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Sent: Wednesday, 19 February 2020 10:35 AM
To: Livestock Regulations
Subject: [EXT] - Submission into the Welfare Livestock Regulations 2019

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Animal Welfare Livestock Regulations 2019.

The proposed Regulations, adapted from the National Standards and Guidelines, have been promoted as a way of achieving the primary aim of setting a minimum welfare requirement in the industry for the humane treatment of livestock. By legislating the proposed Regulations in conjunction with the fines regime, the Government is attempting to encourage the industry to lift standards by ensuring that anyone breaching their duty of care can be dealt with in a timely manner by the issuing of an infringement notice, rather than taking the costly and time consuming approach of addressing animal welfare through the courts.

In my view, the proposed Regulations must therefore clearly and prescriptively inform all participants in the livestock chain of their responsibilities.

Unless the proposed Regulations are prescriptive with legal obligations that are clear, unambiguous and easily understood by anyone in the livestock industry chain without specialised veterinary knowledge, the proposed Regulations will fail to ensure that duty of care obligations are being adhered to and that a minimum standard of welfare in the industry is met.

Comment on specific draft regulations:

9. Unfit to undertake a journey (1) A livestock animal is unfit to undertake a journey if any of the following apply to the animal — (a) it is unable to walk independently by bearing weight on all hooves;

The draft regulation does not make clear whether animals who are limping or in other words not walking normally by bearing weight on all hooves evenly, are to be excluded from transport. An animal may be able to walk independently by bearing some weight on one or more hooves but that does not mean the animal has not got a potentially painful condition. The revised edition of the "Is the animal Fit to Load" guide, which is nationally industry agreed and that industry has been utilising for a number of years to meet animal welfare requirements under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, states on page 22 that an animal with the following conditions, injuries or disease is deemed be unfit for transport.

An animal who has a

- foot abscess
- recent injury
- an old injury or deformity
- old fracture
- or is knuckling over

The Fit to Load guide sites bunny hopping and knuckling over, head bobbing, carrying one leg when standing or walking and reluctance to stand and walk as indicators of lameness.

If draft regulation 9(1)(a) in its current draft form is legislated, an animal, despite having any one of the above conditions, injuries or disease, that is able to rest some weight on the hoof of the affected leg may be considered fit to transport.

Therefore, in my opinion, to be consistent with the "Is the animal Fit to Load" guide and recognise that animals with painful conditions may at times bear some weight, there should be a defining provision inserted into 11(1) that recognises lameness and

refers to the "Is the animal Fit to Load". This will provide clear guidance to those making assessments and help ensure that compromised animals with potentially painful conditions preventing them from bearing their weight fully are removed from the chain.

11. Prescribed conditions

(1) This section provides defines as to what a lesion is. However, 11(2)(j) defines that only a lesion that is (i) discharging; and (ii) is more than 3 cm in length in any direction will be considered when assessing an animals fitness to sell or transport.

It appears that draft regulation 11(2)(j) will allow the sale and transport of animals with conditions, injury or disease less than 2cm or if it is discharging. For example an animal with an infection, indicated by a 'sore' or 'wound' that is less than 2cms and not discharging at the time due to the fact that it has yet to burst, will be fit to load.

Effectively, deep shearing cuts, infected udders, enlarged testicles, lumpy jaw, Ovine Brucellosis, photosensitisation, scabby mouth, eye diseases including pink eye which is I understand painful, or any other condition where the size of the lesion, if the lesion is present at all, is more than 3cm but not discharging, may be considered fit for transport.

I am of the view that the draft regulation should be amended to remove 11(2)(j) completely, and include the conditions stated in the current "Is the animal Fit to load" guide.

Sincerely,
Vicky Sobey

