Independent Observer summary report on MV *Bahijah*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in September 2019

Report 187, January 2020

Voyage summary

A consignment of 5,990 cattle was loaded onto the MV *Bahijah* at the Port of Fremantle between 18 and 19 September 2019. The vessel departed on 20 September 2019. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Eilat, Israel between 7 and 8 October 2019, making this a 20 day voyage.

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

The overall mortality rate for the voyage was 0.05% (3 cattle). This 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 have been approved by the observer that 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

During the loading process livestock crew personnel were available to ensure husbandry and welfare needs were addressed. Experienced stockpersons and crew were available to load the ship in a manner that prevented injury and minimised stress to the animals. Cattle were provided with feed and water within 12 hours as required under the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 (version 2.3)* (ASEL) requirements.

The observer has clarified that approximately 95% of pens were loaded in compliance with the load plan. Adjustments were made during the voyage to ensure all pens complied with the ASEL minimum space requirements. The majority of adjustments made over the first four days. No adverse animal welfare impacts were observed.

Personnel

There was an Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV), and a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) and an unaccredited stockperson on-board the vessel. The AAV,

stockperson and the crew managed the health and welfare well, including the treatment of animals in hospital pens and humane euthanasia when required.

The master, Chief Officer (CO), the bosun and the livestock crew inspected and maintained feed and water rations and pen conditions throughout the decks, cleaned the aisles and notified the stockperson/AAV of any issues.

The livestock crew were experienced, capable and receptive to instructions from the CO and boson as well as requests from the AAV and stock assistants. The officers on-board, especially the Master and CO, were highly effective and co-operative with an emphasis on the welfare of the livestock.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held each day at 10:00am and were attended by the CO, AAV, stock-persons, boson and the observer to review on board operations to ensure the health and welfare of livestock. Topics discussed included feed trends, treatments required/performed, fodder calculations and wash day plans.

The nightwatch crew patrolled decks each hour. Their duties included monitoring the welfare of the stock, updating the officer on over watch and filling out a watch log after every duty. The nightwatch regime did not include cleaning soiled water troughs. The observer noted the AAV raised this issue at a daily meeting and the water trough cleaning regime improved during the voyage.

Feed and water

Pelleted fodder was held in two large silos. The fodder was automatically delivered from the silos to chutes located throughout each deck. The crew then manually transported the fodder from the chutes to feed troughs using twenty litre carry drums. The observer noted that feed was loaded in excess of ASEL requirements.

Fresh drinking water was produced through reverse osmosis plants and was provided to automatic steel water troughs located on the outside rails of each pen.

The cattle appeared to have a generally good appetite during the voyage. The livestock had adequate access to feed troughs and water troughs during loading, discharge and for the duration of the voyage. The animals did not display a reluctance to use the feed and water troughs. For the most part of the voyage the water in the troughs appeared clean, cool and fresh. Adequate water pressure could be seen coming from the float valve to fill the trough.

Some swinging gates in some pens were observed denying some animals access to feed and water troughs for short periods. This was corrected in the first two days at sea.

Ventilation

The ventilation functioned consistently and effectively over the voyage. The observer noted that an intake tower located very close to the open engine room doors increased temperatures in pens behind the engine room on Decks 5, 6 and 7. However, the livestock did not appear to be adversely affected.

Temperatures were taken and recorded once a day by the crew with a handheld meter connected to a data logger. The meter measured and logged real time dry bulb, wet bulb and

calculated humidity. Two meters were located on each deck, one on the forward starboard side and one and the port aft side.

Dry bulb temperatures ranged between 18 °C and 27 °C over the first ten days. Whilst increasing to an average of 31 °C during the last 8 days of the voyage. Wet bulb temperatures were approximately 24 °C over the first ten days, whilst climbing to an average of 29 °C over the last eight days.

Pen conditions

For most of the voyage the pads remained firm and dry. The cleaning was thorough and worked well to maintain acceptable pen conditions and support animal welfare.

During the first two days of the voyage, some pens in the rear half of Deck 5 and some pens on Deck 6 were flooded by sea water during heavy sea conditions. The AAV and master were proactive in moving animals from pens adversely affected by the big sea swells. Livestock that were removed from the flooded pens and boxed with other cattle made some pen densities tight over these three days until the animals were moved back to the dry pens. Once the pens had drained and dried, fresh sawdust was applied, and the cattle were returned to the pens.

Deck washing was undertaken on four occasions. Overall, the cattle responded well to wash down of pens. The wash was generally split over two days with the open decks getting washed first and the enclosed decks washed on the second day. Bedding comprising of sawdust and shavings was reapplied post wash down and only after the final wash.

Cattle pens and pads were maintained well throughout the journey with a well planned and executed washing regime. Bedding was loaded in excess of ASEL requirements. During loading and discharge, bedding was used to line ramps and lane ways. Bedding was also applied initially to all pen floors and used in the hospital pens to improve pad condition as required.

Health and welfare

There were 3 mortalities during the voyage. Two mortalities occurred on day 1. One animal suffered a fractured leg and was euthanased, the second animal died of heart failure and the third animal was euthanased due to suffering from a neurological disease (Polioenephalomalacia).

A small number of animals were treated in the hospital pens by the AAV for swelling in the fore legs, whilst a pen was made to house some lighter weight cattle that were shy feeders. This greatly benefited the welfare and condition of these livestock.

Overall, the cattle were provided with adequate feed, water and supervision during the voyage and the crew handled the cattle calmly and humanely. The cattle had a low stress voyage, very low mortality rate, maintained condition and appeared to gain weight.

Discharge

The livestock crew prepared for discharge by applying fresh sawdust to the ramps, continued to feed and water the livestock and arrange the discharge gates. Unloading was performed swiftly and efficiently with no health or welfare concerns observed during the process.

Conclusion

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 3 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 9 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 13 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 17 Cattle in pen—no issues identified