

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Gulf Livestock One*

## Cattle exported to China in June/July 2019

---

Report 144, October 2019

### **Voyage summary**

A consignment of 5,799 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Gulf Livestock One* at Portland between 12 and 13 June 2019. The vessel departed on 13 June 2019. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Tangshan, China between 4 and 5 July 2019, making this a 24 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the voyage was 0.31% (18 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 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 arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge and contingencies.

#### **Loading**

The cattle were loaded close to the load plan with adjustments made to maximize free space and reduce stocking density early in the voyage. The observer noted that all pens had 50% of animals able to lie down at one time and in most pens all of animals could lie down at one time. All hospital pens were empty at the start of the voyage. There were no animal welfare issues observed during loading in Portland.

#### **Personnel**

Three LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) were assigned to the voyage. The stockpersons were capable in cattle handling and worked well with the master, Chief Officer (CO), bosun and the livestock crew. The CO was experienced and was often seen on the livestock decks and worked well with the crew and stockpersons.

Each member of the livestock crew were assigned to designated areas to clean walkways, ensure feed and water troughs were full and clean. The observer noted the stockpersons and crew showed a genuine interest in the care of the livestock throughout the voyage.

The vessel had an issue with the main engine on days eighteen and nineteen which resulted in the vessel drifting for around 25 hours while repairs were made. During this period all ventilation, feeding and watering systems were operational as normal due to standby generation on board the vessel. The relevant authorities were notified and master kept the stockpersons and observer updated on progress of the repairs. This incident was handled in a professional manner with no issues in regard to welfare of the animals noted.

### **Daily routine**

The 3 stockpersons inspected the cattle daily throughout the voyage with shy feeders and sick animals transferred to the hospital pens where needed. Treatments were administered and post mortem inspections were performed as needed.

Daily management meetings were held at 10:00am and were attended by the CO, stockpersons and observer in attendance to discuss any issues noted on cattle decks, feeding, watering, arrival times and wash down days.

Night watch duties were split between two of the livestock crew over the course of the voyage 6:00pm and 5:00am. The night watch duties included monitoring feed and water, fixing water leaks, reporting injured or sick animals and any other issues that arose.

### **Feed and water**

Pelleted feed and water systems on this vessel were fully automatic with a water supply continuous. Fodder pellets and chaff were each fed twice daily at 6:30am and 2:00pm. Chaff was fed manually.

All pens had 1 water and 2 feed troughs with no issues noted. The amount of fodder loaded was in accordance with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

### **Ventilation**

The vessel had four open top decks and four fully enclosed lower decks. Ventilation was supplied by 37 supply fans with fresh air being transported through a series of vertical pipes directing air via vents into all of the cattle decks. Ten exhaust fans extract stale air from Decks 1 to 4 with the system monitored from the bridge.

The observer noted no breakdowns were observed in the ventilation system and there were no signs of heat stress observed during this voyage.

Thermometers were located on each deck and daily readings were taken by the crew before midday and logged at the bridge. The weather conditions were 13°C in Portland with the warmest temperatures recorded at 31°C around the equatorial region with humidity ranging from 73 to 77% for most of the voyage.

## **Pen conditions**

Deck 4 was washed out 6 times, at 3 day intervals, during the voyage as the pads had a sloppy consistency due to the combination of heat from the engine and humidity.

The pads on the top four decks remained firm to boggy and were washed out 3 times during the voyage. The lower three decks were washed out three times with slightly sloppier pens due to increased humidity levels.

Sawdust was used as bedding in all pens at the commencement of the voyage, used daily in all hospital pens and on completion of the final wash before discharge. No issues were noted by the observer in relation to pad management.

## **Health and welfare**

The treatments administered during the voyage were for conditions including chronic diarrhoea, pneumonia, shy feeders, eye infections and leg injuries.

There were a total of 18 mortalities during the voyage. On day 1 there were approximately 60 animals identified and managed for an outbreak of diarrhoea. As their condition worsened the stockperson decided to isolate all the affected cattle on Deck 8, which was almost empty, in makeshift hospital pens. The situation was stable. The fast reaction and good management practices by the stockpersons limited the number of mortalities to fourteen caused from the diarrhoea outbreak.

The remaining 4 mortalities were caused by respiratory disease, lameness, peritonitis and one undetermined cause.

The veterinary equipment and a good supply of drugs were kept in accordance with ASEL requirements. Animals that were required to be euthanased were quickly and humanely treated by the stockperson. Stock handling was observed to be well managed by the stockperson and all crew with no issues noted.

## **Discharge**

No animal welfare issues were observed during the discharge of the cattle which took 24 hours to complete.

## **Conclusion**

From loading to discharge no animal welfare incidents were noted by observer. Throughout the voyage, the crew displayed a genuine interest in the health and welfare of the cattle.

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

## Representative photographs of the voyage

**Day 3 Cattle in pen - no issues identified**



**Day 5 Cattle in pen - no issues identified**



**Day 6 Cattle in pen - no issues identified**



**Day 8 Cattle in pen - no issues identified**



**Day 15 Cattle in pen - no issues identified**



**Day 18 Cattle in pen - no issues identified**

