

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Ute*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in June 2019

Report 151, November 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 3,732 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Ocean Ute* at Townsville between 26 and 27 June 2019. The vessel departed on 27 June 2019. The vessel discharged the cattle at Hon La, Vietnam between 8 and 10 July 2019 making this a 15 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.03% (1 mortality). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The cause of this mortality 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 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 configuration of the loading ramps and races were set up well for the smooth loading of the cattle. The cattle were observed to have a good temperament and loaded well. Appropriate equipment such as cattle talkers were used when handling the livestock.

The livestock were given water immediately on loading and feed soon after. There was bedding laid in the races and ramps, to prevent foot and hoof injuries, of a thickness and durability suitable when loading the cattle.

There were no welfare incidents observed during loading.

Personnel

Two LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) accompanied this voyage. The stockpersons were observed to make objective and measurable decisions about the health and welfare of the livestock. They were active in disease recognition and treatment, liaising with the

crew about feeding regimes and restocking pens and supervised the loading and discharge process correcting any actions deemed unsuitable immediately.

The crew worked well feeding and watering the livestock and advised the stockpersons when animals required attention and recommended feeding times and washout times to the stockpersons. The observer noted there were sufficient crew to maintain all livestock services during the voyage.

Daily routine

A livestock management meeting was held each day and was attended by the master, Chief Officer (CO), boson, stockpersons and observer. Topics discussed included temperature, feed and water consumption, treatments, stocking density and pen reallocation.

The cattle were fed 3 times daily and the crew continually maintained essential livestock systems such as water reticulation and the semi-automated feed system.

There were 3 night-watch shifts of 4 hours each. The night watch person was observed walking the decks at least 4 times during their watch, completing tasks such as returning feed troughs to rails, removing contamination from feed and water bowls and feeding extra chaff to hospital penned animals. They actioned repair issues such as leaking pipes immediately or made a note to be actioned by the morning crew.

Feed and water

The observer noted the cattle were preconditioned to the feed well and ate most of what was provided to them. No shy feeders were observed. Animals that appeared to be losing weight were separated and given additional nutrition.

Some fodder wastage occurred due to the method of fodder stowage. Fodder wastage resulted from troughs knocked off pen rails, spillage when the animals ate and the removal of faecal contaminated fodder from troughs and stockpiles.

Water was reticulated to automatic nose bowls within each pen and they were kept free from contamination and were appropriately maintained. Cattle were observed to adapt to this type of watering system and no evidence of dehydration or panting scores above the normal level were observed.

Ventilation

The ventilation system worked well throughout the voyage. Ventilation on this vessel was suitable and effective in increasing the comfort levels of the livestock. There were some areas where temperatures were higher due to solar radiation on metal surfaces of the vessel and areas close to the fuel heating tanks and the engine room, no signs of heat stress were observed.

Dry bulb temperature reached a maximum of 34°C with a maximum wet bulb of 31°C with 86% humidity.

Pen conditions

The lower decks were washed on day 10 of the voyage. Deck wash out did not occur on the remaining decks as pad conditions remained acceptable throughout the voyage.

The stocking density for light cattle in a number of pens did not comply with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)* requirements. The stockpersons and crew adjusted the stocking density through pen reallocation, although the observer noted they were still outside the ASEL requirements. The animals in these pens were observed to have less room to access feed and water. There were no obvious stress indicators observed as a result of this density.

Health and welfare

All veterinary medication use was well documented and was administered in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.

The observer noted that the stockpersons intervened early and were well trained and observant when diagnosing issues. Any issues identified were immediately dealt with through regular and targeted administration of on-board veterinary medicines. If needed, animals were segregated into available hospital pens for closer monitoring and treatment. There was 1 mortality due to Bovine Respiratory Disease.

The observer noted the cattle were handled and treated in accordance with the ASEL requirements and there were no health and welfare issues observed during the voyage.

Discharge

The discharge went well with local staff observed treating the cattle appropriately and there were no animal welfare issues observed.

Conclusion

The animals were observed to discharge in a good condition and displayed a good temperament throughout the voyage.

There were no welfare incidents observed at loading, during the voyage and during discharge.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 2 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 11 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

