



## Press Release

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2012

### **Exposé of suffering involved in EU exports of live animals** *Animal welfare groups call for an end to inhumane trade*

Animal welfare groups are calling on the European Commission to stop the export of live farm animals from the EU after investigators discovered widespread and persistent suffering.

Around three million\* cattle, pigs and sheep are exported each year to non-EU countries. Animals are being sent to Turkey, the Middle East, North Africa, Russia, Ukraine, Israel, Moldova and the former Yugoslavia. Some of the animals are exported for slaughter, others for fattening or breeding.

Investigators from Eyes on Animals, Animal Welfare Foundation and Compassion in World Farming have gathered evidence of the severe animal welfare problems entailed in these long journeys.

[A film highlighting the suffering](#) has been sent to Commissioner Tonio Borg who is responsible for animal welfare. The animal welfare groups are calling on the Commission to end the trade and the EU's subsidy of it.

The Member States involved in these exports include Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland, France, Spain, Greece, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Philip Lymbery, CEO of Compassion in World Farming, says: "*The sheer numbers of animals and the vast journeys they are being forced to endure make this one of the most serious issues of animal suffering in the EU today.*

*"What is worse, the European Commission is effectively promoting live exports to non-EU states without regard for the welfare of the millions of animals affected. Investigators have consistently found serious failings in the trade. The Commission cannot plead ignorance in this case, it must act now to stop the export of live animals to non-EU states."*

The investigators documented:

- Animals suffering from extreme thirst.
- Cattle so hungry that they eat their filthy bedding.
- Sheep with legs trapped between the side of the truck and the floor for hours as paperwork is completed at the border (they cannot be helped before the documentation is complete).
- Animals dying on the journey.
- Terrible cruelty at slaughter in the destination countries.
- Long delays at the border between the EU and Turkey that can lead to prolonged suffering.
- Sheep and cows giving birth in trucks at the border, despite EU law prohibiting the transport of heavily pregnant animals. With no facilities to house the animals at the border, the new-born animals had to be left on the trucks at risk of being trampled.

Delays are a common feature in the trade, with the Bulgarian (EU) border with Turkey proving a bottleneck that leads to animals stranded at the border. During the delays- which can last for hours, even days - the animals are often left on the trucks with inadequate food and water.

In one such case, investigators documented a truck of bulls that had come all the way from Latvia and were destined for slaughter in Iraq, an overall journey of 4,600 km. This truck was stuck at the EU-Turkey border for 6.5 days. Throughout this time they were kept cooped up on the truck.

Lesley Moffat of Eyes on Animals and also speaking for Animal Welfare Foundation, says: *“An absurd situation developed where the truck was not allowed to enter Turkey because it did not have the necessary document to allow it to cross Turkey to Iraq. However, because it had crossed into the short No Man’s Land between the Bulgarian and Turkish borders, the Bulgarian officials refused to allow it back into Bulgaria claiming the animals may have caught foot-and-mouth disease in the area between the two borders.”*

Eventually, after 6.5 days, the paperwork problem was resolved and the animals continued their journey to slaughter in Iraq.

Part of the trade between the EU and third countries, the export of breeding cattle, is generously subsidised by European taxpayers. The EU supports exporters to the tune of about €9 million a year to encourage the trade. On average, 80,000 cattle a year are exported with subsidies. It is ethically unacceptable for public money to be used to promote a trade that often results in suffering.

Shockingly, the Commission, rather than trying to end this unacceptable trade, is actively trying to increase it. The Commission’s 2012 Progress Report on Turkey commends Turkey for having increased its imports of live cattle from the EU but also presses it to further expand these imports.

Philip adds: *“We are calling for the EU’s inhumane live export trade to be brought to an*

*urgent end and, in the meantime, for export subsidies for breeding cattle to be stopped. The Commission should stop pressurising Turkey and Russia to accept even more live animal exports from the EU. It is ethically unacceptable for the Commission to try to expand a trade – through subsidies and by putting heavy-handed pressure on third countries - which they know causes immense suffering.”*

### **The EU's live farm animal exports\*\***

- Around 70,000 EU cattle a year are sent on lengthy journeys to the Lebanon, mainly from France and Spain.
- France also exports about 30,000 cattle a year to Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.
- Lithuania and Hungary export around 50,000 cattle a year to Israel.
- The EU sends over half a million sheep a year to Libya, mainly from Romania and Spain.
- Over 600,000 pigs are sent each year from the EU to Russia, some all the way from Denmark and Germany.
- Germany and the Netherlands send half a million pigs a year to the former Yugoslavia.
- Germany also exports 100,000 pigs annually to Ukraine and Moldova.

**-Ends-**

**Notes to Editors:**

**[CLICK HERE](#) to download a media clip reel of investigation footage**

**\*Average figure from 2011/2012 Source: Eurostat.**

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**For further information, images or to arrange interviews contact Jon Bennett  
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Compassion in World Farming was founded over 40 years ago in 1967 by a British farmer who became horrified by the development of modern, intensive factory farming. Today we campaign peacefully to end all cruel factory farming practices. We believe that the biggest cause of animal cruelty on the planet deserves a focused, specialised approach – so we only work on farm animal welfare.