

Franz Fischler  
Commissioner for Agriculture and Fishing  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels

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Dear Commissioner Fischler

**RE: Export of live cattle to third countries - new evidence of cruelty**

Each year around 300,000 live EU cattle are exported to the Middle East and north Africa, mainly from Germany, Ireland and France. This trade is heavily subsidised; anything from 90-290 million Euros a year are paid out in export refunds.

From Germany and France (and Hungary), the animals are sent by road to a southern European port. From there they are shipped to the Middle East. From Ireland, the whole of the journey is by sea.

In August 2000 a veterinary surgeon visited Egypt on behalf of the German organisation Animals' Angels. She found EU cattle being subjected to great cruelty. During the unloading and transport of the cattle in Alexandria they would sometimes fall into the sea and drown. Others were beaten with sticks, sometimes brutally, as they were forced onto the trucks. The cattle's journey from the port would then take up to 3 - 6 hours in temperatures over 40°C (in the shade) through the desert, in vehicles which were overcrowded and had no roof or shelter. In abattoirs near Cairo the animals were then ritually slaughtered and sometimes took a very long time to die.

In my view the EU should stop the payment of export refunds for live cattle exports to third countries. It is unacceptable for taxpayers' money to be used to subsidise a trade which results in great animal suffering. As long as the trade continues the Commission should press Egypt to improve their welfare standards during unloading, onward transport and slaughter.

Please let me know your position on this issue, particularly with respect to export refunds - will you consider ending this practice?

Yours sincerely

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP