

OPEN LETTER to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

26 November 2024

Dear Prime Minister Luxon,

International animal protection groups unite to urge you to retain the ban on export of farmed animals by sea.

Representing leading animal protection organisations from around the globe, we write to **commend New Zealand's world-leading ban on farmed animal exports by sea and implore you, as Prime Minister and leader of the National-led coalition government, to retain it.**

The ban on livestock export by sea is crucial in protecting New Zealand's reputation as an ethical, progressive global trading partner and preventing your exported farmed animals from experiencing horrific cruelty. Animal welfare science shows that animals suffer severely during long-haul live export voyages and that this suffering is inherent to the trade. This sad reality was reflected, yet again, in the shocking footage of cattle plastered in their own excrement, **broadcast on Wednesday 20 November on [1News](#).**

Experience has shown that the suffering associated with long-haul voyages by sea cannot be addressed through regulation or improved standards. No legally robust pathway exists for enforcement of New Zealand's law outside its own jurisdiction, the animal welfare issues are cumulative, and risks are inherent to every voyage. The only way to prevent more suffering, and another inevitable livestock export maritime disaster, is for you to retain the ban.

Repealing the ban creates volatility and vulnerability for New Zealand's farming communities, especially given commitments made by Labour and Greens that upon re-election they will reinstate the ban. Retaining the ban provides security and surety; it enables New Zealand's farmers to confidently plan ahead and lead by example by adopting more humane market pathways. It also ensures that contemporary community expectations across New Zealand, Australia, and internationally, are reflected in more sustainable trade practices.

Animal welfare is a priority across all the countries we represent. Our communities wish never again to have to bear witness to images like these or learn of another tragic loss of life such as occurred when the MV Gulf Livestock 1 sank in 2020, killing 41 men, including New Zealanders, Lochie Bellerby and Scott Harris, Australians, William Mainprize and Lukas Orda, and 5,867 New Zealand heifers.

New Zealand's ban on livestock export by sea demonstrated global leadership, and helped support an increasing trend for developed nations to transition out of the trade, including Australia's recent legislated end date of May 2028 for live sheep exports.

Prime Minister, we strongly urge you not to repeal the ban. Please retain it - for the animals, for farmers and for a more humane and sustainable global community. **The world is watching you and your decision on this critical animal welfare issue.**

Yours sincerely,



Reineke Hameleers

Chief Executive Officer,
Eurogroup for Animals



Philip Lymbery

Global Chief Executive Officer,
Compassion in World Farming



Chris Sherwin

Chief Executive Officer,
RSPCA (England & Wales)



Maria Boada-Saña

Project Leader on Live Animal
Transport by Sea, Animal Welfare
Foundation



Dr Bidda Jones AM

Director of Strategy,
Australian Alliance for Animals



Glenys Oogjes

Chief Executive Officer,
Animals Australia



Ben Pearson

Country Director, Australia & New
Zealand, World Animal Protection



Rebecca Linigen

National Director,
Four Paws Australia



Erica Martin

Chief Executive Officer,
Humane Society International
Australia



Ondine Sherman

Managing Director & Co-Founder,
Voiceless



Richard Mussell

Chief Executive Officer,
RSPCA Australia



Rosemary Elliot

President, Sentient



Alicia Sutton

Chair, Stop Live Exports



Dr Sue Foster

Spokesperson, Vets Against Live
Export



Angela Martin

Founder, Australia Against Live
Exports



Dawn Lowe

Project Manager Australia,
Animals' Angels



Dr Helen Beattie

Managing Director,
VAWA



Dr Arnja Dale

Chief Science Officer,
SPCA New Zealand



Debra Ashton

Chief Executive Officer, SAFE (Save
Animals from Exploitation)