



from the

PRESIDENT'S DESK



THE PGA REPRESENTS THE INTERESTS OF FARMERS AND PASTORALISTS FROM ALL AGRICULTURAL AREAS OF WA, FROM ESPERANCE TO THE KIMBERLEY. PGA MEMBERS ARE MAJOR PRODUCERS OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORT COMMODITIES – INCLUDING GRAIN, BEEF, SHEEP AND WOOL – AND BELIEVE IN FREE TRADE, OPEN MARKETS, PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

DECISION TIME FOR RSPCA

“RSPCA Australia is opposed to the export of live food animals for immediate slaughter of further fattening and advocates the adoption of a chilled and frozen meat-only trade. RSPCA Australia will work to pressure government to achieve the conversion of the live export trade to a chilled and frozen meat-only trade.”

RSPCA Policy F3 Export of live food animals 09/10/2007.

THE RSPCA Western Australian Division's new partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Food over animal welfare now places the organisation's national body in a very precarious position as to whether it will be able to regain the trust of Western Australian livestock producers and the greater agricultural community by stepping away from the hard line positions it has adopted to satisfy animal liberation groups.

The past ten years has seen a shift in RSPCA Australia's advocacy away from animal welfare to animal liberation: from the commissioning of a report in 2009 calling for the phasing out of live sheep exports, to supporting a vicious and directed attack against the livelihoods of Northern WA cattle producers following the release of footage of cruelty in Indonesian abattoirs by the RSPCA Australia's partner Animals Australia.

In each of these instances RSPCA Australia adopted hard line policy positions with no consultation with Western Australian livestock producers, industry bodies, or DAFWA. Such tactics have no place in this new partnership, and it is time for the RSPCA Australia to either compromise on its ideals and marry up with the commercial reality and expertise that comes out of DAFWA, or walk away from the table.

A lot of farmers now see RSPCA Australia as totally aligned with liberation groups such as Animals Australia and PETA. However this new partnership is an opportunity for the organisation to move away from these extremist groups and align with the live stock industry, which remains committed to ensuring the highest standard of animal welfare for our animals.

While it is good to see that RSPCA WA has taken the first step in agreeing to work with DAFWA following the recent changes to administration of the State's animal welfare legislation, the true test will be whether RSPCA Australia will follow their lead.

The ball is now firmly in RSPCA Australia's court and they have to decide whether they will build trust from farmers by focusing on positive animal welfare outcomes, including those in the live export trade, or whether they continue to alienate them by supporting policy positions intent on destroying their livelihoods.

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