

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Gloucester Express*

Cattle exported to China in May 2019

Report 124, September 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 3,545 cattle were loaded onto the MV *Gloucester Express* in Geelong between 10 and 11 May 2019. The vessel departed on 11 May 2019. The vessel discharged the cattle at Huanghua, China between 26 and 27 May 2019, making this a 17 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.08 % (3 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. The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

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 observer noted that sawdust was spread over every pen on every deck in accordance with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* [\(ASEL\)](#).

Livestock were loaded according to stowage plans and the observer noted the pens were not overcrowded, complying with minimum pen area in accordance with the ASEL requirements.

Personnel

The LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) who accompanied the voyage was experienced and the observer noted his genuine care for the welfare of the cattle on board.

The stockperson constantly monitored the cattle, always looked for signs of lameness or injuries and attended to the water troughs and making sure that there was feed available at all times.

Daily routine

A management meeting was held each day at around 7:00am. The Chief Officer (CO), bosun, stockperson and observer were present to discuss the conditions for the cattle including feed,

water, welfare issues, and any issues from the previous day. The crew and stockperson also discussed the importance of complying with ASEL requirements.

The crew members that attended to livestock, worked on a 6 hour rotating system, 24 hours per day. They were regularly observed monitoring the cattle's welfare, checking for injuries, feed and water levels and also regularly cleared the alleyways of excess fodder and faecal matter. The observer conducted two night observation checks and observed crew members checking food and water levels and cleaning troughs.

Temperature checks were recorded twice daily at various times each day.

Feed and water

During the voyage the cattle were fed 4 times each day at 7:00am, 10:30am top up, 1:30pm chaff and a 3:30pm full trough feed.

Throughout the voyage and discharge, the livestock were observed to have access to good quality uncontaminated fodder and quality fresh water. Crew were observed regularly checking fodder and water levels.

Ventilation

No issues were identified with the ventilation during the voyage.

The observer noted the crew had hoses flowing on the top deck during a hotter part of the voyage. The observer noted it kept Deck 5 cooler for the comfort of the livestock. No welfare issues were identified during this part of the voyage.

Temperatures on the voyage were recorded at various times throughout the day, with hot and cold temperatures averaging at 19 – 31°C dry bulb, 18 – 28°C wet bulb and humidity at 75 – 79%.

Pen conditions

Pen management was monitored daily by the stockperson and the bosun. During the voyage the stockperson made the decision to wash down all decks. Once wash down was completed, all pens were scattered with sawdust for the comfort of the animals and to adhere to ASEL requirements. Over the next 24 hours all decks dried well due good ventilation access in the pens.

Health and welfare

Three cattle were placed in the hospital pen during the voyage. Treatments were given for lameness, a swollen leg and pneumonia. A cow delivered a premature calf during the voyage, which died shortly after delivery. No other issues were identified.

Discharge

Discharge of the cattle was supervised throughout by the stockperson. The crew and stock handlers were observed continuing to feed and water cattle on board the vessel until they were loaded onto the receiver's trucks. There were no issues during discharge and it was undertaken professionally and with animal welfare as a first priority.

Conclusion

The crew members and the stockperson were professional and very vigilant in ensuring that ASEL requirements were being followed while undertaking their animal husbandry duties on board the vessel.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 13 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 16 Cattle in pen — no issues identified

