

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Gloucester Express*

Cattle exported to China in January 2019

Report 61, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 1,752 cattle were loaded onto the *MV Gloucester Express* at Fremantle on 8 January 2019. The vessel departed in the morning of the 9 January 2019. The vessel discharged the cattle at the port of Huanghua, China on 22 and 23 January 2019, making this a 16 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.06% (1 mortality). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The cause of the mortality was 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 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

The loading of the vessel was supervised by the LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson), Chief Officer (CO) and bosun without incident. The loading was completed efficiently whilst maintaining animal welfare. There were no issues with stocking densities or location of livestock against the load plan. Animals were fed pellets within an hour of loading.

Personnel

An experienced stockperson accompanied the voyage. The stockperson was vigilant with the handling and welfare of the animals and had provided good care of the cattle on board. The bosun and the crew were very professional, experienced and performed their duties with efficiency and diligence regarding animal welfare.

Daily routine

A meeting was held every day at 7:00am and involved the CO, bosun, the crew and the observer. The discussions covered the destination arrival time, feeding instructions, any issues identified and the dispersal of sawdust.

A crew member performed night watchperson duties for each night of the voyage including checking the welfare of the cattle and filling nose bowls.

Feed and water

Feed consisted of pellets and chaff. The cattle were fed three times per day at 6:00am, 10:30am and 3:30pm with top ups of pellets throughout the day or when needed. Chaff was fed at 10:30 each day.

The water was supplied to the cattle in each pen by either one or two nose bowls. The crew checked the nose bowls at feeding time and were filled as needed. Water was accessible at all times.

The observer did not find any issues with the feeding or watering system on the vessel.

Ventilation

The ventilation system consists of six supply units and three filtered exhaust units. The supply units fed air into all decks and pens using thick PVC piping. During the hotter days, the hatches above Deck 5 were open to provide greater air circulation. The hatches were closed when the weather was cold. The observer detected exhaust fumes on Deck 5 on a very small number of occasions, which only occurred when the wind changed direction. There was no issue with the ventilation system during the voyage.

The pens on Decks 4 and 5 adjacent to the engine room were hotter than other areas on the vessel.

The dry and wet bulb temperature was taken daily on each deck at 11.00am.

Pen conditions

The observer noted the pad varied due to location, density or type of cattle. The pens with bulls built up more rapidly than other areas. Towards the end of the voyage, some pens were boggy with small puddles. The stockperson advised the crew to spread sawdust into the wetter pens which resulted in an improved condition of the pad. Overall the conditions on all decks were good due to the constant monitoring and remedial actions by the stockperson and crew.

Health and welfare

During the voyage there was 1 mortality and one animal was treated for lameness and responded to treatment. The hospital pens remained empty for the voyage with exception of one pen which was used to lessen stocking density and improve access to feed and water.

The crew closely observed the cattle during feeding time and any issues noted were reported to the bosun or to the stockperson.

Discharge

The unloading of the cattle was efficient and the health and welfare of the animals was maintained throughout the unloading. The crew spread fodder and bedding along the laneways and ramps to prevent slipping. The crew and stockperson worked as a team with adequate communication throughout the loading process.

Conclusion

The stockperson and crew were very professional and experienced with animal welfare a priority. The stockperson and all crew members followed relevant procedures consistent with *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)*.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 4 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 12 Cattle in pen – lower stocking density

