



Media Release – Stop Live Export SA and Compassion in World Farming - July 2025

Stop Live Export South Africa and Compassion in World Farming Urges Public Response on Government's draft Regulations to Continue Exporting Live Animals by Sea

Cape Town, South Africa — Stop Live Export South Africa (SLESA) and Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) are calling on the South African public to urgently respond to the newly proposed live animal export regulations announced by the Department of Agriculture (DoA) on 11 July 2025. These draft regulations pave the way for the continuation of the live export of animals by sea — a practice SLESA condemns as unjust, inhumane, and economically misleading.

Established in February 2024, SLESA is a voluntary association of South Africans united in opposition to live animal export by sea. With the support of 50 social justice and animal welfare organisations and a growing base of individual members, SLESA is committed to public education, lobbying, and campaigning to end the suffering inflicted on animals through the live export trade.

An SLESA spokesperson emphasised the urgency of the public's role: "These regulations cannot be passed without scrutiny. We need a significant, united public response to ensure a rigorous consultation process - one that includes the South African public and all animal welfare organisations. We only have until 25 August to submit objections. The time to act is now."

In December 2024, the Department formally responded to a joint request from SLESA and FOUR PAWS South Africa (submitted in May) to implement a ban. The Deputy Director for Primary Animal Health Care, Dr Anndrea Yelliah, responded: "It is the Ministry's position that all animal transport and export must be carried out with due regard for animal welfare... the guidelines for the exportation of live animals by sea are currently in the process of being formalised into regulations. This will follow the Department's standard consultation process, during which stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide further comments and inputs."

While government maintains that its regulatory approach prioritises animal welfare, SLESA strongly contests the notion that live export by sea can ever be considered humane. There is ample global evidence that these systems result in immense animal suffering - and are near-impossible to monitor once the animals leave South African shores.

"Once animals are at sea, there is no independent monitoring," added the SLESA spokesperson. "Even when regulations exist, they are unenforceable at sea, where conditions are often horrific due to the length of time animals have to travel."



This was evident in February 2024, when the Kuwaiti “Death Ship” carrying 19,000 cattle docked in Cape Town on its voyage from Brazil to the Middle East. NSPCA inspectors documented animals standing in knee-deep faeces and ammonia, with several requiring euthanasia due to the appalling conditions on board.

In addition to the moral and ethical implications, SLESA also highlights the flawed economic justification for live export. The Department has framed the trade as a socio-economic boon to the industry and especially to emerging farmers - but the reality tells a different story. The vast majority of livestock exported are owned by wealthy commercial farmers, not small-scale or emerging farmers. These animals are trucked long distances from across the country - often while unfit to travel - exposing them to injury and additional stress and risk.

“Pain for profit is not a just or sustainable model,” said the SLESA spokesperson. “The government’s narrative around economic benefits fails to account for the suffering of sentient animals and the long-term damage to South Africa’s reputation. We must not follow countries that have pursued this trade at the expense of animal welfare or our own morality as a nation but rather learn from the nations that have banned or are in the process of phasing out the trade. These include Luxembourg (2019), New Zealand (the ban took effect in April 2023), Brazil (the ban was upheld in 2024), Germany (has had export bans to certain non-EU countries since 2022), the United Kingdom (the ban was passed in 2024), and Australia (the ban will be implemented by May 2028). These countries are setting a moral and scientific precedent South Africa can and should follow.”

CIWF played a pivotal role in banning live exports in the UK and will continue the fight to ban live exports in South Africa. Alexis Olds, the Head of Southern Africa said, “The export of live animals is an inhumane and unnecessary trade that needs to end. There is no justifiable reason to expose these sentient beings to this type of treatment. We will be opposing the live export regulations, and we urge all South Africans to join our voice against this cruel trade.”

SLESA also raises concern over the lack of truly independent oversight. Under the draft regulations, the Department would appoint its own monitors, which represents a clear conflict of interest and undermines the integrity of any welfare protections included in the regulations. Compounding this issue is the reality that many of the countries importing live animals from South Africa - such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Mauritius - have significantly lower animal welfare standards than South Africa. Once animals arrive, they are not protected by South African law and are commonly subjected to inhumane handling and brutal slaughter practices, including non-stunned slaughter and unregulated backyard slaughter.



“This trade sends our animals into the unknown, where cruelty is not the exception but the norm,” SLESA warns. “No regulation can safeguard their welfare once they leave our shores. That’s why this trade must be outlawed, not regulated.”

SLESA and CIWF urge the public to respond to the Department with logical and informed objections that draw on decades of scientific research - including findings from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and numerous veterinary studies - that have shown that live export by sea subjects animals to prolonged stress, injury, overcrowding, motion sickness, extreme temperatures, ammonia exposure, and deprivation of food and water. In addition, the mass transport of live animals across international borders significantly increases the risk of zoonotic disease transmission - a risk flagged by global health authorities, especially in the wake of pandemics linked to animal-human interactions. The combination of high-stress conditions, close confinement, and extended journeys creates a breeding ground for disease, threatening not only animal welfare but also public health.

“No matter how strict the rules, the live export trade is an unjust and unnecessary practice. These horrors are not glitches in the system, they are inherent to the process and cannot be eliminated through regulation. We must demand a total ban and now is the time to use our collective voice to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves,” concludes SLESA.

To access the regulations and for instructions on how to submit comments, go to the [SLESA website](#).

To submit comments on the draft regulations, please email VPH@Dalrrd.gov.za and copy RegulationsComments@stopliveexport.co.za

The public may also submit their comments on the [Dear South Africa website](#).

The deadline for submissions is 12pm on **25 August 2025**.

To join the movement and stay informed:

- **Sign the Petition to ban live export by sea:** <https://stopliveexport.co.za/petition/>
- **Facebook:** [Stop Live Export SA](#)
- **Instagram:** [@stoplxsa](#)
- **Website:** <https://stopliveexport.co.za/>

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FACT SHEET

What is SLESA?

SLESA is a voluntary association of dedicated South Africans standing against the unjust and cruel practice of live animal export by sea. We aim to lobby for change via government, legislative, trade and media channels to eliminate the unlawful suffering and cruelty inflicted on animals via the live export system.

SLESA objectives:

The overarching objective of SLESA is to facilitate the creation of a strong social movement that advocates locally and globally so as to create awareness amongst the public of the horrors of live animal export, and to lobby and affect policy and legislative remedies to eliminate the suffering of farmed animals in long distance live transport.

SLESA is focused on the interaction with local and international governments, industry, corporations, communities and other bodies and stakeholders to protect farmed animals in long-distance sea transport through collaborative, informed and targeted efforts.

Our Call To Action Goals:

- Call on the National Department of Agriculture (DoA) to fulfil their mandate in protecting animal welfare and **ban the live export of our animals**.
- Call on the DoA to develop the South African agricultural economy in a **sustainable** manner, without allowing systemic cruelty to farmed animals.
- Call on the SA public to **sign our [petition](#)** to ban live animal exports by sea.
- Call on the SA public to **make a [donation](#)** to support our mission.
- Call on the SA public to **support SLE** by following us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Call on the SA public to send an email to the DoA to pass regulations to prohibit the live export of all animals by sea. A letter template with email addresses can be found [here](#).