



**Australian Government**

**Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service**

## **Investigation into reportable cattle mortality level on the voyage from Darwin to Belawan May 2007**

### **1. Purpose**

To report on the investigation into the cause of the mortalities in cattle and to make recommendations with the objective of reducing the likelihood of a recurrence.

### **2. Summary**

Five cattle out of 866 died on a voyage from Darwin to Indonesia which equates to a voyage mortality rate of 0.58%. The cause of the mortalities was investigated and found the cattle were euthanased due to injuries sustained on the voyage.

### **3. Background**

The investigation into the mortality was carried out by reviewing the following information:

1. Stockman's end of voyage report.
2. Stockman's Daily Reports
3. Report from the exporter.
4. Records from the registered premises.
5. Report from the AQIS certifying veterinarian.

**Table 1: Chronology of events**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
866 cattle loaded in Darwin	9 May 2007
5 cows humanely destroyed	17 May 2007
Unloaded 861 cattle Belawan	18 May 2007

### **3. Findings**

#### **4.1 Events in Registered Premises**

The cattle exported from Darwin were received at the registered premises between 6 and 9 May 2007. The records of the registered premises indicated no mortalities or abnormal circumstances over the preparation period. The 866 cattle were loaded on 9 May 2007. The cattle were Brahman and Brahman cross (288) heifers and (578) cows.

#### **4.2 Loading**

There were no incidences during loading.

#### **4.3 Journey**

The climatic condition for the cattle decks were as follows

**Table 3: Climatic conditions**

Day of voyage	Dry bulb	Wet bulb	Humidity	Deaths	Daily water consumption (L)	Comments from daily reports
1	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	0	23.7	Loading went smoothly. 1 heifer on deck 4 suffered minor collision with railing during loading.
2	30.7	26.7	73	0	28.9	3 cows (2 on deck 1 and 1 on deck 2) have done the splits. Ventilation and stocking density good.
3	29.9	26.1	73	0	31.2	2 more cows have done the splits. All stock travelling well. Ventilation and stocking density good.
4	30.2	26.5	75	0	31.2	One of the cows that have done the splits is standing and appears fine. Rolled the other 4 over to restore blood circulation. One lame cow on deck 3. Ventilation and stocking density good.
5	31.4	27.6	72	0	31.2	2 of the 5 cows that had done the splits are now standing. Continue to turn the other 3, twice daily. 1 lame cow on deck 2. All stock travelling well. Ventilation and stocking density good.
6	30	27.1	80	0	32.9	1 heifer on deck 3 has suspected salmonella. All stock travelling well. Ventilation and stocking density good.
7	31.4	27.5	74	0	30.6	1 lame cow on deck 1. 1 shy feeder. All stock travelling well. Ventilation and stocking density good.
8	29.3	27.1	83	0	32.3	1 downer with suspected salmonella. Washed down deck 4. All stock travelling well. Ventilation and stocking density good.

The reportable mortality trigger for a short haul cattle voyage is 0.5 per cent. The reportable mortality level was triggered on 17 May 2007.

The stockman's end of voyage report suggests that these cows "did the splits". The stockman treated the recumbent cattle with anti-inflammatory injections and nursing care. The cattle improved but were not able to be discharged and were euthanased.

One third of the consignment loaded were heifers and two thirds were older cows. The injuries- recumbency occurred in the cows. The stockman did not record the properties of origin of the cattle which were injured and euthanased.

#### **4. AMSA evaluation of the vessel on return to Australia**

The vessel was inspected on arrival and livestock were permitted to load

#### **5. Conclusion**

The factors contributing to the cattle mortalities were injuries causing recumbency which necessitated euthanasia.

Recommendations.

- . That AQIS request AMSA consider the stockman's report that the cause of the injuries and recumbency as the slippery floors.
- . AQIS officers inspect older cows and reject any cows with problems because of their susceptibility to injuries- recumbency.

- . AQIS places an AQIS accredited veterinarian on the next voyage of this exporter to monitor the cattle and provide accurate diagnosis in the event of a problem.
- . The next consignment exported by this exporter has 3 days in the registered premises before departure.
- . AQIS places an AQIS accredited veterinarian on the next voyage of this vessel to monitor the cattle and provide accurate diagnosis in the event of a problem.
- . AQIS write to the exporter to notify that they did not notify AQIS of a reportable mortality level in accordance with the ASEL.

**Actions:**

The next consignment of cattle exported by the licenced exporter had additional conditions as follows:

1. A minimum of 3 days in the registered premises before export
2. An AQIS accredited veterinarian accompanied the next consignment to investigate mortalities.

The result of the voyage was as follows:

mortalities	Number loaded	Mortality rate
1	1619	0.06%