

Kent Action Against Live Exports (KAALE)

"I never give them hell. I just tell the truth and they think it's hell."

President Harry S Truman

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PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 2nd October 2012

Kent Animal Welfare NGO Calls for Full Investigation Into Events Prior To Sheep Deaths At Ramsgate Port

Reference Source:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/28/live-animal-exports-suspended>

dated Friday 28th September 2012

Re. questions from very many concerned members

Regarding the article entitled 'Suspension of Live Exports Welcomed by RSPCA' published in 'The Guardian' on Friday 28th September, 2012, (article link above), KAALE feels that the last paragraph incites many queries :

"The NFU has called for a full and frank investigation into the incidents that led to the closure of Ramsgate port. Concerns have been raised with us as to why contingency plans to deal with such events do not appear to have been followed by the bodies overseeing the trade and with the pressure that was placed on government officials to sanction the slaughter of these animals at the port by the RSPCA when more humane alternatives may have been available."

Sheet 1

BAN LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS

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Queries:

- 1) Regarding the line : "**.....as to why contingency plans to deal with such events do not appear to have been followed by the bodies overseeing the trade....**", there appeared to be no viable plans in place, to anybody's knowledge. No near resting place was designated for injured or delayed animals. The port and Animal Health (who should know how to deal with such an event) were not equipped to deal with such an emergency.

According to Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2-005 of 22nd December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport;

Article 11 – Requirements for long journeys transporter authorizations

1. **The competent authority shall grant authorisations to transporters carrying out long journeys upon application, provided that:**
- (b) the applicants have submitted the following documents:**
 - (iv) contingency plans in the event of emergencies.**

As no near resting place was designated (within Kent) for injured or delayed animals; KAALE ask yet again why the said animals were not taken to the alleged Kent facility which is supposed to exist as a result of the report produced by EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) inspectors post their UK visit (in Order to Evaluate the System of Control in relation to Animal Welfare During Transport) of 18th – 22nd February 2008. If sick and animals had been taken to this facility, it is assumed further health inspections could then have been undertaken.

- 2) Following on : "**.....and with the pressure that was placed on government officials to sanction the slaughter of these animals at the port by the RSPCA....**", it was obvious to all witnesses present, that it was the only ethical option in the circumstances; an humane decision, as the sheep were clearly suffering, many for some time. Foot rot does not simply develop on animals carried in a livestock transporter between Northamptonshire and Ramsgate, Kent.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2-005 of 22nd December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport declares;

ANNEX I – TECHNICAL RULES – Chapter I – FITNESS FOR TRANSPORT

4. **When animals fall ill or are injured during transport, they shall be separated from the others and receive first aid treatment as soon as possible. They shall be given appropriate veterinary treatment and if necessary undergo emergency slaughter or killing in a way which does not cause them unnecessary suffering.**

Sheet 2

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- 3) And finally : ".....*when more humane alternatives may have been available.*"

Many of these animals (apart from those injured from the vehicle's faulty hydraulic system) already had advanced cases of 'foot-rot' and should never have been loaded on a transporter to undertake a gruelling export journey in the first place. Animals such as these, suffering from such a physical condition, would not be legally allowed to be traded through a UK livestock market. Therefore, one can only deduce that the animals forming this export consignment were collected straight from farm, in this appalling condition, again illegal, as a veterinary surgeon must have been present (at the farm) to check their welfare and physical condition at original loading (at source); and given their foot rot, should never have passed these sheep as being fit to travel:

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2-005 of 22nd December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport declares;

Article 15 – Checks to be carried out by the competent authority at any stage of a long journey

2. *In the case of long journeys between member states and with third countries, the checks at the place of departure for fitness for transport, as referred to in Chapter I of Annex I, shall be preformed before loading as part of the animal health checks as set out in the corresponding veterinary Community legislation, within the time limits provided by such legislation.*

ANNEX I – TECHNICAL RULES – Chapter I – FITNESS FOR TRANSPORT

1. *No animal shall be transported unless it is fit for the intended journey, and all animals shall be transported in conditions guaranteed not to cause them injury or unnecessary suffering.*

- 4) We should be interested to know who, if any, was/were the veterinary surgeon/s who were present at the farm/s in Kettering, the original place of departure for the animals and who, we consider, 'okayed' their loading and export in such a painful physical state?

The AHVLA only have a policy of inspecting around 30%, or one in three livestock transporters carrying live animals through UK ports for export to mainland Europe.

RSPCA inspectors on the other hand, have a policy of inspecting in detail each and every (100%) livestock transporter and its animals undertaking the same journey(s). It is strongly considered that if the RSPCA inspectors had not been present on the day of the recent incidents at Ramsgate (Wednesday 12th September), it is quite possible / probable that the vehicle carrying the animals suffering from foot rot, and who may possibly have departed from origin without the necessary veterinary inspections to approve their welfare and condition prior to loading and departure, (and consequently being destroyed in the port as a result), could have made up part of the 60%, or been one of the 'two in three' livestock transporters which do not undergo any inspection by UK 'Competent Authorities' for animal welfare issues at the departure port.

Sheet 3

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KAALE consider that this policy of just selected inspections is completely unsatisfactory, as with just AHVLA inspectors present, the animals suffering from foot rot may possibly have not undergone any checks on their condition at the departure port – Ramsgate. As a result, the export consignment would have been allowed to board the vessel 'Joline' in the normal way, and many suffering animals would have continued on their journey into Europe. As a consequence, it is possible that all the events that materialized on the day (Wednesday 12th September) of departure at Ramsgate would not have unfolded at all, had the RSPCA inspectors not been present and vigilant as always.

From this it can clearly be deduced, that in events leading up to the tragic situation at Ramsgate during September and, as always, pointed out by animal welfare organisations, the AHVLA are not fulfilling the necessary requirements to ensure that all animals being exported are in a 'fit and healthy condition' for onward movement to mainland Europe.

It should also be noted that in an earlier shipment during September; on Friday 7th; when sheep being carried by a Dutch haulier were inspected at Ramsgate, one was discovered with a badly ulcerated eye; which again leads to the question, who is the 'competent person' (veterinary) that is signing the export certificates for export animals at source? In this particular case, it was decided that the sheep in question was in no condition to continue the journey, and once the vehicle was on board the ship (Joline); the sheep was removed from its carrier transporter and shot by a licensed person using a captive bolt.

For this reason, KAALE ask EU authorities to undertake the necessary penalties as defined in [Article 25](#) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2-005 of 22nd December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport.

A further issue:

Chapter II – MEANS OF TRANSPORT – 1. Provisions for all means of transport

- 1.1 Means of transport, containers and their fittings shall be designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to:***
- (a) avoid injury and suffering and to ensure the safety of the animals.***

KAALE asks the question: If vehicles have to be maintained to such EU transport regulatory standards, then why did animals get exported through the port of Ramsgate with their legs broken due to becoming trapped between faulty tiers on their carrier vehicle?

KAALE believes that if a legal challenge is launched to force the continuation of live exports from either Ipswich, Ramsgate, or any other possible port(s) in the UK, the questions raised above will be ignored. The challenge (if the tone of the statement given to 'The Guardian' is anything to go by) will possibly come from the NFU, who will be, perhaps, protecting their own (possible) members who have acted outside of EU legislation regarding Council Regulation(s) on the protection of animals during transport – the kingpin of transport legislation for all farm stock being transported throughout EU Member States.

Who knows?... but something is absolutely clear..... KAALE (and many other animal welfare organisations) sense a lot is currently very wrong !!!

As the old saying goes : " There's a nasty smell in the woodshed!"

ENDS

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