

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ensuring animals are Fit to Load

Peak representative bodies WoolProducers Australia (WPA), Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) and Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association (ALPA) are reminding those in the sheep industry about ensuring that the sheep they are selling are ready for sale by meeting the requirements of the Fit to Load guide.

WPA CEO, Ms Jo Hall said “Adhering to the criteria of the guide is one of the many ways Australian sheep producers and wool growers can demonstrate they are serious about sheep welfare.”

The guide is designed to help producers, livestock agents, buyers and transporters meet their legal obligations under the Australian Animal Welfare Standards for the Land Transport of Livestock and help to ensure high animal welfare standards are maintained throughout the livestock industries. Topics in the guide include preparation of livestock for transport, feed and water, examples of animals that are unfit to load and what to do if an animal is unfit to load.

It is the responsibility of the person in charge to ensure that animals are prepared correctly, will cope well with the entire journey and are not suffering any illness or injuries.

To further enhance industry’s ability to meet these requirements, ALPA are currently undertaking a number of Industry Awareness Days with a strong united focus on implementing practical and appropriate measures to achieve this aim.

ALPA CEO, Mr Peter Baldwin said “It is part of the ALPA Charter that our agents take a disciplined and forthright best practice approach to animal welfare, which remains a key issue in our industry and within society. The role of an agent in the welfare of animals remains critical and none of us condone animal cruelty nor pain and suffering. Our education and professional development programs continue to recognise the value of an unstinting and collegiate whole of industry approach to best outcomes in sheep health and welfare.”

Transporting unfit animals not only reflects poorly on the person in charge of the animals but on the wool and sheepmeat industries. It is a reminder that there is a joint responsibility for animal welfare, and it is imperative that all animal welfare obligations are being met. Sheep in transit are highly visible – it only takes a few moments for someone to upload what they see to the rest of the world - if all livestock are *Fit to Load*, the reputational risk to the Australian industry is reduced.

SPA CEO, Mr Stephen Crisp said “It is vital that the guide is used as the accepted standard at all points in the supply chain, and that feedback is provided to any producer that requires clarification of what is expected.”

A copy of the guide can be downloaded from the MLA website, by searching ‘Fit to Load’.

ENDS

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