

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Swagman*

## Cattle exported to Vietnam in August 2019

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Report 170, December 2019

### Voyage summary

A consignment of 3,496 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Ocean Swagman* at the Port of Townsville between 5 and 6 August 2019. The vessel departed on 6 August 2019. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Thi Vai, Vietnam, between 16 and 17 August 2019, making this a 13 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the voyage was 0.34% (12 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

Loading went well with no incidents reported.

Most pens seemed to provide ample space for the cattle to move and rest. Approximately 70% of the cattle could rest at any one time. The vessel was nowhere near its full capacity, therefore, there was more than adequate space for the cattle. The load plan and stocking density complied with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

#### Personnel

A LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the consignment. The stockperson appeared knowledgeable and dedicated and was available day and night.

The master was aware of the importance of maintaining health and welfare of the livestock. The Chief Officer (CO) was active in the vessel operations, crew and livestock. The CO made daily rounds of all cattle and responded to requests by the bosun and stockperson. The bosun

supervised and managed the crew in their daily work activities and the management of the cattle at loading, discharge along with the stockperson. The livestock crew were dedicated and diligent in their day to day duties and in maintaining the health and welfare of the cattle as their highest priority.

### **Daily routine**

A management meeting was held each day at 10:00am and was attended by the master, CO, bosun, stockperson and the observer. Topics discussed included the daily management of the cattle, livestock movements, treatments and any issues from previous days.

Each nightwatch person worked a 4 hour shift between 8:00pm and 4:00am each night.

### **Feed and water**

Pelleted fodder was mostly delivered to the troughs by the automatic feeding system. Some areas required manually filling of the troughs by the crew. Pelleted feed was given at 6:00am, 10:30am, and 3:30pm. Chaff was also provided to the cows and bulls.

Water supply or leak issues were fixed in a timely manner. No issues were noted with the water supply to the cattle. The feed and water troughs were cleaned daily. The crew monitored and cleaned the feed and water troughs if they became contaminated with faecal matter.

The cattle were in good condition at discharge with good intake of fodder and water throughout the voyage.

### **Ventilation**

The ventilation system worked efficiently and effectively on all decks and pens and no problems were detected during the voyage. Engine doors on decks 5 – 7 were closed at all times to block heat transfer into the adjacent livestock pens. No signs of heat stress were observed throughout the voyage.

The temperatures were recorded on each deck using a hand held device at 9:00am. The temperatures remained relatively constant throughout the voyage at 31°C dry bulb, 27°C wet bulb and humidity was around 80%.

### **Pen conditions**

On day 1, two pens had shallow water on Deck 4. The water was pumped out when the vessel commenced moving.

Pad maintenance was observed daily with most pens comprising of a good, dry to thick, muddy pad. Sawdust and unconsumed fodder was used in pens to remediate any pens that were sloppy. Sawdust was also laid in hospital pens and the bull pens on Decks 6 and 7. A wash down of all decks was undertaken on days 8 and 9. After the deck wash, the pens had good dry pads for the remainder of the voyage.

### **Health and welfare**

The sea and weather conditions were excellent throughout the voyage.

There were 12 mortalities during the voyage. Nine of the mortalities were due to respiratory disease. The remainder of the mortalities were steers with leg injuries or recumbency (unable to stand).

No signs of heat stress or shy feeders were observed during the voyage.

### **Discharge**

There were no welfare incidents noted at discharge.

### **Conclusion**

The cattle were in good condition on arrival. Twelve mortalities were caused mainly by respiratory disease and injuries.

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 5 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen - no issues identified

