

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Swagman*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in June 2019

Report 138, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 4,484 head of cattle for two exporters was loaded on to the *MV Ocean Swagman* at Townsville on 3 June 2019, departing on 4 June 2019. The cattle were discharged at Thi Vai, Vietnam on 13 June 2019 and Long An-Ben Luc, Vietnam on 16 June 2019, making this a 14 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.07% (3 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of these mortalities is not considered to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

The following comments represent a summary of the key observations made by the observer who accompanied the 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 observer did not observe any issues with loading.

Cattle were loaded in accordance with the load plan, and had sufficient pen space to lay down and access feed and water.

Hospital pens were empty of livestock at the beginning of the voyage and not used as storage areas.

Personnel

Two experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) accompanied the voyage and were responsible for the health and welfare of the two consignments. They worked collectively to ensure the overall welfare of all of the cattle. The master, Chief Officer (CO), bosun and crew were experienced on livestock vessels and performed their duties professionally.

Daily routine

A management meeting was held each day and was attended by the master, CO, bosun, stockpersons and observer to discuss any issues that may have arisen from the previous day, plan daily activities and discuss voyage progress.

Animals were fed three times per day. Crew were observed to be constantly checking on animals throughout the day as well as performing other associated tasks such as cleaning. Night watchmen worked throughout the night in 2 hour shifts to keep cattle under constant observation and remedy any problems.

Feed and water

Cattle had ad lib access to water. Water was automatically dispensed and troughs routinely cleaned, as well as cleaned if observed to be contaminated at other times. Cattle were fed in the morning, mid-afternoon and late afternoon. Pelleted feed was dispensed through an automatic delivery system, as well as manually into extra feed troughs placed in all pens. Feed consumption increased throughout the voyage except for a period of 24 hours on the third day when cattle were adjusting to slightly rougher seas. Consumption increased as conditions improved. Chaff was also available and fed manually to encourage shy feeders and animals in hospital pens to eat.

Ventilation

No issues were observed with the ventilation and no animals were observed to be affected adversely from heat stress. Deck temperature and humidity levels were recorded daily by the CO. The highest temperature recorded on a deck was 32°C this was the same as the temperature recorded on the bridge at the same time.

Pen conditions

Pen conditions remained good throughout the voyage; very little faecal contamination was observed on animals from lying down in the pens. Wood shavings were used on an ad-hoc basis in hospital pens and in pens which had accidental water spills. Decks were washed on day 8 and 9 of the voyage.

Health and welfare

All personnel worked collectively to ensure the welfare of the shipment. Animals observed to be showing signs of lameness or illness were placed into hospital pens and given treatment, additional fodder and bedding. Thirty-five animals were placed into hospital pens with the majority showing mild signs of lameness, all improved following treatment and were discharged.

Three mortalities occurred throughout the voyage, all had been isolated into hospital pens and treated for symptoms of pneumonia however did not respond to treatment.

Discharge

Discharge was conducted at two ports. No animal welfare issues were observed at either port and all animals on board were successfully discharged.

Conclusion

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](#) requirements. The observer did not note any animal welfare concerns. The crew work well together to ensure positive animal welfare outcomes.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 4 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

