

NSPCA STATE OF **LIVE EXPORT** REPORT

JANUARY TO APRIL 2024

The NSPCA is committed to ensuring the compassionate and humane handling of farm animals. This includes the farm animals onboard the ships docking in South Africa's harbours, known as the **live export** of animals by sea. This unnecessary practice is associated with many welfare concerns, as the animals onboard endure weeks of suffering and overcrowded, unhygienic conditions, to then be slaughtered at their eventual destination.



[Learn more about Live Export on the NSPCA's Website](#)



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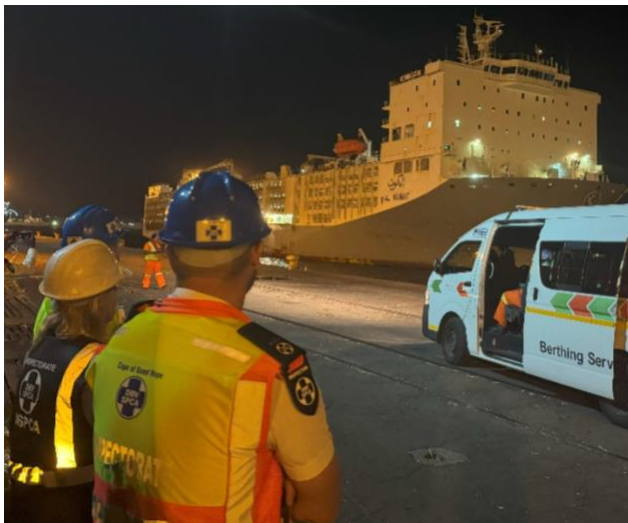
Two of the key recent live exports events that occurred both involved the company Al Mawashi, which the NSPCA has been in litigation with for almost 5 years.



According to their website, Al Mawashi's vision is to "become the leaders in exporting livestock and meat products from the region to the world by operating **advanced facilities** that implements high **bio-security, hygiene, and animal welfare** regulations controlled by advanced technologies assuring sustainability in the next 5 years."

Al Kuwait

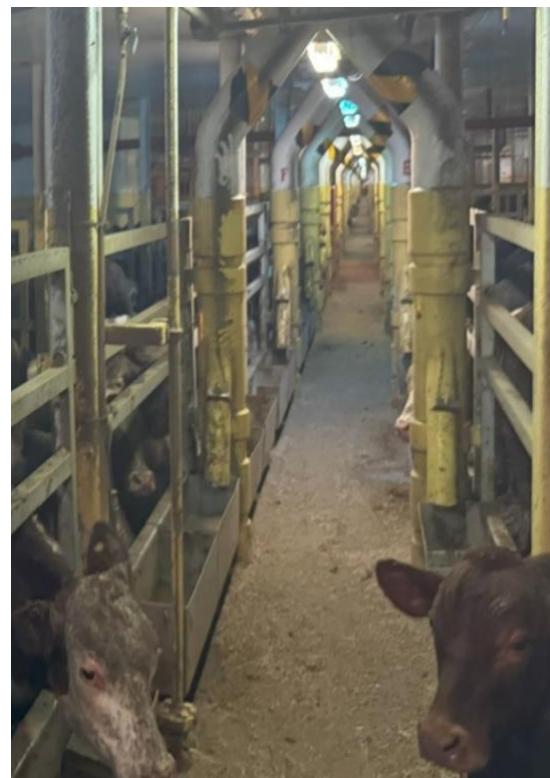
Days prior to the arrival of the MV Al Kuwait on the 18th of February 2024, the NSPCA had detected the vessel heading towards South Africa from Brazil. After investigation and through contacts in Brazil, it was confirmed that this vessel would be berthing in Cape Town with cattle onboard.



Brazil to Iraq.

The NSPCA alerted the Cape of Good Hope SPCA, and Senior Inspector Grace De Lange and Consulting Veterinarian, Dr Bryce Marock, travelled to Cape Town and raided the vessel as it arrived.

The vessel belonging to Al Mawashi was rented out with the crew to an Emirati company transporting the animals from



The vessel (with a carrying capacity of 15 000 bulls) was found to be overloaded, with 19 000 bulls found onboard (albeit many were bull calves).

The NSPCA boarded the vessel under warrant and found bulls kept in terrible conditions: the pens were filled with faeces, much of which was soft because of diarrhoea, overstocking and widespread water leaks. Inspectors were paid lip service, as despite claims of regular cleaning, animals were found to be covered in faeces. Out of sight of the friendly journalists who usually

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accompany this vessel on show journeys, proper cleaning was not done. Regular, thorough cleaning is expensive and labour intensive and can take up to 2 days.



Issues found onboard included:

- faeces in the water and feed troughs
- lack of bedding
- a build-up of ammonia
- overstocking in some pens

Rotting carcasses were found in both the "hospital" and "general" in pens. The animals in the hospital pens were dying and/or untreatable (i.e wounds needing a more hygienic environment for treatment). Seven bulls were euthanised to end their suffering.

In addition, many animals were removed from general pens to the "hospital pens", to facilitate treatment by the two on-board Brazilian veterinarians. The conditions observed included foot rot (exasperated by

the accumulation of faeces), ocular disease, gastro-intestinal disease, respiratory infections, and bloat.

The veterinarians were ordered to administer the available pain medication to the animals in the hospital pens. Furthermore, the NSPCA warned we would hold the vessel until they purchased topical eye medication for the many bulls with ocular disease.

A warning was issued to lay down shavings in the hospital pens to provide bedding, for medications to be purchased on shore, for the troughs to be cleaned, and for the cleaning of pens where there was deep watery stool. The staff onboard could not clean everything because of the danger to human and marine life close to shore, and the threat of livestock diseases entering South Africa. The NSPCA team ensured cleaning was done as thoroughly as possible, while considering these limitations.



During the saga, Senior Inspector De Lange and Dr Marock attended a meeting with the Port Authority. This occurred after the City of Cape Town became aware of the vessel. The noxious fumes and smell of faeces permeated the city, and the vessel could be seen quite easily. There was public pressure for the vessel to depart immediately. The NSPCA believed the vessel could not be forced to leave without loading enough food, and therefore worked with the State and relevant authorities to prevent this.

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The resultant media coverage was widespread in South Africa and throughout the world. Marcelle Meredith, Grace De Lange, Jacques Peacock and Dr Bryce Marock spent many hours fielding questions over many time zones.

Welfare organisations world-wide and New Zealand parliamentarians combatting live export have since reached out to the NSPCA for assistance. This specific vessel has been used as show carrier to have live export by sea in New Zealand legalised again, as well as for the reversal of the pending stayed court ordered ban in Brazil. Our footage and information have been used in both countries' legislatures.

NSPCA's Dr Marock prepared a technical report for the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), on the request of the Deputy Director-General. A veterinary report for the prosecution of the captain of the vessel was also completed. Senior Inspector De Lange compiled the docket and included evidence from the Cape of Good Hope SPCA.



View our video here:
The 'Big Stink' Leaves Cape Town,
but Suffering Continues



View our video here:
A journey no animal should endure...

Al Messilah



Al Mawashi's notification of an upcoming shipment led to inspections and legal interventions. The notification was vague, mentioning a planned shipment around the 22nd of March 2024.

An inspection at the Berlin Feedlot by the King Williams Town SPCA on the 14th of March 2024 unveiled concerns about approximately 20,000 sheep. There were plans to increase this number to 60,000 by the 18th of March 2024. Issues such as inadequate shelter were raised, prompting a Warning to Al Mawashi.

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18 March 2024

NSPCA Senior Inspector Appalsamy and Dr. Bryce Marock obtained a warrant to conduct a follow-up inspection, where welfare issues such as distressed animals and incomplete shelter construction were identified, leading to the issuance of another Warning for veterinary compliance.



22 March 2024

Senior Inspector Appalsamy secured another warrant at the King Williams Town Court for 12 inspectors until the 8th of April 2024.

25 March 2024

The team left Johannesburg and collaborated with local SPCAs for inspections.

26 March 2024

The team encountered welfare concerns, injured animals, and a lack of veterinary attention at the feedlot. Discussions with feedlot management highlighted issues with shearing practices and animal screenings. Dr. Zondi, the State Veterinarian, later arrived to address these concerns, including rushed shearing practices that caused injuries.

27 & 28 March 2024

Subsequent inspections on the 27th and 28th of March 2024 revealed ongoing welfare issues, downer animals, and inadequate shelter capacity for injured animals. A confrontation with staff responsible for shearing over marking animals led to disagreements and intervention from the Feedlot management. The owner overseeing loading clashed with NSPCA inspectors, resulting in threats and aggressive behaviour, necessitating intervention by law enforcement. Dr Zondi continued the screening process, with NSPCA teams marking animals and removing those with wool longer than 25mm, lameness, and eye issues. Challenges arose due to insufficient labour from Al Mawashi, causing delays in the inspection process.



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16,000 ewes being at the feedlot raised concerns about pregnancy, with tensions among Al Mawashi and NSPCA staff rising. Tactics like mixing animals to confuse markings were employed by Al Mawashi, leading to chaos. The delay in screenings aimed to reduce rejections by NSPCA. The feedlot staff focused on animal marking and drafting, while tensions persisted.

The discovery of a lamb in one of the ewe's camps raised doubts about the accuracy of farmer declaration certificates regarding pregnancy. NSPCA planned to bring in a sheep expert veterinarian for examination, but Al Mawashi did not dispute the presence of pregnant animals.

29 March – 1 April 2024

Over the Easter period, obstacles such as locked gates by Al Mawashi were encountered, prompting a focus on monitoring shearing and marking practices. Legal battles ensued, with Al Mawashi serving the NSPCA with a High Court Application to prevent marking and screening of pregnant animals. Senior Inspector Appalsamy, Attorney Dean Wright, and Advocate Andy Bester SC travelled to Grahamstown over the weekend, where Advocate Andy Bester SC represented the NSPCA. We received judgment on the 1st of April, and the NSPCA won the matter with costs.



1 – 5 April 2024

The NSPCA resumed inspections in the Eastern Cape, focusing on harbour activities remotely. Observations were made of the euthanasia of compromised animals, screenings by Dr. Zondi, Dr. Marock, and NSPCA officials, and challenges with loading. The loading process on the 3rd of April was obstructed as Al Mawashi attempted to control the pace, leading to confrontations. Compromised animals were identified and removed, and pregnant ewes were scanned, confirming cases of ORF (an infectious disease caused by a poxvirus, characterized by skin lesions and secondary bacterial infection). The NSPCA utilized an expert sheep consulting veterinarian, who was excellent in screening animals with her specialised equipment, which resulted in many pregnant animals not



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being loaded. Loading continued, with 23,000 sheep boarding the vessel by the end of the day.

On the 4th of April 2024, loading commenced despite the absence of State Vets, with challenges, delays, and confrontations between Al Mawashi and NSPCA staff. Heat exhaustion and inadequate screening processes were noted, with loading ending at 16:00 and cattle scheduled for loading the next day.

On the 5th of April 2024, cattle were loaded, with a focus on ensuring no compromised animals were overlooked. Inspections continued, with a total of 51,250 sheep, 200 goats, and 1,500 cattle loaded onto the vessel. Key concerns included non-adherence to guidelines, inadequate staff, confrontations, disease prevalence, and loading of pregnant animals despite welfare concerns. We extend gratitude to the NSPCA's other units, namely the Special Projects Unit, the Wildlife Protection Unit, and the Animal Ethics Unit for their assistance with export, despite it not falling within their portfolio. We are proud that NSPCA Inspectors are always willing to help **all** animals.



Other Livestock Shipments

Gelbray Express

16 April 2024

Making its inaugural journey to South Africa, the vessel, arrived a day behind schedule on the 16th of April 2024. Interestingly, there were no trucks awaiting its arrival at the harbour on the initially scheduled day of the 15th of April 2024. Loading operations commenced at 10:00 once the ramps were set up and concluded shortly after midnight with minimal issues during offloading. However, inspections onboard revealed elevated ammonia levels of 25 parts per million (ppm) on some decks. Any reading above 25ppm is deemed high. To address this, officers were instructed to increase the speed of the extractor fan, to effectively reduce ammonia levels. A total of 2,250 bulls were loaded onto the vessel, which departed at 06:00 on the 17th of April 2024.

29 April 2024

The returning vessel faced a delayed arrival, prompting adjustments in the loading schedule. Despite the delay, loading operations proceeded smoothly, with minimal issues encountered. Measures were taken to address increased ammonia levels onboard, ensuring the welfare of the livestock. The crew were requested to switch on additional fans, which they did. Arriving later than scheduled on the 29th of April 2024, around 10:00, docking and ramp setup were completed by approximately 11:00. Upon arrival, four trucks were already queued outside the harbour for offloading, with approximately 240 cattle onboard. There was a delay with animals loaded and the trucks were parked outside the harbour, and as such the owner was warned of loading animals before the vessel could dock. Loading commenced at 11:07 and concluded shortly after midnight on the 30th of April 2024. During inspections, elevated ammonia levels,

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reaching 14ppm, were detected around 20:30 on some decks. Investigation revealed closed pop holes (ventilation holes) due to cattle being loaded. Instructions were given to the second officer to open some pop holes for improved ventilation. Additionally, extractor fan speeds were increased to mitigate ammonia levels, effectively ensuring the welfare of the livestock onboard.

A total of 2,500 bulls were loaded onto the vessel, with loading operations completed at approximately 00:10am. The vessel departed at 06:00 on the 30th of April 2024, following the completion of loading operations.

Murray Express

The East London and King Williams Town SPCAs persist in their pivotal role of monitoring every shipment of live animals bound for Mauritius, ensuring the maintenance of animal welfare standards. Throughout the reporting period, a total of 8 shipments were loaded, comprising 400 sheep and 8,310 cattle.

The Farm Animal Protection Unit receives voyage reports for each shipment from the SPCAs, which document any mortalities or injuries sustained during the journey. It's worth emphasizing that mortality rates have remained low in recent shipments. However, it's essential to acknowledge that the accuracy of the information presented in the captain's voyage reports cannot be independently verified.

The NSPCA continues to monitor the state of live export in South Africa and advocate for the welfare of all animals onboard until we reach our objective of banning live export of animals by sea in the country.



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