

media release

REPORT REVEALS MORE DEATHS AT SEA

More than 36,000 Australian farm animals died last year while being transported overseas for slaughter. They died from starvation, salmonellosis, heat stress, injury, or pneumonia.

The live export industry's annual Shipboard Performance Report, released this week, publishes the mortality statistics from the live export journeys of sheep, cattle and goats.

But the RSPCA believes mortality is a crude and ineffective indicator of animal welfare.

"To get a true picture of animal welfare in the live export trade, we need to see more comprehensive reporting of mortality, injury and illness before, during and after the actual sea journey," RSPCA Australia Scientific Officer Melina Tensen said.

"Cattle suffering from heat stress or pneumonia may not die during the journey but they will continue to suffer post arrival so we need to look at what happens to these animals once they get off the boat.

"What these mortality statistics really do is underline the fundamental cruelty of the live export trade.

"Tens of thousands of animals every year don't survive the sea journey alone and that's a problem inherent in transporting animals over such vast distances.

"The industry's annual mortality statistics will reveal a similar grim story while ever we continue to export live animals for slaughter.

"There are alternatives that have proven to be far more lucrative than the trade in live animals. Our meat exports are seven times more valuable to the economy and they keep jobs here in Australia.

"Our efforts should be focused on ramping up Australia's meat processing capacity and phasing out live animal exports."