

**MEDIA RELEASE
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WELLARD RURAL EXPORTS

WELLARD INVOLVED IN GROUND-BREAKING RESEARCH

Livestock exporter Wellard Rural Exports is working with one of Australia's leading animal welfare experts to further improve animal welfare during transportation on livestock carriers.

Wellard's Managing Director, Mr Steve Meerwald, said the Director of the Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics, Professor Clive Phillips, had been given full access to the MV Becrux to study aspects of animal welfare during a recent 12 day voyage from Fremantle to the Middle East.

"Professor Phillips is Professor of Animal Welfare at the University of Queensland, the first position of its kind in Australia, and has [XX] years experience in his field," said Mr Meerwald.

"His studies will provide Wellard and the livestock industry with valuable advice on developing further improvements in the safe management and handling of livestock during overseas transportation."

Professor Phillips is developing a more sensitive system for monitoring and assessing animal wellbeing during ship transportation. While on the Becrux, Professor Phillips and his fellow researcher, Dr Mathew Pines, examined the practicalities of using indicators such as ammonia levels and stock density to determine the health of the 70,000 sheep on board.

"During the journey the sheep moved from winter in Western Australia to summer in the Middle East, a significant change in terms of climatic conditions for the animals," Mr Meerwald said.

"This was an important aspect of the study as we wanted to ensure that Professor Phillips was able to see first-hand how Wellard manages this change in conditions during the voyage and how readily the sheep adjust."

The results of Professor Phillips' studies, commissioned by Meat and Livestock Australia and LiveCorp, will be released when finalised to ensure that this important aspect of the livestock export process is open to full public scrutiny.

"For the livestock trade to have a sustainable future, the public must have confidence in the way we operate and the industry itself must be more transparent and accountable," Mr Meerwald said.

"Wellard is happy to be involved in such important, ground-breaking research as we believe our commitment to animal welfare and ongoing improvement is second-to-none."

Professor Phillips is acknowledged as a world leader in animal welfare issues. He has [details].

The MV Becrux is a modern, purpose built livestock carrier capable of carrying 75,000 sheep or 14,000 cattle to major markets around the globe. It was commissioned in 2002 and designed to ensure the animals reach their destination in the best possible condition.

Further information:

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