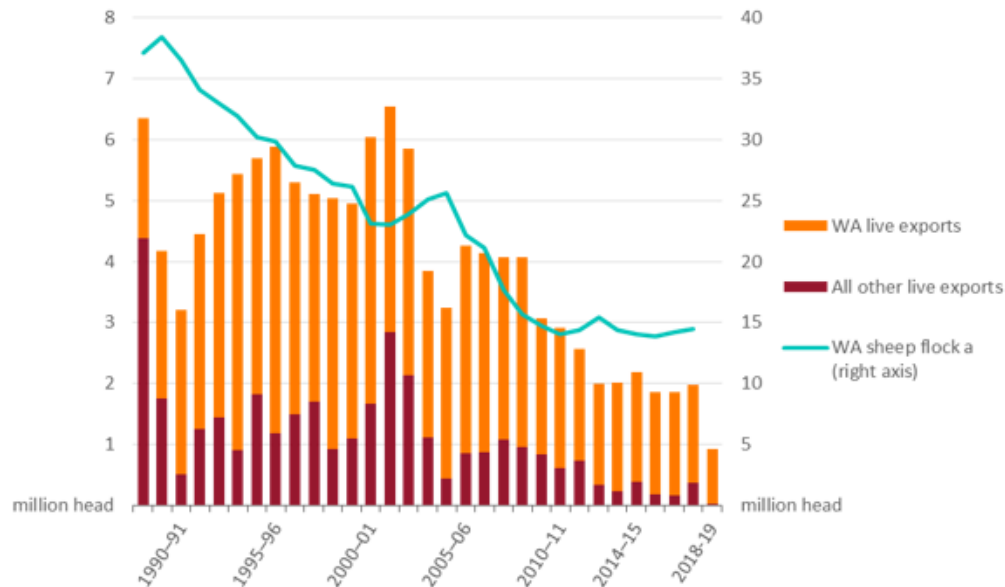
Mulesing continued

- Introduced originally by Mr Mules (hence name) when no other options in 1930s
- Many producers moving towards unmulesed flocks (some not) by genetic selection but takes time
- Interim program (?) of pain relief
- Customer accept ?

Live sheep export

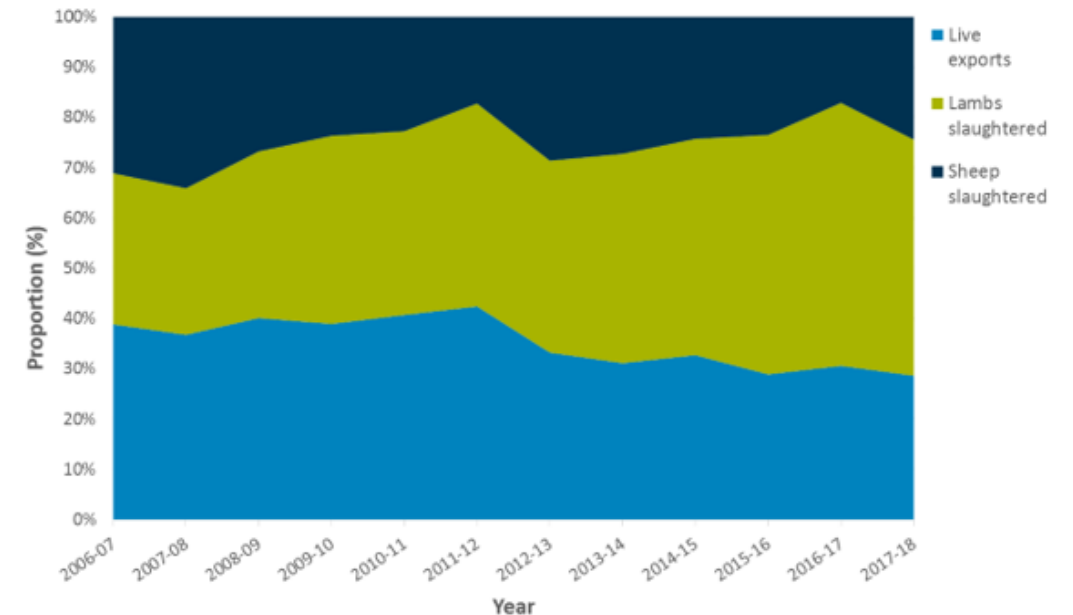
- Probably the most controversial Australian sheep issue
- Sheep sent from Australia to middle east

Figure 1 Australian live sheep exports and WA sheep flock, 1988-89 to 2018-19



Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, ABS 2013; Australian Bureau of Agricultural Research and Economic Sciences (ABARES)

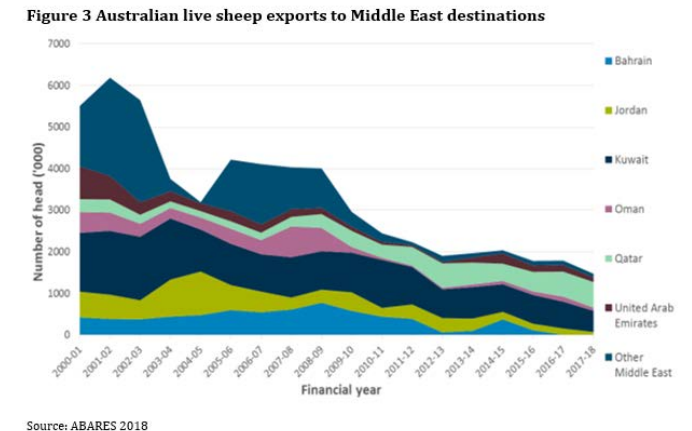
Figure 2 Breakdown of WA sheep turn-off, 2006-07 to 2017-18



Source: ABS 2019b; ABARES

McCarthy Review

- Changes implemented by the Middle East Order aimed to more adequately address the risk of heat stress in the Northern Hemisphere summer and included requirements for:
 - exporters to have a heat stress management plan for each voyage
 - a reduction in the reportable (mortality) level from 2% to 1%
 - stocking densities calculated using allometric principles ([section 1.2.6](#))
 - independent verification of pen air turnover (PAT)
 - 10% extra space for horned rams
 - Kuwait to be the first port of unloading for the vessel if it is one of the destination ports
 - all vessels to be installed with automated watering systems
 - provision of additional bedding.
- The Northern Winter Order applies to voyages of sheep to, or through, the Middle East departing Australia between the months of November to April. Amongst other conditions, the Northern Winter Order gives sheep 17.5% additional space compared with the ASEL (version 2.3). The Northern Winter Order is beyond the scope of this RIS and therefore not considered further.



Mortality to animal welfare basis

- Mortality = crude measure of animal welfare- overall mortality rate for sheep during sea transport to all destinations during 2018 was 0.46% (5,202 mortalities in 1.14 million sheep exported)
- Average duration 18 days
- Welfare impacts prior to mortality

Percentages of sheep, cattle and goats successfully delivered by sea since 1995 are shown below.

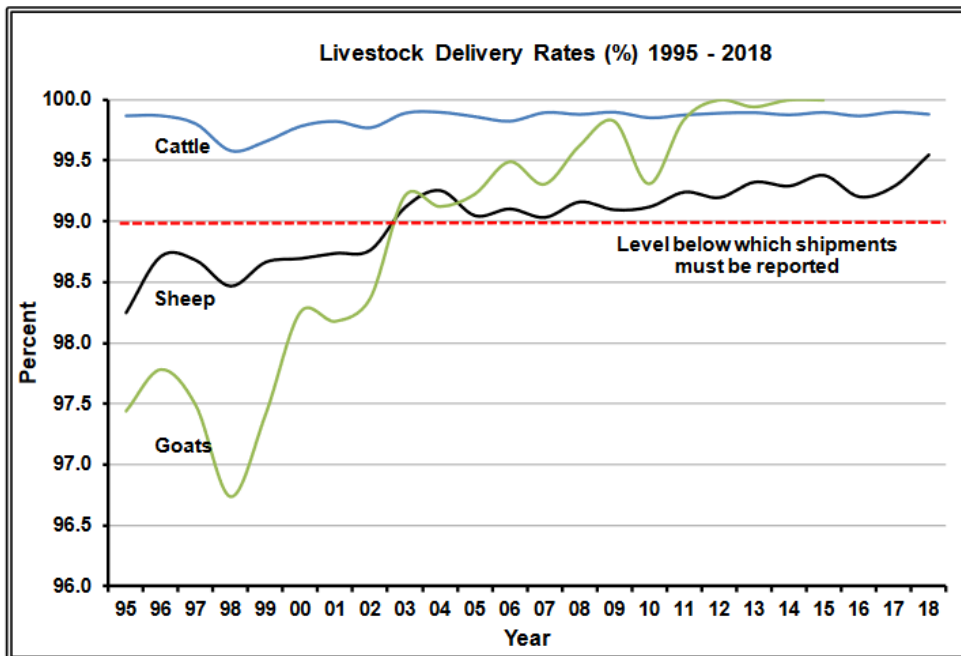
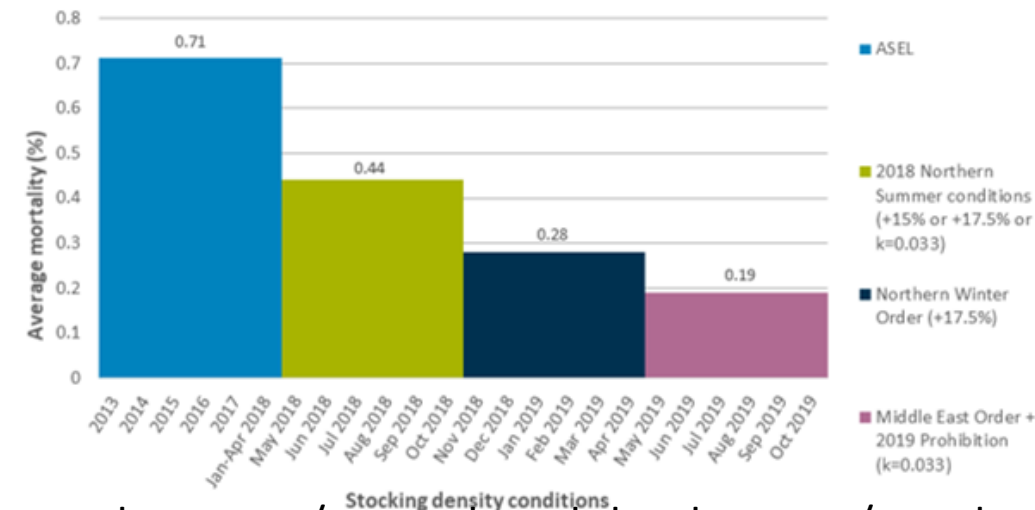


Figure 4 Average sheep mortality compared with stocking density, 2013 to present



<https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/search-rd-reports/final-report-details/National-livestock-export-industry-sheep-cattle-and-goat-transport-performance-report-2017/3852>

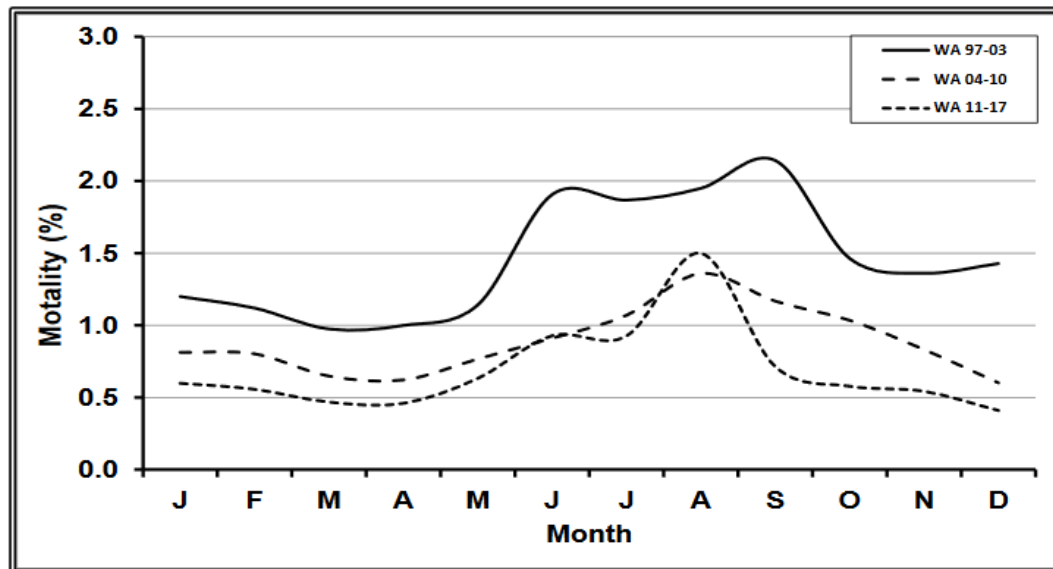
Average and range

- Important not just to consider average annual loss
- Particular times/voyages worse?

Table 1 Mortality rates, number of voyages, voyage and discharge days, and number of sheep exported for voyages to major destination regions during 2018

Parameter	ME/N Africa	SE Asia	SE Europe	Total
Voyages (No.)	25	2	7	34
Sheep (No.)	903,149	9,470	230,818	1,143,437
Mortality rate overall (%)	0.45	0.31	0.48	0.46
Mortality rate range (%)	0.13 – 1.96	0.08 – 0.56	0.25 – 1.24	0.08 – 1.96
Voyage days (Ave.)	17.13	8.02	23.99	18.00
Discharge days (Ave.)	4.15	1.20	4.43	4.04

Figure 10 Average monthly mortality rate (%) for Adult Wethers for three periods



Castration & docking (& all marking procedures)

- Almost all lambs are castrated and docked – except some live export lambs are not (market requires entire rams with tails)
- Lambs docked to reduce fly issues
- Rams castrated for meat quality, aggression, unwanted pregnancy
- Painful procedure however it is carried out, just because there is no blood is NOT equivalent to no pain e.g. using rings, may not see pain until out of yards
- Analgesia/anaesthesia – new products on market, Numnuts to put local anaesthetic into correct position, trisolfen if in conjunction with mulesing, NSAIDs for pain relief

Education

- Ensuring next generation educated in animal needs to meet S & G requirements around education
- Not just always “continue how always done” (not logical to expect positive change if that is what is needed)
- Social license – changes in a range of livestock management procedures, more science input e.g. stronger AVA policy on live export (but varying opinions exist in the organisation and broadly in society)