



**siba ships**  
SOCIETÀ PER AZIONI



**Wellard**

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER

Three thousand food parcels have been distributed to victims of mud eruptions at Sidoarjo in the Porong district of East Java, Indonesia, thanks to funds raised from a live export charity auction in the Northern Territory.

Fremantle-based Wellard Rural Exports Managing Director Steve Meerwald last week travelled to Sidoarjo to witness the distribution of the rice, sugar, cooking oil, ketchup and instant noodles to the families displaced by the mud eruptions, and described it as one of the most humbling experiences of his life.

“Some women had tears rolling down their faces as they received their food parcels while others were just so happy that they didn’t have to worry about where they would find their next meal. It was an amazing collection of emotions and I was extremely fortunate to have witnessed it and to have played a part in facilitating it,” he said.

The purchase and distribution of the food parcels was funded by a charity auction held in Darwin this year when Wellard Rural Exports’ associate company Siba Ships donated for auction 1000 square metres of space aboard the first Asian voyage of its new livestock vessel currently under construction, the m/v Stella Castor.

Livestock exporter Northern Australian Cattle Company paid US\$135,000 for the m/v Stellar Castor space, and part of that total was earmarked for the food parcels, alongside donations to the Isolated Childrens’ Parents Association, the School of the Air and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Wellard and Siba then worked with a long-term feedlot customer from nearby Surabaya, PT Agrisatava Jaya Kencana, to organise the purchase and distribution of the food parcels, through a local Islamic group Banser (a part of Nahdatul Ulama) which also organised free transport of the food.

Mr Meerwald said the families remaining in Sidoarjo after the mud eruptions were the most deserving and the most needy. They could not rely on family support from outside districts; the mud eruptions had wrecked their subsistence crops forever; and they could not prove land title to receive compensation for the mud eruptions.

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“They are literally surviving one meal at a time. Any money they earn buys their next meal, so they can’t afford clothing, books or schooling – purchases we would regard as necessities but they regard as luxuries.”

“Many of the families were living in the former Porong market, where each family occupied one former market stall, while the remainder lived in tents.”

After witnessing the devastation and the effect on the remaining population Siba Ships and Wellard Rural Exports have organised another donation of 3000 food parcels in September, during the Islamic Ramadan festival.

Mr Meerwald said the impact of watching the relief effort would be everlasting.

“I came away knowing we had facilitated something that was quite extraordinary.”

**For further information please contact:**

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**Pictures**



LEFT: Residents line up to receive their food parcels

RIGHT: Wellard Rural Exports Managing Director Steve Meerwald helps distribute the food parcels

High resolution copies are available from Cameron Morse by email at

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**Background – Wellard Rural Exports**

Wellard Rural Exports has supplied quality Australian dairy and beef cattle and sheep and goats to the world for more than 29 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.

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Wellard has priority access to the most modern fleet of livestock carriers on the ocean through its association with Siba Ships. The company's flagship carrier, the MV Becrux, is a purpose-built livestock carrier capable of carrying 75,000 sheep or 18,000 cattle from Australia to major markets around the globe. She was commissioned in 2002.

Two new vessels, the MV Stella Castor and the MV Stella Pollux, are due for launch in early and late 2009. In August 2008 Wellard and Siba Ships announced a US\$250 million contract to build two new livestock vessels which will be able to carry 17,000 cattle or 70,000 sheep or a combination of the two.

For more information visit: [www.wellardgroup.com.au](http://www.wellardgroup.com.au)