



National Sheep Association

NSA policy position on live exports of sheep for slaughter

- NSA believes it is preferable for sheep to be slaughtered as close to home as possible and that transporting carcasses instead of live animals brings a number of benefits.
 - Extra jobs in the local processing sector.
 - Added value to the animal, even more so if cuts are sold instead of carcasses.
 - More efficient energy use (e.g. one lorry to move 2,800 carcasses rather than 500 live lambs).
- The benefits of moving carcasses instead of animals from an animal welfare perspective are not clear cut, as research shows the main stress for transporting animals is associated with loading and unloading and not the length of the journey. Transport vehicles are regulated by the EU, which dictates high welfare standards and additional rules for lorries involved in longer distance journeys.
- NSA believes all transport of live animals should be undertaken with welfare as the highest priority. Animals must only be moved if fit for travel and it is the responsibility of the livestock keeper (the seller) to ensure this is the case when the animals depart. It is the responsibility of the destination keeper (the buyer) to arrange transport and appoint a driver who is licenced for the job and had the appropriate qualifications and equipment. That driver is responsible for the animals during transit and must abide by the law and protect stock throughout the journey.
- Transporting livestock across water (live exports) is not a welfare issue in itself and journeys across the English Channel are no longer than common on-land routes.
- Live export transport is governed by the same regulations as any other journey type; problems in the past (such as Ramsgate in September 2012) have been a result of poor enforcement and not a lack of legislation. Transport of livestock carries legal requirements for the livestock owner (buyer and seller) and the transporter as outlined above; journeys over eight hours but less than 28 hours carry additional requirements to protect welfare, including provision of water, insulated roofs, air

circulation and ventilation; rare journeys over 28 hours require unloading, rest and feed and water.

- NSA supports the work of UK levy bodies and the processing sector to add value to prime lambs by exporting cuts rather than whole carcasses or live lambs. However, while export destinations require live lambs the legitimate movement of animals across the English Channels must be protected. It is a valuable and legal trade.
- Welfare at slaughter is the responsibility of the end processor and is governed by the same EU law as welfare at slaughter in the UK. NSA believes EU regulations should be interpreted and enforced to an equal standard in all EU member states.

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