

September 12, 2007

The Honorable Peter McGauran
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

1 page via fax: 612-6273-4100

Dear Mr. McGauran:

I used to think that wool came from animals who were merely sheared and allowed to live fairly decent lives. I was shocked to learn from my friends at PETA that Australian farmers cut huge chunks of skin and flesh from lambs' backsides without any painkillers and cram sheep onto filthy, disease-ridden ships that take them to the Middle East, where they are cruelly slaughtered.

PETA is asking the wool industry to switch to flystrike-resistant breeds of sheep for a long-term solution to flystrike while, in the short term, using better husbandry practices that are already employed by many Australian farmers to effectively and humanely prevent flystrike. Won't you please step in and push the wool industry to do the right thing, right now?

I understand that claims have been made that this procedure will be replaced by 2010, yet unfortunately, this will not help the millions of lambs who will be needlessly mutilated for the next three years. And it does nothing to end the suffering that animals are forced to endure during long ocean transits to the Middle East, where they are cruelly slaughtered. Despite decades of documented abuses to sheep and other animals, live animals are still exported to countries that have no animal protection laws. These animals could be slaughtered in Australia, where laws will ensure that sheep are stunned before being killed—a practice that is both more humane and consistent with Muslim religious requirements.

As the minister of agriculture, you are in a position to demand and ensure the humane treatment of animals. Please put an end to the two worst abuses of sheep who are raised for their wool by banning both mulesing and the export of live sheep to the Middle East.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Phoenix', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joaquin Phoenix