

Written evidence submitted by Kent Action Against Live Exports (KAALE) (AWB18)

I write to you on behalf of Kent Action Against Live Exports (KAALE), which is an animal welfare organisation founded 26 years ago with the sole aim of ending the long-distance transportation of farm animals when being taken to slaughter or further fattening. With the Government supporting a ban on live exports and the current Animal Welfare Bill, we eagerly anticipate the end of our campaign activities. KAALE has worked tirelessly on this issue with all of its members being volunteers, and alongside the RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming, Eyes on Animals and other interested parties. The primary role of KAALE has been to have a protest presence at every shipment of animals passing through Dover and Ramsgate, and other locations of public protest, along with a study of the long-distance trade and a programme of political activism to inform and encourage the change which is finally imminent.

There is one aspect of the expected legislation with which I have concern, and that is the transport of farm animals to slaughter and further fattening from Northern Ireland transiting to the Irish Republic on journeys to mainly European destinations. It is my understanding that Stormont will not be bound by the Animal Welfare Bill and will continue to use the EU 1/2005 Regulation administration of Animal Transportation. The route through the Republic to Cherbourg in France has been used for many years and has been the primary route for most British live exports since the mid 1990's when the major ferry companies operating from southern English ports all adopted a policy of not carrying animals destined for slaughter or further fattening. In order primarily to establish the scale and scope of animals being exported from GB via Northern Ireland and the Republic I began an investigation into the trade based upon FOI requests to the APHA and the Northern Irish department DAERA. I very quickly found that DAERA information recording was highly unsatisfactory and that they had apparently been approving journeys which did not have journey logs. Journey Logs under EU 1/2005 are essential for recording and administering long journeys. The admission by DAERA led me to widening the scope of my investigation to include the competence of DAERA.

I had communication with DAERA over a period of about 15 months and including FOI requests for information, the file on this runs to about 130 pages. Many of my questions were not answered satisfactorily but from those that were I concluded that DAERA was more than just incompetent in administering animal transportation; but is in fact deliberately misinterpreting the Regulation EU 1/2005 in order to soften the effect of the Regulation for the benefit of those of the farming community involved in this trade. Having quoted a specific example of how DAERA had approved a journey which did not comply with the Regulation, and which was admitted by the Permanent Secretary in writing, I presented the letter on the BBC programme Countryfile - within a few days DAERA wrote to me to say that they would have no further communication with me.

The Parliamentary Committee examining the Bill needs to pay particular attention to the subject of animals being transported to and from Northern Ireland and must find an absolute guaranteed method of preventing the trade carrying on through Northern Ireland otherwise the farmers, transporters, livestock dealers and DAERA will make a mockery of the proposed legislation

and the honourable and compassionate intentions of the Committee will be denied.

If you wish I would be happy to attend at your convenience a meeting at which I could present in detail my concerns and my conclusions.

Yours faithfully

Reg Bell
KAALE

8 November 2021