# Independent Observer summary report on MV *Girolando Express*

## Cattle exported to Indonesia in July 2019

**Report 153, December 2019**

### Voyage summary

A consignment of 3,403 cattle was loaded on the MV *Girolando Express* at the Port of Darwin between 3 and 4 July 2019. The vessel departed on 4 July 2019. The vessel discharged at the Port of Jakarta, Indonesia between 8 and 11 July 2019, making this a 9-day voyage.

An Independent Observer (observer) boarded the vessel at Darwin, then remained on board until completion of discharge.

There were no mortalities during the voyage.

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 in place to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge, including contingencies.

#### Loading

The cattle were not strictly loaded in accordance with the load plan with some minor adjustments made in the first few days to improve stocking densities. Stocking density was within the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 (version 2.3)* (ASEL) requirements. The cattle were fed immediately after loading, and had access to water in accordance with ASEL. All cattle in each pen had access to feed troughs and room to move freely to and from trough locations. The observer noted 50% of cattle could lie down at a time in each pen. No animal welfare issues were observed during loading.

#### Personnel

There was a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) on board responsible for implementing the exporters' procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage. The stockperson was experienced in livestock vessel voyages, and had a good knowledge of on-board management of cattle.

The stockperson and the crew worked throughout the voyage to maintain animal health and welfare according to the ASEL requirements.

The livestock crew were competent in the handling of cattle. The crew were even-tempered, calm, and quiet when moving through the decks. The Chief Officer (CO) and Bosun were approachable and responsive to questions and concerns. Communication between them and the stockperson was clear.

## Daily routine

Each morning, the stockperson would go through the decks, emptying fines from troughs, and cleaning nose bowls prior to the crew distributing the morning feed. The stockperson would then move through the decks observing the cattle and administering treatments as necessary. This procedure was repeated in the afternoon.

At 10:00am every day a management meeting was held and was attended by the CO, Boson, and stockperson. Topics of discussion included watering; ensuring that nose bowls and troughs were free of contamination; feed and feed trough management; and pen density. The cattle were fed three time each day.

The night watch comprised one crew member for each of four four-hour shift between 4:00pm and 8:00am. Duties included ensuring that water troughs and feed troughs were kept clean, monitor the cattle; and report to the bridge if any cattle were injured or trapped.

## Feed and water

The vessel feeding system delivered pellets to each deck, and the crew would manually fill troughs. Troughs that were located under the floor grates were continually contaminated with falling debris from the deck above, which made the feed in these troughs unpalatable to the cattle. The observer noted that these troughs were usually still almost full before the next morning's feeding. This impacted on the welfare of the cattle in the effected pens by reducing their access to feed. When these troughs were cleaned of debris, the cattle would immediately commence eating, which indicated that their consumption had been reduced by the contamination.

Pelletised feed and chaff was loaded slightly in excess of ASEL requirements for a 4-day voyage, however, the observer noted that some cattle were on the vessel for 9 days. This was mainly due to a delay in berthing of the vessel, then slow unloading of the cattle that took 63 hours meant that during days 6–9 there was insufficient feed to supply the cattle according to ASEL requirements.

The Department of Agriculture raised the issue of insufficient feed with the exporter. The exporter identified the best way to deal with the issue was to source local feed, and therefore arranged the loading of approximately 10 tonnes of supplementary feed at the port. During days 6–9, the cattle displayed behaviour such as vocalisation and excessive licking of empty troughs, which indicated a degree of hunger.

The vessel produced an adequate volume of water by reverse osmosis. Water was available in nose bowls in each pen and in a plastic trough for each pen that was manually filled by the crew.

## Ventilation

Ventilation on each deck was supplied via two supply lines and two exhaust lines for each hold. Decks 5 and 4 had six supply lines and six exhaust lines, Decks 1, 2 and 3 had four supply lines

and four exhaust lines. Air flow was directed into pens via a ducting system. Ventilation was consistent and sufficient on all decks.

Temperature readings were taken each day on each deck between 9:30am and 10:00am using a sling psychrometer. The maximum dry bulb temperature recorded was 30 °C, and the maximum wet bulb temperature was 27 °C. The highest humidity recorded was 79%. The observer did not see any evidence of heat stress in the cattle during the voyage.

### Pen conditions

Pad conditions were good in the majority of pens. There were several areas around the engine room and the aft of the vessel that were hotter, although cattle in these pens did not exhibit any symptoms of heat stress.

Deck washing was not undertaken due to the short duration of the voyage.

## Health and welfare

As described above, the cattle exhibited signs of hunger on days 6–9 during the prolonged period of berthing and unloading and the observer noted the welfare of the animals was impacted at this time. The issue of the contamination of feed in troughs that were located under floor grates which made the feed unpalatable, and therefore reducing the access of those cattle to suitable feed also contributed to level of feed available.

Apart for the issues experienced due to the prolonged period of discharge, the health and welfare of the cattle was good with very few animals presenting with illness or injury.

Three cattle were treated for lameness, and one was treated after having been trampled by other cattle in the pen. All the cattle were discharged without incident.

## Discharge

Discharge took approximately 63 hours which contributed significantly to the shortage of feed for the cattle. However the cattle were handled quietly and calmly by the vessel's crew, and there were no injuries during discharge.

## Conclusion

The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements up to the point of unexpected delay during unloading.

## Representative photographs of the voyage

**Day 1 Cattle in pen – no issues identified**


**Day 2 Cattle in pen – no issues identified**


**Day 3 Cattle in pen – no issues identified**


**Day 5 Pad – no issues identified**


**Day 8 Pad – no issues identified**


**Day 8 Cattle in pen – no issues identified**