Independent Observer summary report on MV *Ganado Express*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in November 2018

Report 41, August 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 2,507 cattle were loaded onto the MV *Ganado Express* in Townsville on 22 and 23 November 2018. The vessel departed on the morning of 23 November 2018. The cattle were discharged at Phu My, Vietnam on 3 December 2018 making this a 12 day voyage.

An independent observer (observer) boarded the vessel in Townsville and remained on board until completion of discharge.

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.12% (three mortalities). The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable mortality rate as stated in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* (ASEL). 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 from the observer that accompanied the voyage. The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied this voyage.

Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

Exporter Documentation

Exporter arrangements were available addressing procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge and contingencies. The instructions included in the arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements.

Loading

The observer noted that the cattle were not loaded in strict accordance with the load plan. Some cattle were initially loaded into pens identified as hospital pens. Over the course of the first two days, the numbers of cattle in some pens was adjusted to eliminate the chance of overcrowding and to create extra space for cattle to lie down as per the ASEL requirements. Hospital pens were made available for sick animals if required.

Personnel

A very experienced Livecorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the consignment and was responsible for the health and welfare of the livestock. The stockperson demonstrated a genuine care of the livestock and was constantly monitoring the cattle and looking for signs of lameness, injuries, checking water and feed availability.

Daily routine

The crew worked on a four hour rotating system 24 hours per day monitoring the cattle for injuries, feed and water provision, cleaning feed troughs and water bowls.

A daily meeting was held at 10.00am every day and involved the Chief Officer, Bosun, stockperson, and observer. The attendees discussed cattle conditions, feed, water, welfare issues, findings from the previous day and the ASEL requirements.

Feed and water

The livestock were fed three times per day at 7.00am, 10.30am and 3.30pm. Chaff was fed to the cattle starting a few days after the voyage commenced, and ceased two days before arrival.

The observer noted that the crew and stockperson were constantly monitoring to ensure the water bowls were full and clean.

Ventilation

The ventilation system comprises of ducted supply to all decks. Temperature recordings were taken each afternoon. The observer reported that average dry bulb temperatures were 29 to 30 degrees Celsius, wet bulb 26 to 27 degrees Celsius and humidity averaged 79%.

Pen conditions

Pad conditions were monitored each day by the stockperson and bosun. Pens were washed on Day 7 of the voyage. The build-up of the pad was not causing distress to the cattle before wash down.

Health and welfare

Any lame animals were removed from pens and placed into hospital pens for monitoring and treatment.

There were three mortalities which occurred prior to leaving Australian waters. Two of the cattle were spooked by the feeding process and fractured their leg when it was caught on the pen rails. The cattle were euthanased by the stockperson. These two cattle were in the 500 to 700 kilograms bodyweight range and were euthanised using a captive bolt that did not appear to be powerful enough for the size and breed of the cattle. The stockperson showed experience in technique and placement of the captive bolt, however both cattle required six applications of the captive bolt.

The third mortality was a sudden death. The cause of this mortality was not definitively established.

Discharge

The observer did not identify any issues associated with discharge.

Conclusion

The stockperson and crew constantly monitored the animals health and welfare. Access to feed and clean water, pen conditions and ventilation were satisfactory throughout the voyage.

The department has addressed with the exporter a breach of the procedures to ensure health and welfare of the livestock in relation to the euthanasia of the two cattle and the effectiveness of the captive bolt utilised.

The exporter was unable to determine why the captive bolt was initially ineffective on these occasions. The exporter was able to confirm the vessel is equipped with three suitably rated and maintained captive bolts and that when the enquiry was made the activators (charges) carried on board were suitable for large bulls. The Master and stockperson were unable to recall what class of activators were available or used on this particular voyage.

The department confirmed that the independent observer has experience observing captive bolt application and was confident that the technique and placement utilised was appropriate.

Subsequent independent observer reports from the *Ganado Express* have not indicated any issues regarding ineffective captive bolt euthanasia. The department has provided all livestock exporters with information on best practice euthanasia options in a minuted industry forum.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 4 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 8 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 12 Cattle discharge—no issues identified