

MEDIA RELEASE
1 JULY 2005



WELLARD RURAL EXPORTS

WELLARD WELCOMES NEW LIVESTOCK CARRIER

Livestock exporter Wellard Rural Exports has welcomed an announcement today by associated company, Siba Ships, that it has commissioned construction of a new A\$47 million livestock carrier.

Wellard's Managing Director, Mr Steve Meerwald, said that the 135 metre carrier was a significant investment in the future of the Australian live export industry and highlighted the company's strong commitment to animal welfare.

"This will be a state-of-the-art, purpose built vessel designed specifically for the transportation of sheep and cattle," said Mr Meerwald.

"The ship builders are very much aware that our priority is to protect the animals we carry. For example, our design specifications include spacious holding pens, with single tier, automated feeding and watering systems and air circulation which far exceed the new Australian and international regulatory requirements."

Mr Meerwald said the ship would have two independent propulsion systems - an industry first - meaning that even the complete loss of one engine would not impact on animal safety and the ability of the vessel to reach a port. He said this would secure official IPS (Independent Propulsion System) Notation from the internationally recognised classification society RINA.

He said she would also be certified by RINA as a 'Green Vessel', meaning low emissions and no fuel in direct contact with the ocean.

"For too long now, the condition of some older ships has reflected poorly on the industry as a whole," he said.

"This new livestock carrier represents the future of the industry and is another example of our commitment to best practice and a sustainable live export trade."

In contrast to the approach being taken by Siba Ships, Mr Meerwald said that some operators were continuing to invest in outdated tonnage, missing all the welfare, safety and technological advantages offered by newer, purpose built vessels.

The new Siba carrier will be built by Labroy Shipbuilding and Engineering Pte Ltd of Singapore and ready for delivery in the first half of 2007. It will be capable of carrying about 26,000 sheep or 6,500 cattle.

Mr Meerwald said that Siba also had an option on a second new livestock carrier of similar dimensions that would need to be confirmed by the end of 2005.

Siba Ships already owns two of the newest livestock carriers on the ocean, and this latest vessel will further improve their fleet. The company's flagship carrier, the MV Becrux, was built in 2002 at a cost of A\$66 million.

Wellard Rural Exports has supplied quality Australian sheep and cattle to the world for more than 25 years. Based in Fremantle, the company's operations cover every aspect of the export chain, including feed and high fibre milling, road transport, feedlot facilities and modern shipping.

Wellard, through its association with Siba Ships, has priority access to the Becrux and other Siba livestock vessels. In 2004, Siba Ships transported about 650,000 sheep and about 130,000 cattle from ports around Australia to destinations in Asia and the Middle East.

Further information:

Steve Meerwald, Managing Director, Wellard Rural Exports
0403 389 189

Richard Ellis
08 9386 1233

Ship Specifications

Length: 135 metres

Carrying capacity: 8,000m²

Number of decks: 7

Fresh water capacity: 2,000 tonnes

Fresh water production: 340 tonnes per day

Fodder capacity: 1,500 tonnes

Air circulation: 80 air changes/hour (3 times minimum standard)

Speed: 18 knots

Engines: 2 Wartsila 9L32

Crew: 25