



# Wellard

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## MV Ocean Drover reaches centenary voyage milestone

The flagship of the world's livestock shipping fleet, the MV Ocean Drover, has celebrated the success of its 100<sup>th</sup> voyage.

Launched in 2002 as the MV Becrux (it was renamed the MV Ocean Drover in 2009), the vessel is the world's largest, purpose-built livestock carrier, with advanced ventilation, feed and water systems.

In its first 100 voyages it has carried 670,368 cattle and 3,837,127 sheep, and travelled 932,613 nautical miles (1,727,199 km - equivalent to 4.5 trips to the moon). The livestock have consumed more than 150,000 tonnes of fodder.

It has visited ports in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Russia, and loaded from Townsville, Darwin, Wyndham, Broome, Geraldton, Fremantle, Adelaide, Portland and New Zealand.

Wellard Executive Chairman Mauro Balzarini said Wellard had high expectations for the MV Ocean Drover when it was launched, and the vessel continued to exceed those lofty expectations.

"The Drover was a breakthrough for the live export industry, because it was the first time a large vessel had been designed from the ground up to carry livestock," Mr Balzarini said.

"It was a huge investment in the future of Australia's livestock industry, and we continue to see the benefits of that investment more than 100 voyages later.

"The vessel has performed extremely well. Success rates are high, weight gains are high and we expect that it will continue to exhibit the same performance in its next 100 voyages."

In 2009 Wellard ordered the construction of two sister ships to the MV Ocean Drover.

"Imitation is the highest form of flattery, and the new vessels will be largely based on the Drover's design due to the outstanding success of the vessel," Wellard Director Steve Meerwald said.

"In an industry where animal welfare is paramount, the Drover has set the benchmark for livestock care."

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Information gained from the operation of the MV Ocean Drover also aided the design of Wellard's new smaller vessels, the MV Ocean Swagman (launched January 2010) and the MV Ocean Outback (due for launch in late 2010).

Al Batina Livestock LLC, Muscat, Oman, and P.K. Livestock & Meat Co ( PVT) Ltd, Karachi, Pakistan, Managing Director, Mr Tariq Mahmood Butt said the Drover had forged a reputation throughout the Middle Eastern livestock industry during its visits to Middle Eastern ports.

"We are extremely pleased when the MV Ocean Drover has been nominated to carry our cargo, because we know the livestock will be delivered quickly and in excellent condition," he said.

"That is important for us, as the sheep reach their destination in outstanding condition compared to livestock received from other vessels.

"We also know that the Drover will consistently deliver almost 100% of the cargo loaded for us, all in peak condition.

"The quality of the ship matches the quality of the Australian livestock it carries."

On its 100<sup>th</sup> voyage, the vessel carried 72,000 sheep and 150 cattle from Fremantle to Muscat, Bahrain and Doha.

A celebration to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> voyage was held in Doha, with importers from across the Middle East joining Wellard to celebrate the achievement.

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## Vessel specifications – MV Ocean Drover

Capacity: 75,000 sheep or 17,000 cattle, or a combination of both

Deck space: 2.4 hectares

Fresh water generation: 600 tonnes per day

Fodder capacity: 1500 tonnes

Speed: 18 knots

Length: 180 metres

Height: 9 decks

## Background – Wellard Rural and Trading

Wellard Rural and Trading is the Wellard Group's agriculture and international trade division.

Its two largest subsidiaries are Wellard Rural Exports, Australia's largest livestock exporter and ship owner, and Wellard Agri, a mixed farming land owner and operator specialising in the production of grains, legumes and livestock.

Wellard Rural Exports has supplied quality Australian dairy and beef cattle and sheep and goats to the world for 30 years, and its investment in the live export industry is without peer. Based in Fremantle, the company's operations cover every aspect of the export chain, including feed milling, road transport, feedlot facilities throughout Australia and modern shipping.

The company's flagship carrier, the MV Ocean Drover (formerly the MV Becrux), is a purpose-built livestock carrier capable of carrying 75,000 sheep or 18,000 cattle from Australia to major markets around the globe. She was commissioned in 2002.

Its MV Ocean Shearer (formerly the MV Stella Deneb) can carry 125,000 sheep or 23,000 cattle, or a combination of both.

A new, technologically advanced, purpose-built vessel, the MV Ocean Swagman sailed on its maiden voyage in January 2010. The Swagman's sister ship, the MV Ocean Outback, is due for launch in mid-late 2010. In August 2008 Wellard and Siba Ships announced a US\$250 million contract to build an additional two new livestock vessels which will be able to carry 17,000 cattle or 70,000 sheep or a combination of the two.

Wellard Agri owns and operates eight farms across three agri-hubs, two are located at Dongara and Watheroo in Western Australia's central midlands and one is located at Kojonup in the Great Southern region of WA.

The Dongara hub is home to The Grange, a 14,500 hectare property which is considered one of Western Australia's blue chip farming properties. It is primarily used for grazing, with some cropping.

The remaining landholding totals more than 18,000 hectares, of which 14,000 hectares is cropped to a variety of grains and legumes. The other 4000ha is devoted to sheep production, including the famous Hyfield Poll Merino stud at Kojonup.

In November 2009, Wellard Agri announced it was entering the farm machinery sector, when it commenced management of the CLAAS Harvest Centre at Katanning for the Landpower range of farm machinery.