

LIVE SHEEP TRADE, MARKET CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FACTORS

**1430. Hon JIM SCOTT to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

The minister identified in question on notice 1243 of 14 October 2003 that the demand for live sheep in specific markets such as the Middle East was driven by cultural and religious factors.

- (1) What cultural and religious factors are driving that live sheep importation?
- (2) To which specific market sectors does the minister refer?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank Hon Jim Scott for some notice of his question.

- (1)-(2) The longstanding cultural tradition in Middle Eastern countries is for people to purchase fresh meat in small quantities from animals slaughtered on the same day. For specific religious ceremonies, such as those that take place after a designated period of fasting, Ramadan, the slaughter of the whole animal on the day of the ceremony is an integral part of the ceremony. Demand for live sheep from Australia is driven by importers in the Middle East to complement domestic supplies and imports of livestock from other countries such as Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. I refer to importing countries such as Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Jordan and others. Within these countries, specific sectors include the celebration of business or family occasions, religious occasions, demand by expatriate communities and ongoing demand for freshly slaughtered meat in urban populations.

Although the answer provided does not note it, I must add that there is an ongoing trade in carcase meat with all the countries mentioned, and some to which I did not refer. However, not all residents of those countries - particularly many of the expatriation populations, which in some of those countries is the majority population - shop in wet markets and souks rather than in supermarkets with meat counters similar to those available in our supermarkets.