

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Yangtze Harmony*

## Cattle exported to Indonesia in March 2019

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Report 103, October 2019

### Voyage summary

A consignment of 4,693 cattle were loaded onto the *MV Yangtze Harmony* at the Port of Townsville between 30 and 31 March 2019. The vessel departed on 31 March 2019. The first discharge was at Jakarta, Indonesia on 8 April 2019, with the remaining cattle discharged at Panjang, Indonesia on 9 April 2019, making this an 11 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.13% (6 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 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 voyage instructions relating to the care and management of the livestock during the voyage were made available, as were relevant specific management plans.

#### Loading

There were sufficient, competent and experienced personnel to load the vessel in a manner that prevented injury and minimised stress on the cattle. No animal welfare incidents were observed. Cattle were provided with feed and water within 12 hours of loading.

A sample taken by the observer of stocking density in pens across all decks, found approximately 80% of the pens met the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* (ASEL) requirements. Around 20% were not compliant with the ASEL minimum space requirements for the class and weight of the cattle transported. Cattle held in these higher stocked pens were observed to work harder to access feed and water with less room to move or lie down. The stockperson readjusted numbers in tight pens early in the voyage when these were brought to his attention.

## **Personnel**

An experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the voyage. The stockperson was competent and diligent with his oversight of the health and welfare of the cattle.

The stockperson and the crew handled the cattle calmly and professionally and were observed using low stress handling methods to load, unload and move animals.

The Chief Officer (CO) took an active role in planning and decision making. The master attended most daily meetings and was seen on the cattle decks on occasions.

## **Daily routine**

The stockperson inspected the cattle at 7:00am each morning and repeated the inspection process in the afternoon. Some of the treated animals remained in their original pen but others were relocated into the hospital pens for care and additional treatments.

Daily adjustments to the number of cattle in some pens were made where necessary.

Meetings were held daily at 10:00am with the CO, bosun, stockperson, observer and often the master. At the meeting, the discussions included cattle mortalities, health, treatments, pen condition, and fodder and water consumption, estimated time of arrival, route logistics and overarching management issues of the voyage.

One night watch person patrolled the decks addressing or reporting to the stockperson or bosun on any issues as they arose.

## **Feed and water**

Pelletised feed was stored in large silos and holding tanks above the decks. Crew collected fodder from multiple chutes on the decks and filled plastic feed troughs that hang on the outside of the pen. Fodder and water supplies were loaded in accordance with ASEL. The cattle were fed pellets at 7:00am, 1:00pm and 3:30pm. Chaff was also fed once per day. The crew emptied and cleaned water and feed troughs before they were filled.

Water was piped to plastic water troughs which hung adjacent to the feed troughs. Water is refilled using an automatic trough float mechanism. Clean water was available during the voyage.

## **Ventilation**

The vessel had eight enclosed decks. Air was circulated to the enclosed cattle decks via overhead pipes with evenly spaced holes directing air into the cattle pens. Ventilation on the vessel was sufficient to keep the cattle comfortable on this voyage.

Temperature and humidity were taken at 10:30 am each day using a hand held device. The temperature and humidity ranges were 31°C – 33°C dry bulb and 74 – 86% humidity throughout the voyage. Humidity was highest on day 9.

## **Pen conditions**

The decks were not washed during the voyage. There were a few trough leaks on the final two days that wet some pens and created sloppy pen conditions. However the vessel's fitter was

observed inspecting troughs and repairing leaks. The pen manure pad was maintained with sawdust added to wet pens and by tipping the remains of unconsumed pellets into the pens. Bedding was loaded in accordance with the ASEL.

### **Health and welfare**

Cattle identified as sick or injured were treated promptly in their original pen or moved to a hospital pen. Sixteen animals were treated in hospital pens for lameness, leg issues or shy feeders.

There were 6 mortalities during the voyage. Three animals were euthanised following injuries and 3 mortalities were attributed to pneumonia, bloat and internal injury. Animals were humanely euthanised when necessary.

The consignment was predominantly *Bos indicus* cattle which appeared to tolerate the hot conditions. Two *Bos taurus* type animals in good condition on Deck 4 were observed from time to time with slightly increased respiratory rate due to hot temperatures and heat from a nearby air conditioning vent.

### **Discharge**

There were sufficient competent, and experienced crew and stockperson available to unload the cattle in a manner that prevented injury and minimised stress on the animals. However, one steer was euthanised after fracturing a leg during discharge.

All cattle had access to feed and water during the discharge process but some leaking troughs caused sloppy pens and humid conditions in the final 24 hours of the voyage.

The cattle were discharged in accordance with the ASEL requirements.

### **Conclusion**

The exporter complied with most aspects of the exporter arrangements. Adequate feed water, ventilation, supervision of stock and treatment of sick and injured animals was provided by competent and experienced staff in accordance with the ASEL.

There were no significant non compliances with the exporter's arrangements for the voyage that impacted on animal welfare.

## Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen — higher stocking density



Day 7 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen — no issues identified

