

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Drover*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in July 2019

Report 163, December 2019

Voyage summary

Three consignments totalling 18,758 cattle for three exporters were loaded on the *MV Ocean Drover* at Townsville between 31 July and 1 August 2019. The vessel departed on 1 August 2019. The first discharge was at Jakarta between 9 and 10 August 2019. The second discharge was at Panjang on 12 August 2019. The final discharge was at Belawan Indonesia, between 16 and 18 August 2019, making this a 19-day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.13% (24 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of the mortalities were not considered to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporters.

The following comments are a summary of key observations of 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 cattle were loaded according to the load plan, which was compliant with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 (version 2.3)* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

No animal welfare issues were observed during loading.

Personnel

Five LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) accompanied the voyage with each responsible for overseeing the consignment for their respective exporter. The stockpersons were observed to be active and effective.

The Chief Officer (CO) was in charge of the livestock crew and conducted daily meetings. The livestock crew were efficient, competent and effective in terms of maintaining supplies of feed and water, and cattle care and handling techniques.

Daily routine

The stockpersons checked the cattle early in the morning by getting them to their feet in order to identify any lameness, shy feeders or ill cattle, and then roved throughout all decks between 6:30am and 5:30pm.

A management meeting was held each day at 10:00am and was attended by the CO, bosun, stockpersons, and observer to discuss temperatures, feed, water, bedding, treatments and mortalities.

Cattle were fed pellets 3 times a day and once with chaff. Twelve night watch crew were each rostered on a one hour shift between 6:00pm and 6:00am. Duties included inspecting alley ways, checking the water flow to troughs and feed and water access for the cattle.

Feed and water

Pelletised feed was loaded in accordance with the ASEL requirements for the voyage and water was supplied by automatic nose bowls in the pens. The cattle were observed to be able to consume adequate feed and water during the voyage.

Ventilation

The ventilation system on board the vessel functioned effectively and provided the livestock with fresh cool air and provided a good drying effect to the pens.

The lower five decks were enclosed and had two central rows of supply fans and active peripheral exhaust. The four outside decks had two central rows of supply vents.

The environmental conditions during the voyage were good, with mild seas and moderate outside temperatures with little variation. Dry bulb temperatures averaged 28 °C, wet bulb 25.8 C, average humidity was 82.0%.

Pen conditions

Pen adjustments were made as required during the voyage to ensure that cattle had adequate space. The observer noted that 50% of all cattle had sufficient space to lie down and rest.

Pen conditions for the voyage were well managed. Pad depth grew throughout the voyage but provided a soft flooring for the animals to lie on. The noise and light levels were as per the ASEL requirements. No cattle showed any signs of distress from noise or light levels.

Health and welfare

The main reason for cattle being placed in the hospital pens was due to the exhibit of symptoms of pneumonia as well as injury, indeterminate sickness, and lameness. Cattle were treated with antibiotics and an anti-inflammatory drug. All the cattle responded well to separation, and no mortalities occurred in the hospital pens.

There were 24 mortalities recorded during the voyage. Thirteen were found dead at various times during the voyage with the cause attributed to pneumonia, five suffered broken legs and

were euthanised humanly with a captive bolt gun, and six were found dead with injuries due to misadventure.

There was no evidence of any heat stress symptoms in the cattle and no variations in appetite or herd behaviour were observed during the voyage resulting from weather conditions or elevated wet bulb temperatures on the livestock decks. During the voyage there were no issues with the overall health and welfare of the cattle.

Discharge

Discharge at each of the three ports were well organised and ran smoothly. Wood shavings were added to alleyways and ramps prior to and during discharge. The stockpersons ensured adequate amounts of shavings were present on each deck ready for use during discharge.

There were some delays with the transport trucks at the final port of discharge which was due to the turnaround time between the port and stock yards, however, the cattle were provided with extra fodder and water on board the vessel during this period. No animal health or welfare issues were observed during any of the discharges.

Conclusion

The vessel's infrastructure functioned well and the officers, livestock crew, and stockpersons performed their jobs effectively resulting in a good voyage outcome with no animal health and welfare issues.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 10 Pad level – no issues identified



Day 13 After deck wash – no issues identified



Day 17 Deck 9 – no issues identified

