

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Yangtze Fortune*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in May 2019

Report 128, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 5,149 cattle were loaded onto the MV *Yangtze Fortune* at the Port of Broome on 18 May 2019. The vessel departed on 18 May 2019. The first discharge was at the Port of Jakarta, Indonesia between 22 and 24 May 2019. The second discharge was at the Port of Panjangan, Indonesia between 24 and 25 May 2019, making this an 8 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.04% (2 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 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 observer monitored loading and no significant welfare incidents were observed. The cattle were handled quietly and appropriately. Water was available at the time of loading and cattle were provided feed shortly after loading.

The observer noted some pens contained more animals and other pens had fewer animals than specified in the load plan, however overall deck numbers were consistent with the load plan. Adjustments were made on Day 2 to balance out pens but some pens remained over-stocked. However, the observer noted there were no impacts on the welfare of the animals. The hospital pens were empty at completion of loading.

Personnel

An experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the voyage to provide care and management of the livestock, reporting, and to ensure compliance with the

Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL) requirements. The stockperson was capable and had a good relationship with the crew.

The observer noted that even though the level of expertise in handling livestock varied amongst the crew, the cattle were handled competently and the crew acted professionally with regard to the welfare of animals.

Daily routine

Each morning the stockperson conducted an inspection of all decks, prior to the daily meeting.

The daily meeting was held at 10:00am and was attended by the bosun, Chief Officer (CO) and the stockperson. Attendees discussed the feeding, watering and any issues that arose. The stockperson used these meetings to help complete the daily report. The CO would add the feed/water calculations and vessel's position to the daily report prior to sending it at midday.

The Stockperson moved through the decks during the day, observing the cattle, noting animals requiring treatment and moving animals between pens if he felt stocking density could be improved.

There were two night watch shifts between 6:00pm and 6:00am. Each shift was staffed by one night watchman. The responsibilities of the night watchman were to maintain water troughs and monitor the cattle.

Feed and water

Fodder was distributed to decks via a conveyor system with chutes to each deck. Crew then manually filled buckets to distribute the feed to the troughs. The crew routinely fed pellets to cattle at 7:00am, 1:00pm and 3:00pm. Chaff was bagged and stored on the top deck on pallets. Chaff was routinely fed at around 10:30am. Crew checked water troughs at all feeding times. Fodder quantities loaded were in excess of ASEL requirements.

The observer noted some troughs were often knocked off the pen rails and became contaminated with manure or fines. To fix the issue of residual fines in feed troughs, the stockperson requested that feed troughs be emptied prior to filling with fresh feed.

Five pens were noted to have reduced access to feed and water. This was due to narrow spacing between rails which limited placement of water and feed troughs. Crew attempted to fix this issue by placing troughs inside the pens however this reduced pen space and meant it was easier for troughs to be knocked off or soiled. The observer did not note any significant impact to the health and welfare of the stock in these pens during the voyage.

Water was produced through reverse osmosis and fed automatically to the water troughs in each pen (ranging between 1 to 2 troughs). Each trough had a float valve to control the water level.

Apart from the problems with the five pens noted above, no issues were noted with water quality and access for livestock for the duration of the voyage.

The observer noted that on a number of occasions the water valves had not been re-opened after being shut off for cleaning. However, these were rectified when noticed by crew as they moved through the decks. No welfare issues were observed as a result of this.

Ventilation

The ventilation functioned consistently and effectively on all decks for the duration of the voyage. There was little to no ammonia smell noted and the pads were observed to be in good condition.

Dry and wet bulb temperature readings were taken daily at around 10:00am on all decks.

Deck 8 was the hottest of the decks and the crew kept the doors at either ends of the deck open to improve air flow. Although the temperatures were in the high twenties and early thirties, the livestock did not appear to be adversely effected and no animals were seen to be panting or showing signs of heat stress.

Pen conditions

Pads on all decks were generally in very good condition. The crew paid attention to not empty water troughs into pens or alleyways during cleaning. Alleyways were cleared daily which helped to identify any water leaks. On most occasions, water leaks or spills were detected quickly and fixed.

Due to concerns about possible delays in the discharge of cattle at the Port of Jakarta, deck washing on Decks 1-3 occurred on day 4. Deck 1 had significant build-up of water causing animals to stand almost up to their knees in water for in excess of 2 hours. It was explained that this was a result of using multiple hoses on multiple decks to get the cleaning done quickly due to restrictions of effluent discharge in close proximity to land.

No sawdust was provided to wet pens after washing. There was not enough sawdust for this purpose because it was required for the discharge. Pen conditions on Deck 1 improved by Day 5. No visible signs of distress or welfare issues were identified in the cattle at the time of the water pooling. No concerns were noted with health and welfare in subsequent days once the water had drained away.

Health and welfare

Animals were monitored over 24 hours including the use of night watchmen and cameras on a number of decks. Very few animals were unwell during the voyage but issues observed included bloat, lameness and nasal discharge. These animals were moved to hospital pens.

The observer noted four pens were stocked above ASEL requirements. The cattle in these pens had no issues accessing feed or water and no adverse animal welfare issues were identified. The observer noted that, for all pens, at least 50% of the cattle in each pen were able to lie down at the same time.

The stockperson administered a number of treatments for lameness and respiratory symptoms. The observer noted that all cases improved over the course of the voyage and were discharged without issue.

Two mortalities were reported during the voyage. One mortality was due to a broken leg on discharge where the animal was euthanised by the stockperson using captive bolt. The other was due to drowning after an animal escaped the loading structure at discharge.

Discharge

There were two cases of misadventure during discharge as outlined in the Health and Welfare section. No other issues were noted and the cattle were provided adequate feed and water during this time.

Conclusion

The observer noted that the crew were well organised and their livestock management and husbandry practices considered the welfare of the animals. There were no concerns about the overall welfare of the livestock during the voyage.

Apart from the minor non-compliance with the stocking density, 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 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen — good pad condition



Day 5 Cattle in pens — no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified

