

10th June 2024

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

PO Box 1081
BENTLEY DC WA 6983
Phone: 08 6262 2128
info@giwa.org.au
www.giwa.org.au

ABN: 81 881 249 684

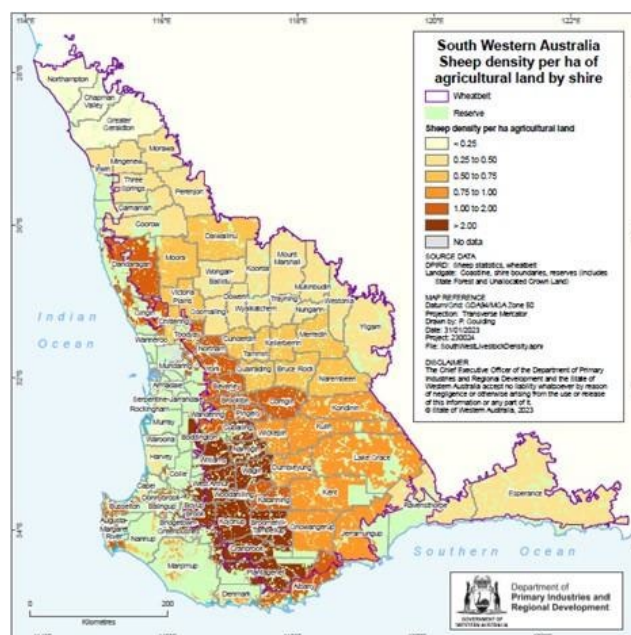
Via email: Agriculture.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Inquiry into Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024

The Grain Industry Association of Western Australia's (GIWA) purpose is to support an effective and efficient Western Australian grain industry. This submission highlights the vital role the live sheep export industry plays in supporting diversified, resilient and sustainable farm businesses, and the importance of this to the agricultural value chain, including Western Australia's (WA) grain industry, and to regional communities.

Whereas not all grain growers farm sheep, many grain farmers sell grain or grain by-products to the sheep industry, and almost all sheep farmers grow grain as part of a mixed farming operation (refer image below). They do this as it makes sense for their farming business model due to synergies. An involuntary narrowing of the breadth of their farming operations will reduce overall efficiency. In this context, GIWA is of the view that reducing the viability of sheep production through a reduction in market optionality will have a flow on impact to the longer-term viability of grain production as input costs per hectare rise and rainfall deficient seasons become more commonplace.



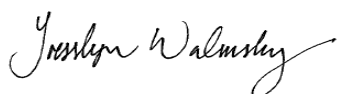
The export of live sheep by sea from Australia is a long-standing industry and has contributed considerable value to Australian agriculture and the Western Australian (WA) economy. In WA, the live export industry underpins strong rural and regional communities, ensuring vital employment for shearers, truck drivers, fodder suppliers, stock feed manufacturers, livestock agents, veterinarians, farmers, producers, and their families. Removing this trade creates uncertainty for farmers and their families and has detrimental flow-on effects on regional communities.

Additional to the very direct impacts on the livestock sector, removing the live export trade will also have additional, significant impacts on WA's grain industry. Sheep support grain production by:

- Increasing resilience through a diversified business model. Mixed farming enterprises are generally more resilient to fluctuations in commodity and input prices – it is rare for returns from sheep and grain to both be down at the same time.
- Providing diversity and sustainability in cropping rotations due to the addition of legume-based pastures. This allows for more integrated weed, disease and pest management and reduces the requirement for nitrogenous fertilisers in the cropping phase. Nitrogenous fertilisers are the most significant on-farm greenhouse gas contributor in grain production, so any reduction in their application contributes to meeting Australia's greenhouse gas emission targets.
- Generating demand for feed grain production, both as whole grain fed to sheep on-farm, and as pelletised compound feeds fed both on-farm and on live export vessels.
- Generating export demand for feed grain required by those countries importing live sheep (eg. Kuwait) to feed those sheep.
- Generating demand for lupins for domestic sheep feed and for export. Lupins are WA's most widely grown legume crop, with 300,000ha expected to be planted in 2024. They are well suited to our sandy, acidic soils and play a critical role in the WA cropping system by fixing atmospheric nitrogen which is then available to the following cereal or oilseed crop, and by providing more integrated weed, disease and pest management options. In the same manner as legume-based pastures, the reduced requirement for nitrogenous fertilisers in the following grain crop contributes to meeting Australia's greenhouse gas emission targets.
- Providing a market for straw and grain by-products such as oat husks and malted barley culmings utilised as sheep feed.
- Being a widely used tool to reduce stubble density through grazing, eliminating the need to burn stubbles.
- Providing a means to salvage value from failed grain crops by grazing them.
- Livestock infrastructure directly supports the grain industry. For example, trucking contractors regularly transport both sheep and grain. Removing the livestock income stream from these businesses may see some become unviable.

In summary, GIWA is supportive of the continuation of the live export industry in Australia.

Yours sincerely,



Tresslyn Walmsley

Chair

Grain Industry Association of Western Australia (GIWA)

(Enquiries; Peter Nash, GIWA Executive Officer pnash@giwa.org.au 0413 032 654)