

# Independent Observer summary report on MV Yangtze Harmony

## Cattle exported to Vietnam in December 2019

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Report 209, July 2020

### Voyage summary

A consignment of 3,005 head of cattle was loaded at Fremantle between 12 and 13 December 2019. The vessel departed on 13 December 2019. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Thi Vai, Vietnam, between 21 and 22 December 2019, making this an 11 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.43% (13 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate.

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

Loading was completed over a two day period with one animal requiring euthanasia due to a broken leg. The cattle were provided feed and water within 12 hours of loading as per [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 \(version 2.3\)](#) (ASEL) requirements.

#### Personnel

The LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) on-board the vessel was experienced and was responsible for implementing the exporters' procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage. The stockperson, Chief Officer (CO) and crew had an effective working relationship.

There was sufficient livestock crew for the daily duties and looking after the welfare of the cattle.

## **Daily routine**

The crew commenced the feeding at 6:30am followed by cleaning and repairing of water troughs as required once feeding had been completed. Two more feeding rounds were conducted at 1:00 pm and 3:30 pm in conjunction with welfare checks of the animals.

A management meeting was held each morning and was attended by the CO, head stockperson and the observer. Topics discussed were dependent on the stockperson's needs including animal welfare, mortalities and any adjustments to the feeding and watering schedules.

There were two night watchpersons assigned, each to a 6 hour shift between 6:00pm and 6:00am. During these shifts crew would conduct welfare checks of the cattle and clean and fill water bowls and troughs.

## **Feed and water**

Cattle received 3 full feeds each day. Contaminants and fines were removed from feed troughs daily. On the washdown days, the cattle penned on the relevant decks were fed twice.

Water was available via an automatic system with each trough having a float valve to gauge the level of water that went into each trough, and a gate valve to limit the flow into each trough. Water troughs were maintained throughout day and night shifts.

Some cattle did not have access to feed and water for up to 7 hours as the feed and water troughs were removed from the pens during the wash down. However, the observer reported that this didn't cause any adverse animal welfare issues for the cattle.

## **Ventilation**

The observer did not note any issues with ventilation. Both the side and top doors were left open for added air flow. Temperature readings were taken each day.

## **Pen conditions**

Sawdust was available to manage pen conditions if required. During the voyage, the pen conditions went from good to friable, with some pens muddy prior to wash down which commenced on Day 8, being completed over a two day period. The pen condition was restored following wash down, with sawdust being applied in some pens, and the ramps between the decks.

## **Health and welfare**

The general health and welfare of the cattle was good, with the cattle loaded observed to be in good condition.

The hosing down of the pen floor during wash down on decks 6 to 8 was noted to frighten some older cattle, causing them to jam against the rails resulting in some injuries. The affected cattle manifested a stress response in the form of elevated pant score of 1 to 3. The elevated pant score was not associated with any heat stress event. Approximately 80% of the cattle on Decks 6 to 8 were observed to have a pant score of 3 with open mouth breathing for a duration of 30 minutes to 2 hours following the wash down. During wash down, a total of 13 cattle received injuries, or developed pneumonia following wash down. Of these, 8 did not recover from and were euthanased prior to discharge. The remaining 5 cattle recovered and were discharged.

## **Conclusion**

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

## Representative photographs of the voyage

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



**Day 2 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**

