

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Shorthorn Express*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in May 2019

Report 135, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 2,220 cattle was loaded on the *MV Shorthorn Express* at the Port of Darwin on 29 May 2019 and departed the same day. The vessel discharged the cattle at the Port of Thi Vai, Vietnam on 6 June 2019, making this a 9 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.18% (4 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of the mortalities was not considered to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

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

Independent observations of the 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 cattle were loaded in accordance with the load plan and all hospital pens were empty at time of departure and remained empty throughout the voyage. The observer noted that 50% of animals were able to lie down at any one time on multiple occasions.

Pen density complied with the approved load plan. Spot checks were carried out by the observer on a daily basis that verified compliance with the approved load plan.

Personnel

The master of the vessel had 20 years experience working on livestock vessels.

The LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) had 23 years experience working on livestock vessels. The relationship with crew was noted as fair and communication was only made if necessary. The stockperson had previously worked on the current vessel and was very familiar with the crew and the workings of the vessel.

The Chief Officer (CO) and bosun communicated well with their overall priority to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock.

There was 1 crew member on night watch duty at any given time. The 6 hour night watch shifts commenced at 6:00pm to 12:00am and 12:00am to 6:00am. The observer confirmed night watch duties were undertaken.

The crew were observed checking the water bowls were clean and in working order on a daily basis.

Daily routine

A management meeting was held each day at 11:30am and was attended by the stockperson, CO and observer. During the meetings the CO ran through the status of the conditions of the animals and confirm daily feed times with the stockperson. The stockperson outlined the prepared list of feed adjustments for the day, such as additional top ups for feed troughs or commencement of manual watering.

Feed and water

There was abundant feed and water availability throughout the voyage. Animals were content to move around the pens to access water while others were feeding.

The cattle were fed three times a day, at 7:00am, 10:30am and 3:30pm. Feed times were discussed and reviewed each day by the stockperson, CO and bosun.

Chaff was provided on request from stockperson and was mostly given as a top-up after the second feed. All fodder provisions were compliant with *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

In the afternoon of day 4, the observer noted water leaking from a ceiling pipe that ran into one of the feed troughs full of pellets. The water leak was brought to the attention of the crew, however, they were already aware of the issue. The observer noted that the leak had been rectified by the following morning and the affected feed trough had dry pellets.

Ventilation

Temperature and humidity readings were taken every day at 12:00pm. The average temperature for the voyage was 31°C dry bulb, 29°C wet bulb and 79% humidity.

The ventilation was excellent throughout the voyage and there were no signs of heat stress, the animals were calm and no signs of panting were observed.

Pen conditions

There was no requirement for deck washing or pad maintenance on this voyage due to its short duration.

Health and welfare

All mortalities were humanely euthanised. They consisted of one pneumonia that did not respond to treatment, one with a suspected back injury, and two animals that were unable to rise (downer).

No treatments were required to be provided during the voyage.

A non-compliance was noted where an animal with a wound to its leg was not treated in accordance with ASEL requirements. The matter was brought to the attention of the stockperson on Day 3, however on the morning of Day 4 the stockperson advised they had not attended to the animal. The animal was not located and identified until Day 6 as the livestock in the pen had been relocated. When located, the animal was standing and moving without any trouble and showed no signs of infection, therefore it was decided that no treatment was required to be administered.

Discharge

No issues were noted at discharge.

Conclusion

The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 3 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 5 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 6 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 7 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 8 cattle in pen—no issues identified

