



**Australian Government**

**Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service**

## **Investigation into the cattle mortality level for the voyage from Broome to Pasar Gudang Malaysia July 2006**

### **1. Purpose**

To report on the investigation into the cause of the mortalities of one consignment of cattle loaded in July 2006 and to make recommendations with the aim of preventing a recurrence.

### **2. Summary**

The cause of the number of mortalities of this consignment was investigated. There were seven deaths from the 478 cattle loaded which equates to a mortality rate of 1.47%. The reportable level for long haul cattle voyages is 1%. The vessel was loaded with 16,195 cattle and overall there were 23 mortalities in the cattle which equates to a mortality rate of 0.14%.

The stockman reported that four of the seven deaths were recorded as pneumonia. The other three animals died of common (but unrelated) causes of deaths in cattle.

The vessel was loaded with multiple consignments from different exporters.

### **3. Background**

This investigation into the mortality was carried out by reviewing the following information:

1. accredited stockman end of voyage report
2. report from the exporter.
3. Notice of Intention and Consignment risk management plan from the exporter.

This report covers only the cattle loaded by one exporter. The remainder of livestock on the voyage did not have a reportable mortality event.

The cattle were held at the registered premises between 14 and 20 July 2006. The exporter reported there were no reportable mortality events at the registered premises.

The cattle were inspected on 18 July by the AQIS accredited veterinarian (AAV).

The cattle were unloaded on the 4 August 2006. The voyage length was 13 days.

**Table 1: Summary of mortalities**

<b>Date</b>		<b>Cause of death</b>
20 July 2006	Loading	
21 July 2006	1 shorthorn heifer died	pneumonia
22 July 2006	2 shorthorn heavy bulls	pneumonia
23 July 2006	1 shorthorn heavy bull	pneumonia
27 July 2006	1 cow died	Foreign body intestine

31 July 2006	1 shorthorn bull	Pneumonia and enteritis
31 July 2006	1 cow	Non feeder

Fodder, water, and environmental conditions were otherwise unremarkable. The exporter has reported that there was no link to the property of origin of the cattle and that the cattle came from several properties.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The contributing cause to the mortalities is likely to be pneumonia.

Shipping fever / Pneumonia is a common cause of illness or mortalities in cattle. Transport is most common predisposing causative factor with pneumonia. Cattle with chronic or sub-clinical pneumonia may not be obvious on visual inspection in a large consignment being prepared for export. Moving cattle may make the cattle with chronic or sub-clinical pneumonia obvious. However in a large group of cattle it is difficult to detect an individual animal with sub-clinical pneumonia. The AAV should examine all cattle closely and reject any with possible pneumonia or which are not in appropriate condition scores specified in the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- . AAVs to closely scrutinize the export of cattle to reduce the chance of mortalities.
- . A repeat of mortalities caused by pneumonia could be managed by vaccination against the organism which commonly causes “shipping fever” in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendation.

#### **Actions**

AQIS recommended research and development be undertaken into on-board pneumonia and the Livestock Export Standards Advisory Committee examines measures relating to managing pneumonia in cattle on export voyages.