

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Swagman*

## Cattle exported to China in May 2019

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Report 119, September 2019

### **Voyage summary**

A consignment of 5,355 cattle were loaded on the *MV Ocean Swagman* at Portland on 1 May 2019 and departed on the same day. The vessel discharged the cattle at the port of Jintang, China between 19 and 20 May 2019, making this a 20 day voyage.

An Independent Observer (observer) boarded the vessel at Portland and remained on board until completion of discharge.

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.09% (5 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of these mortalities were not considered to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

The following comments represent a summary of key observations from the observer. The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied this voyage.

### **Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock**

#### **Exporter Documentation**

Exporter arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge and contingencies.

#### **Loading**

The observer was not present for loading but noted that the cattle were loaded in accordance with the load plan.

#### **Personnel**

An Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and two LiveCorp accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) accompanied the voyage.

The stockpersons and the AAV worked well as a team in implementing pre-emptive treatment strategies to enable the maintenance of the health and welfare of the cattle for the duration of the voyage.

The master and the crew assisted the observer and worked well with the stockpersons and the AAV to ensure the success of the voyage.

## **Daily routine**

A management meeting was held each day at around 10:00am and was attended by the AAV, stockpersons, Chief Officer (CO), bosun and observer.

Night watch arrangements involved four shifts between 4:00pm and 6:00am with 3 crew on each shift. The observer verified that the night watch personnel undertook monitoring activities which included cleaning water and feed troughs.

## **Feed and water**

The vessel feed system was gravity fed although some troughs were required to be manually filled. The cattle were fed three times per day (early morning, midday and afternoon). There were generally two pellet feeds and one feed of chaff but on occasions, the pellets and chaff were mixed and fed together. The observer noted that there was no shortage of fodder or any issues with fodder supply.

Water was supplied from stored water and water produced by reverse osmosis. Long water troughs operated with a float system and functioned well during the voyage.

## **Ventilation**

Decks 1 to 4 are closed decks and decks 5 to 7 are open decks. Ventilation operated well on each deck and no issues were noted during the voyage.

Temperature was recorded twice daily at around 8:00am and 2:30pm on each deck. The average temperature was included in the daily report. Approximately 10% of the cattle had mild panting around the time the vessel crossed the Equator. The deck conditions recorded at this time were 30°C to 31°C dry bulb and 85% humidity.

## **Pen conditions**

The pen conditions were good during the voyage. Prior to the wash down of the decks, some pens were boggy. The wash down routine was well managed. The decks were washed on three occasions. No animal welfare issues were apparent during any of the wash downs and after each wash down, a minimum of 20 kilograms of sawdust was laid in each pen.

## **Health and welfare**

The stockpersons and the AAV conducted thorough inspections of the cattle during the early morning rounds and treatments were administered as required.

Cattle were administered treatments for a range of conditions including respiratory disease, eye conditions, lameness, swollen legs and diarrhoea. Hospital pens were used appropriately for treating sick and injured cattle.

There were 5 mortalities during the voyage and the causes of the mortalities included respiratory disease, sepsis and pericarditis. One cow aborted on day 10 of the voyage.

## **Discharge**

Prior to the commencement of the discharge, sawdust was laid on all the discharge ramps and all the trucks had sawdust on the floor. An extra stockperson was available to assist in the discharge process. The 3 stockpersons and the AAV worked on a rotating roster to ensure the

discharge was supervised for its duration. No issues were observed to have an impact on animal welfare during discharge.

### **Conclusion**

The crew were dedicated and hardworking and the master ensured that all requests raised by the AAV were actioned. The journey was free of any significant incidents.

The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

## Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 6 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 13 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 14 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 15 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

