

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Dareen*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in February 2019

Report 89, September 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 4,170 cattle were loaded onto the *MV Dareen* at the Port of Alma on 28 February 2019. The vessel departed on the morning of 1 March 2019. The vessel discharged at Port Haiphong, Vietnam between 13 and 14 March 2019, making this a 15 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.48% (20 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of these 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.

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

There were competent and experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) and crew to load the vessel in a manner that prevented injury and minimised stress. However one animal was euthanised due to a fractured leg during loading. The crew provided water and feed to the cattle well within 12 hours of loading.

The observer noted that approximately 70% of pens had more space per head that required in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements. Approximately 30% of the pens had stocking density above the ASEL minimum requirements. Some pens were adjusted to provide the minimum space in accordance with ASEL requirements however, at the end of the voyage some of the pens with higher stocking density had not been adjusted.

Personnel

Two stockpersons accompanied the voyage. The vessel is operated by 42 officers and crew. There were 27 crew delivering livestock services including provision of feed, water and handling

the animals appropriately and humanely. The Chief Officer (CO) was observed actively involved on decks working with the bosun and the crew, liaising with the stockpersons and master on all issues.

Daily routine

A management meeting was held each day at 11:30am and involved the Master (on several occasions), CO and the stockpersons. The attendees discussed the estimated time of arrival, route logistics, mortalities, treatments, temperatures recordings, pen conditions, health, fodder and water consumption.

Two crew members performed night watchpersons duties each night of the voyage.

Feed and water

In general, the crew maintained full troughs of fodder and clean drinking water daily. The cattle were fed pellets four times per day at 7:00am, 10:30am, 1:00pm and 8:30pm. Chaff was also fed at 3:30pm each day.

During the voyage, a handful of water troughs were observed empty at various times usually intentionally turned off for repair by the vessel's fitter. The repair was usually completed within 2 hours.

No issues were noted with feeding or water supply to the cattle.

Ventilation

The enclosed below Decks 1 to 5 were well ventilated by ducted air and industrial fans. The open Decks 6 to 9 were ventilated by ducted air, industrial fans and natural airflow.

There was one fixed thermometer per deck which were read three times a day. The lower decks (1 -5) reached a maximum temperature of 30°C to 32°C and 79% humidity during the voyage. However, one area on Deck 4 was hotter and was observed to have a constant temperature of 33°C (dry bulb) and 30°C (wet bulb). Additional ventilation was added to Deck 4 because of the adjacent heat-producing engine funnel.

The upper decks (6-9) recorded maximum temperatures of 26 -29°C and 78% humidity.

Heat stress was not observed in the cattle.

Pen conditions

The pad on all decks built up during the first 6 days of the voyage developing from slightly wet to a soft thick pad of approximately 30 cm depth. The decks were washed down on two occasions during the voyage.

Regular trough leaks made some pens on Deck 2 sloppy. Repairs were normally done within a couple of hours. Sawdust was applied to the worst of the pens.

The upper open decks maintained a dryer more friable pad during the voyage.

Health and welfare

There were 20 mortalities during the voyage. The cause of the mortalities was not definitively confirmed but most were attributed to respiratory disease, bloat or trauma.

The stockpersons and crew were observed using low stress stock handling methods during loading, discharge and when moving cattle on the vessel. They used cattle prods and other aids with care and were patient and skilled while working with cattle.

The stockpersons inspected the cattle daily and otherwise relied on the crew to observe and report sick or injured animals that required treatments.

In the pens with the lower stocking densities, nearly all cattle were observed to be able to lay down at any one time. In the pens with stocking densities which met the ASEL standards, approximately 50% of cattle were observed laying down at any one time. In the pens with higher stocking densities, only 20% or less were observed laying down at any one time.

Hospital pens were available on each deck but only 5 of the 9 hospital pens were kept for hospital use. The remainder were used to hold healthy cattle for the duration of the voyage.

During the voyage, sick or injured cattle were identified, isolated where necessary and treated promptly. Written records of the numbers and treatments administered were not kept by the stockperson. The stockpersons daily report did not include details of numbers in hospital pens, nature of illness, and treatments. In general, the cattle were treated for respiratory disease, lameness, eye disease and injuries. Fourteen cattle were held in the hospital pen during the voyage but other cattle were treated in their holding pen.

Discharge

The discharge was undertaken in a timely and professional manner. The stockperson and crew were observed to use low stress handling methods to unload the cattle.

Conclusion

Apart from some stocking density issues which were not compliant with the ASEL requirements, the crew and the stockpersons provided adequate fodder and water to the cattle, pens were well ventilated, drained and cleaned. The cattle were carefully and appropriately handled during the voyage.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen - higher stocking density



Day 5 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen - higher stocking density



Day 10 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 12 Cattle in pen - no issues identified

