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THE LAW SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
youngLAWYERS

Bobby Calf TOF RIS Submissions 3 February 2011
Animal Health Australia
Suite 15, 26-28 Napier Close
DEAKIN ACT 2600
Post and email: consultation@animalhealthaustralia.com.au

Submission on Bobby Calf Time off feed Standard

The Pro Bono Animal Law Service (**PALS@PILCH**) and the NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee (**Committee**) wish to make a brief submissions to Animal Health Australia (**AHA**) on the proposed amendments to the *Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals – Land Transport of Livestock* and its associated Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS).

Pro Bono Animal Law Service

The Pro Bono Animal Law Service (**PALS@PILCH**) is a project of the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) NSW and PILCH Victoria. PALS@PILCH is a national legal referral service that puts not for profit animal protection organisations in contact with lawyers able to provide pro bono legal advice and assistance. Our members include prominent Australian law firms, barristers and universities. In addition to our referral service, PALS@PILCH is also committed to addressing significant animal welfare issues.

NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee

NSW Young Lawyers (NSWYL) supports practitioners in their professional and career development in numerous ways, including by encouraging active participation in it's 15 separate committees, each dedicated to particular areas of practice. Membership automatic for all NSW lawyers under 36 years and/or in their first five years of practice, as well as law students.

The NSWYL Animal Law Committee (Committee) comprises of a group of lawyers and law students interested in animal welfare and laws regulating the treatment of animals. The Committee aims to raise awareness and provide education to the legal profession and wider community, while increasing understanding about the importance of protecting animals from

abuse and neglect. A common theme amongst Committee members is a passion and desire to use our legal skills and the law to help improve the lives of animals.

Bobby Calves

Bobby calves are one of the most vulnerable animals in the Australian livestock industry. The common industry practice of removing bobby calves from their mothers shortly after birth compromises the physical and physiological welfare of these animals even before they are transported.

PALS@PILCH and the Committee make the following submissions:

1. We oppose the introduction of the amending clause "be slaughtered or fed within 30 hours from last feed" to standard SB4.5 of the A*ustralian Animal Welfare standards and Guidelines – Land Transport of Livestock.* PALS@PILCH and the Committee submit that the proposed amendment will have an undeniably detrimental impact on the welfare of bobby calves.

2. We submit that the proposed amendment has been developed from an industry perspective which places disproportionately high emphasis on economy over the welfare of bobby calves. Not surprisingly, the proposed amendment has industry support but significant opposition from the RSPCA and other animal welfare advocacy groups.

3. We note that the current *Code of Practice for Transportation of Cattle* states that calves being transported or awaiting sale or slaughter should not be deprived of appropriate liquid feed or water for more than 10 hours. The proposed amendment increases this recommendation by a staggering 20 hours.

4. We submit that adopting 30 hours Time Off Feed (**TOF**) as an industry standard is endorsing the lowest benchmark recorded in common farming practice. We note that the "vast majority of bobby calves are slaughtered at less than 24 hours TOF" (see summary point 7 at page vii of the RIS). Introducing and endorsing a lower standard of

practice creates a disincentive for the industry to improve practices in the interest of animal welfare.

5. We submit that reliable and peer reviewed research is required before proposed standards are adopted. PALS@PILCH and the Committee have concerns about the reliability of the Fisher Report which was conducted to demonstrate the appropriateness of 30 hours TOF. In particular, we note that the bobby calves who were the subject of the research were sourced from well run dairy farms that were well briefed for the study.

PALS@PILCH and the Committee are grateful for the opportunity to provide brief submissions as part of this consultation process. Please feel free to contact Edyta Zurawski (Chair, NSWYL Animal Law Committee) or Jillian Field (PALS@PILCH) on the contact details listed below.

Yours faithfully

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