

# **Kent Action Against Live Exports (KAALE)**

## **Patrons:**

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**Contact:** Chairman - Mr. Ian Birchall – Mobile 07968 134489

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012

**Official Complaint – Reference: KAALE / xxxxx 004/ 27th April / 2012 xxxxx**

**To:** Mr. J. Paice; Minister of State for Agriculture and Food,

Defra, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR.

Dear Sir,

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April we were once again present at Ramsgate port to witness the sailing of the export ship 'Joline' owned by the Dutchman John Onderwater. On this occasion not only was Animal Health present but the RSPCA, who are now inspecting all the animals at the port as DEFRA's remit is to only inspect 30%, were also in the port. As KAALE is not allowed to enter the port and can only monitor from the entrance we have to communicate by telephone with the inspectors.

We rang to express our concern at the weather conditions as although the wind was on the decline, after a week of gales, as the ship was being loaded the wind was still bordering on force 6. We were assured by the Animal Health inspector present that he would ring South Foreland coastguard before sailing to ensure the conditions were calm enough for the ship to sail. As we have no powers we had to accept his assurances and the ship sailed at 10.30 hrs with three transporters of sheep and one of calves on board..

The RSPCA also expressed concern to us as they left the port but they too have no power to stop the ship only advice on the animals. At approx midday we observed the vessel off Deal between the Goodwin Sands and the shore making heavy going as it hugged the coast instead, as it usually does, taking the direct route across the shipping lanes. This is a sure sign that the weather is rough and our concerns grew.

We travelled to St Margaret's Bay and from the cliffs there witnessed the ship, bow on to the wind, with waves breaking constantly over her due to the wind which was still above force 5. At that point she turned to cross the lanes and the wind hit her on the beam causing her to roll dangerously and we watched her until out of site still rolling excessively.

That she made Calais is not in doubt but at what distress to these animals on board! We realise that this was the only day this week the exporter could make a crossing because of the extreme conditions but if your officials had asked the ship to wait for another four hours the wind did eventually drop to force 4 before rising again on Friday night. The transporters could have been kept on the dock using the time as an 'on lorry' rest period and the animals would not have been subjected to this torture. That these people who export animals care nothing for their feelings as they are merely to be slaughtered is obvious, however, there is no need to make them suffer first or maybe there is!!!

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**BAN LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS**

*This is the first time since we obtained the photos on our website of her rolling in these sorts of conditions that she has been allowed to sail in over a force 5. That seems to us as a backward step and does your official representatives no favours in the eyes of the general public, many of whom were on the cliffs watching this unsuitable vessel struggling in the heaving waters of the channel. She was even warned by a cross channel ferry to be careful as she, at one point, was on collision course with her.*

*We ask you to look into this matter and give Animal Health clear instructions as to what conditions this ship can sail in for the sake of the animals, who have no choice in whether they travel or not.*

*Yours Sincerely*

*Ian Birchall – Chairman – KAALE.*

