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**Press Statement**

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**Stop Live Transport : International Awareness Day**

Most people interested in animal welfare would agree that transporting livestock destined for slaughter across a country, an ocean or a continent is a practice that should be discontinued.

Though the status of animal transport in each region presents a somewhat different context, the basic problems of overcrowding, rough handling and ill effects from long rides without rest are essentially the same in all parts of the world. Long distance livestock transport in itself is economically inefficient, but persists largely because of inefficient investment in developing the alternatives.

Donald Broom of the Cambridge University Animal Welfare Information Centre points out that long transport varies by species. Journeys for birds must be considerably shorter because poultry held in crates cannot be effectively fed and watered during transport. For four legged animals standing on a road vehicle subject to movement, they position their feet outside the normal area under the body in order to help them in balancing. They also need to take steps out of this normal area if subjected to accelerations in a particular direction. Hence more space is needed than if standing still. But livestock are seldom allowed much space in transport. Instead haulers typically try to pack as many animals into a vehicle as can be shoved aboard. The animals are kept upright by the pressure of the bodies of the other animals around them.

In Malaysia livestock transport by road is the usual practice with livestock exposed to heat and sun and the amount of time spent without food, water and inadequate ventilation. Trips maybe longer if truck stops at more markets along the way, or has a breakdown, or is stopped at borders for permits and inspection.

The plastic crate for holding the birds can contain about 10 – 12 chickens. Measuring 915mm in length by 510mm in width and by 305mm in height, these are deemed by farm exporters to be conducive for easy loading and unloading for work efficiency. They are stacked high on top of each crate in a transport truck or lorry. Many of the birds are seen panting due to heat stress and many arrived at markets with wet feathers as they are watered down to prevent deaths during the long journey. On arrival they are kept in their crates until the following day for slaughter.

The treatment of animals at livestock markets revealed that animals are routinely abused through negligence on the part of the transport worker. In one incident at the Kuantan Road market, Penang, Friends of the Earth Malaysia (FOEM)/Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM)'s officer witnessed a scene in which a lorry attendant was seen pulling a crateful of chickens out from inside the lorry. He pulled it over the edge of the lorry then let the crate drop from the height of the lorry floor onto the ground (height of about 3 feet) giving the chickens a terrible jolt.

Livestock also suffer traffic accidents during transport whereby thousands of crates filled with chickens are strewn on the road. Despite the "relatively" low mortality rate, animals suffer high-risk situations that cause pain and stress. According to The Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, accidents pose a greater risk to animal welfare. "Animals have not evolved to be programmed to cope with a road accident, meaning they suffer stress, anxiety, fear, pain and uncertainty, which can endanger other animals and people", explains Miranda de la Lama, a researcher at the Department of Animal Production and Food Science at the University of Zaragoza (UNIZAR).

Pigs and cattle are one of the most-transported animals due to the heavy consumption demand for pork and beef products across the country, and this means they are the most exposed to traffic accidents.

Live animal export is a story of corporate profiteering, politics, deceptive information and profound cruelty. It is also a story of division within society where the opponents of the trade are unyielding in their fight to end the prolonged horror meted out to the animals selected for export. Generally the government's interest in economics far overshadows any compassion for the entities being exploited. The truth is that there is a very dark side to this trade and there is no way that live animal export can be ethical. There is no ambiguity of the inherent. One would expect livestock to have some level of 'protection' commensurate with their value; sadly, however, this is not the case.

In short the export of live animals causes unnecessary suffering, and unnecessary suffering is bad, whatever the context. That really is all there is to it.

In view of the above SAM is joining the Compassion in World Farming in support of its International Awareness Day - September 13th 2017 - to Stop Live Transport of Livestock.

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