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Wool grower believes live animal export industry needs to work alongside animals activists for better welfare and trade outcomes

The live export industry needs to start talking more positively and stop demonising those opposed to the trade, according to NSW farmer and Australian Wool Growers Association director Charles 'Chick' Olsson.

He quoted a 19th century French economist, who famously said, 'if goods don't cross borders, then soldiers will'.

"The 'whole picture' presents remarkable opportunities to build long-term relationships that would otherwise have very little to do with us," Mr Olsson said.

He believed the live export industry represented much more than just the ferrying of live animals to hungry markets.

"The trade gives the chance to cross-pollinate ideas between countries, to strengthen friendships, to increase understanding, to improve the way we handle animals," he said.

"We need to have a firm leadership position and a strategic plan to go forward to meet these constant criticisms.

"The cruelty issues are isolated instances, but the media seem to be hungry to pick up on any fault.

"The Australian export industry is at the top of the tree. It's one of the greatest export industries in the world.

"We are the top dog and people will pick us off for anything. We've got to be prepared for these issues, have a strong plan and talk about the good things we're doing.

"There is far more good in our industry than there are bad things."

Mr Olsson said animals rights groups, such as Animals Australia, had every right to expose issues of cruelty, but the trade needed to welcome their help to improve the "bigger picture".

"We've got to grow up a bit as an industry and stop attacking the messenger," he said.

"These people are well organised. They have exposed issues of cruelty that have appalled all of us.

"I think without them there wouldn't be these improvements. I think we've got to start working with them.

"They're intelligent people, they're raising big funds off the back of supposedly cruel live export.

"We can change it around and talk about the good stories."



PHOTO: A wool industry spokesperson believes all who wish to see better ways to improve animal welfare must work together. (User submitted: Stephen Shaw)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-10/wool-grower-highlights-bigger-picture-benefits-of-live-exports/6533344>