

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Gudali Express*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in August 2019

Report 174, November 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 2,495 feeder cattle were loaded on the *MV Gudali Express* at Townsville on 20 August 2019 and departed in the evening. The vessel discharged the cattle at Phu My, Vietnam, between 30 and 31 August 2019, making this a 12-day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.12% (3 mortalities), which does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of the mortalities were 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 according to the load plan, which was compliant with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 (version 2.3)* ([ASEL](#)) requirements. After loading additional space remained available which enabled the pen densities to be eased over a 2 day period. The cattle were observed to have sufficient space to access feed and water and no animal welfare issues were noted during loading.

Personnel

The LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) who accompanied the voyage was responsible for implementing the exporters' procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage. The stockperson had many years of experience working on livestock export vessels, and worked well with the bosun, the livestock crew, Chief Officer (CO), and the master.

The master of the vessel was observed walking through all the decks on a daily basis. The livestock crew took care of cattle on the five decks which included manual feeding; cleaning nose bowls and floors and monitoring the cattle. The crew were experienced in cattle management and it was observed that they made the welfare of the cattle was a high priority.

Daily routine

A meeting was held daily at 7:15am between the bosun and the livestock crew to discuss the forthcoming day's work schedule. The cattle were fed 3 times a day which included a feed of chaff at 10:30am. The livestock crew's working day finished at 5:00pm.

A management meeting was held each day at 10:00am and was attended by the master, CO, bosun, stockperson and the observer to discuss feeding watering, pad conditions, treatments, expected time of arrival and any other relevant issues. The stockperson walked around the decks before breakfast for a brief inspection, then after breakfast assessed each pen, standing all the cattle to check for lameness and any other issues. The stockperson administered treatments where necessary. The stockperson undertook further checks in the afternoon up until 5:30pm and reported any issues to the bosun.

Two night watch crew shared the night watch arrangements from 6:00pm to 6:00am. Duties included monitoring the cattle, water nose bowls, feed and any other issues as they arose.

Feed and water

Fodder pellets were fed automatically through chutes to the decks and then were manually bagged by the livestock crew and delivered to the troughs at each pen. The pelletised feed was of good quality with little to no fines.

Three troughs were available in each pen, which was adequate. Feed that fell to the floor was swept up during cleaning, and added to the pens to firm up the pads. Feed troughs were emptied each morning before feeding commenced, or as instructed by the stockperson.

Water was of good quality, and the livestock crew tested salinity levels twice daily. Two nose bowls were available per pen. The nose bowls were automatically cleaned out at each feeding. No manual watering into troughs was needed until discharge. One nose bowl was seen to overflow, which when detected, was rectified within 15 minutes by applying sawdust to soak up the water.

Ventilation

Ventilation was supplied by a series of vertical pipes that circulated fresh air into each pen through holes in each pipe at appropriate locations. The same system was used to extract stale air from all decks which worked well. There were no hot spots located on any deck, and no issues were noted.

A sling psychrometer was used to measure temperature and humidity. Maximum temperature was 30 °C, and maximum humidity was 80%.

Pen conditions

The pads developed to a maximum depth of approximately 10 cm on decks 3, 4 and 5. Decks 1 and 2 were washed out on day 8 on the stockperson's instructions. All pads remained firm throughout the voyage.

Wood shavings for bedding was supplied to the heavy cattle on Deck 5. These pens were lightly stocked so there was room for the cattle to move around.

Cattle had sufficient space to lie down at a rate greater than the 50% by the ASEL requirements.

Health and welfare

The stockperson identified cattle that needed treatment, and administered treatments in a simple and quick manner, with no issues noted.

Three mortalities were recorded on the voyage. The post-mortem examination of two cattle found an advanced stage of pneumonia that had likely been present before loading. One downer animal was euthanised humanely at discharge.

No cattle needed to be moved to the hospital pens during the voyage. The veterinary equipment and drug supply were in accordance with the ASEL requirements.

'Typhoon Jenny' 300 nautical miles to the west caused two days of rough weather when the vessel crossed the South China Sea, but there was no significant impact on cattle welfare.

Discharge

Discharge proceeded smoothly. All livestock had access to clean water and fodder during discharge. One downer animal was euthanised at the end of discharge in a humane way with a captive bolt gun.

No animal health or welfare issues were observed as a result of the discharge of the consignment.

Conclusion

The observer noted that the stockpersons and the crew ensured that the health and welfare of the cattle were maintained during the voyage.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 2 Heavy cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 6 Pad – no issues identified



Day 9 Heavy cattle in pen – no issues identified

