

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Girolando Express*

Cattle exported to Brunei and Malaysia in July 2019

Report 159, November 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 2,504 cattle and 508 buffalo were loaded on the *MV Girolando Express* at Darwin on 17 July 2019. The vessel departed on 18 July 2019. The first discharge was at the Port of Muara, Brunei between 23 and 24 July 2019. The second discharge was at the Port of Bintulu, Malaysia between 25 and 26 July 2019, making this a 10 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 0.04% (1 mortality). The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The cause of this mortality was not considered to be linked to any systemic failure on behalf of the exporter.

There were no mortalities in the buffalo on this voyage.

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 arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge and contingencies.

Loading

The pens which held the heavier bulls were observed to be initially overstocked as there was limited room for them to easily move around and access feed troughs. Adjustments to pen densities were made on day 3 once they had settled enough to be moved. With the additional space the animals appeared to be visibly more comfortable and had improved access to feed and water.

Personnel

A LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the voyage.

The master, Chief Officer (CO), stockperson, bosun and crew operated effectively to deliver positive health and welfare outcomes.

Daily routine

The stockperson commenced duties at 6:00am with an inspection of all pens. After the management meeting, the stockperson followed up and completed their other tasks.

Daily management meetings were held at 10.00am and were attended by the CO, bosun stockperson and observer.

Night watch duties were rotated through the livestock crew with each crew member completing a 4 hour session between 4:00pm and 8:00am.

Feed and water

The vessel's feed system distributed pelleted feed to chutes on each deck. The crew filled bags in order to manually transfer the pellets to fill the feed troughs. The livestock were fed three times each day starting at 7:00am, 10:00am with the final feed at 3:30pm. Chaff was fed once per day for the first 5 days.

The feed and water troughs and water bowls were cleaned and refilled as required.

Initially, the source of water for the livestock was through the nose bowls that filled when an animal physically activates the trigger mechanism at the base of the bowl when drinking. As the cattle were not familiar with the nose bowl water supply process, the stockperson and crew implemented a system of manually filled water troughs for each pen which was observed to have improved the access to water by the livestock.

Ventilation

The vessel ventilation system comprised of large overhead pipes that delivered air flow into the livestock pens. Mild to warm temperatures combined with an effective ventilation system provided comfortable environmental conditions for the livestock that were adapted to tropical conditions. No issues were noted with the ventilation system.

The *Bos taurus* cattle were the only livestock exhibiting a panting score more than zero during the voyage. The panting score was observed to be 1 (slight panting with some increased respiratory rate, closed mouth breathing) around the equatorial region.

Temperatures were recorded daily at 9:00am initially, then later on at 10:30am using a hand held device. Wet bulb temperatures began at 24°C after departing Darwin and climbed to 28 °C on days 6 -9 with all three livestock decks recorded at 29°C on the final day.

Pen conditions

The observer noted that sufficient bedding material was provided in the pens for the heavy cattle as well as during loading and unloading.

Pad conditions were monitored daily and were considered to be dusty at the beginning of the voyage, progressing to firm to wet pads in places where the water from the drinking supply had affected the pad condition. Wood shavings were applied to manage the wet pens.

Decks one and two were washed out on day 4 as the livestock were to be unloaded at the second discharge port. No other decks were washed out.

Health and welfare

Relatively calm sea conditions were experienced during the whole voyage with no delays in planned sailing times. No sick, injured or unhealthy livestock were noted by the observer that required separation into one of the hospital pens or required treatment.

One mortality was recorded at the time of discharge at the first port and was due to misadventure and was unable to rise. The animal was euthanised by the stockperson.

No shy feeders were observed that required transfer to the hospital pens. Medications available on-board the vessel were in accordance with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3)2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

Discharge

No animal welfare issues were observed during discharge operations. Some delays were experienced due to truck availability and with the cattle moving slowly from the vessel to the unloading ramp.

Conclusion

The observer was satisfied that the livestock were managed as required under the ASEL requirements. It is worth noting that interventions made by the stockperson to improve water availability and to significantly lower the initial pen stocking densities of the bulls loaded contributed positively to animal health and welfare outcomes.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 9 Buffalo in pen - no issues identified



Day 5 Buffalo in pen - no issues identified

