

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Swagman*

Cattle exported to China in October 2019

Report 195, December 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 5,853 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Ocean Swagman* at the port of Portland on 12 October 2019 and departed on the same day. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Jingtang, China, between 30 October and 1 November 2019, making this a 21-day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.14% (8 mortalities), which 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 are a summary of key observations and has been approved by 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, including 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.

The deck area available for this number of cattle exceeded ASEL requirements.

All cattle had access to fodder and water as soon as they were loaded, as per the voyage instructions. No animal welfare issues were observed during loading.

Personnel

Two LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockperson) and an assistant stockperson accompanied the voyage. The stockpersons were very attentive to the needs of the cattle.

The livestock crew were observed to be experienced in the care of cattle including feeding and watering, as well as assisting the stockpersons.

The vessel's livestock crew, officers, and stockpersons communicated well during the voyage, with mutual respect, with the overall goal of ensuring the health and welfare of the cattle.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held each day at 10:00am and were attended by the master, Chief Officer (CO), stockpersons, bosun, and observer. Discussions covered the daily feed adjustments and other instructions, current status of cattle in the hospital pens, treatments and pen density and deck wash plans.

Cattle were fed twice each day. The livestock crew were vigilant regarding the water trough delivery system, repairing trough hoses and adjusting the trough water pressure.

Four night watch crew monitored the cattle in single shifts between 6:00pm and 6:00am. No reportable incidents occurred during night watch.

Feed and water

The vessel loaded pelletised feed hay at Portland which exceeded the ASEL requirements for this voyage.

Feed pellets were delivered by chute to individual troughs. The capacity of the vessel to produce fresh water exceeded ASEL requirements for this voyage. Water is supplied to troughs regulated by float valves.

The cattle were observed to be able to consume adequate feed and water during the voyage.

Ventilation

The ventilation was operational throughout the voyage and the cattle did not display any symptoms of heat stress.

The vessel's crew took readings from fitted thermometers located on each deck. The observer did spot checks, which were comparative to the crew's readings. The dry bulb temperature ranged from 12–31°C, the wet bulb temperature range was 11 – 28°C, and humidity range was 64–86%.

Pen conditions

The pads were damp and spongy during the initial stages of the voyage, but served as a cushion for recumbent cattle. By day 7, some pads were wet and sloppy but did not impact negatively on the health and welfare of the animals. Sawdust was applied to some of the worst-affected pens.

Deck washing was carried out on all decks on different days. Deck washing was done in a safe manner, and the cattle remained calm.

The observer noted that at least 50% of the cattle were able to lie down at one time.

Aisles were well maintained and cleaned daily. Some pens had spare gates that had fallen over in the pen and were lying down in the pad, but these were removed when noticed. An appropriate amount of sawdust was loaded for use during the voyage.

Health and welfare

There were 8 mortalities during the voyage. The causes of the mortalities was pneumonia (6), enteritis (1), and one animal was euthanised by captive bolt due to a fractured leg sustained during discharge.

Approximately 110 treatments were administered during the voyage. The main treatment was administered for pinkeye, followed by swollen legs, pneumonia, injury, and respiratory disease.

There were no issues with the overall health and welfare of the cattle.

Discharge

All the cattle had access to fodder while waiting and during the discharge period. Discharge proceeded smoothly, although one animal fractured a leg and was euthanased.

Conclusion

The observer noted that the stockpersons and the crew ensured that the health and welfare of the cattle was maintained during the voyage.

The exporter's arrangements were implemented during the voyage, and were compliant with ASEL requirements.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Loading – no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 11 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 15 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 18 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

