

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Shorthorn Express*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in May 2019

Report 129, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 3,187 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Shorthorn Express* at the Port of Darwin on 16 May 2019. The vessel was unloaded in Panjang, Indonesia on 22 and 23 May 2019 making this an 8 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.06% (2 mortalities). The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of the 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.

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

No welfare incidents were observed during loading. The dock crew and personnel on the vessel were proficient in their duties. The livestock were provided feed and water within 12 hours of loading.

The cattle were loaded in accordance with the load plan. In approximately 70% of the pens, 50% of the animals could lie down at one time. Adjustments to the number of cattle in some pens were made during the voyage to provide improved space availability.

Personnel

The vessel livestock crew members responsible for the general care of the cattle had a presence with the livestock 24 hours a day.

The crew included a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) who was responsible for inspecting, administering treatments, checking feed and water availability, directing the bosun

and crew relating to animal management and ensuring stowage of the cattle in the pens was appropriate.

Daily routine

The crew systematically moved through the decks at 7:00am and 3:30pm to clean feed and water troughs and to subsequently fill the troughs. A top up feed was provided at 10:30am. Chaff was fed on the second day to encourage consumption.

A daily meeting was held at 11:30am to discuss any issues that occurred in the previous 24 hours, environmental conditions, treatments and mortalities.

One night watch person was rostered in two shifts between 6:00pm until 6:00am. The night watch person reported to the bridge every hour to discuss any issues that occurred. The night watch person systematically moved through the decks checking for issues, and to clean and refill the water troughs.

Feed and water

Fodder is gravity fed to chutes located on each deck. The crew manually filled the troughs using bags of fodder from the chutes. Excess fodder was loaded when compared to the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

The pens on the outer edge of the vessel held more cattle but had the same number of troughs available. The cattle in the larger pens had to wait or compete to get access to feed and water but this factor had no impact on the health of the animals.

The feed consumption was reported incorrectly in one of the daily reports because of an incorrect count of the number of fodder bags that had been distributed for that day. Following the detection of the incorrect report, a new system of counting the number of feed bags distributed each day was implemented.

Water is produced by a reverse osmosis plant. Water is delivered to two nose bowls in each pen. The crew also manually filled a trough to provide an additional source of water for each pen. On one occasion, the nose bowls stopped functioning on Deck 2. The chief engineer rectified the issue before the observer could notify the crew. No other water issues were observed or reported.

Ventilation

The vessel has 5 enclosed livestock decks. Ventilation is provided through large pipes with holes that direct the fresh air into the cargo hold and exhaust fans to remove the stale air. If the system fails, the auxiliary generator will start to ensure that ventilation is maintained. The ventilation system appeared to function effectively to provide fresh cool air. No animals were observed showing heat stress indicators.

The temperature readings were taken between 8:00am and 9:00am each day. The temperatures were in the relatively constant range of 30-31°C dry bulb and around 79% humidity.

Pen conditions

The pen conditions were well managed and the pad conditions ranged from dry to soft clay texture. On day 2 a water leak occurred on Deck 1. The crew diligently managed the issue by

promptly fixing the leak and adding sawdust to the pen which produced good results by assisting the drying of the pen with no adverse impact on the animals. The decks were not washed as the voyage was of a short duration. Any fodder not consumed was tipped into the pen to assist with pad condition management.

Health and welfare

The stockperson inspected the cattle twice daily to check for illness and injuries, and to check the feed and water troughs.

The veterinary medication supplies were in excess of the ASEL requirements.

Five cattle showed signs of illness or injury during the voyage. Two lame cattle were treated. Three animals with an eye condition, skin abrasions / scrape lesions and broken horn were not treated before being discharged in Indonesia.

There were 2 mortalities for the voyage. The first animal was euthanised following an injury on day 4. The second animal was euthanised following an injury during discharge.

Discharge

Discharge was a prolonged process due to the timing of discharge and the impact of Ramadan on the availability of trucks. The stockperson and crew maintained good animal health and welfare practices during discharge with the exception of one incident when one of the dock crew kicked and used excessive electric prodding on one animal that had turned on the ramp. Additional personnel were available on the vessel to ensure the livestock had appropriate care.

Conclusion

The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements with the exception of the lack of treatment of the 3 animals identified with eye, skin or horn issues.

The voyage had 2 mortalities and very few animals with signs of injury or illness. Overall, the master, CO, stockperson and crew appeared to have a genuine interest in the health and welfare of the livestock.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

