

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Yangtze Harmony*

Cattle exported to China in November 2019

Report 198, January 2020

Voyage summary

A consignment of 2,618 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Yangtze Harmony* at the Port of Fremantle between 5 and 6 November 2019. The vessel departed on 6 November 2019. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Huanghua, China, between 20 and 22 November 2019, making this an 18-day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.11% (3 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 have 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.

No animal welfare issues were observed during loading.

Personnel

An experienced Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) were on-board the vessel, who were responsible for implementing the exporter's procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage.

The vessel's officers and livestock crew were responsive to the cattle's needs and welfare.

Daily routine

A management meeting was held each day and was attended by the Chief Officer, bosun, AAV, stockperson, and observer. Topics discussed included livestock service, feeding regimes, and washing-out strategies.

Cattle were fed pelletised feed morning and afternoon, with a mid-morning top-up, when chaff was also fed.

Nightwatch comprised one crew member from 6:00 pm to midnight, then one from midnight to 6:00 am. Their duties were to check and report on continuous provision of essential livestock services such as uncontaminated feed, water, and ventilation.

Feed and water

Pelletised feed was loaded in accordance with the ASEL requirements for the voyage, and was supplied to each deck by chute from the vessel's feed storage silos, then manually taken by the livestock crew to feed troughs at each pen.

The vessel generated adequate fresh water that was supplied to troughs regulated by a ball float valve.

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

Ventilation

The vessel has eight enclosed livestock decks. Fresh air is supplied to each pen through a ducted system, dispersed and diffused evenly in each pen. The system was observed to be operating effectively throughout the entire voyage.

Dry bulb temperatures during the voyage varied between 15 and 33 °C. Maximum humidity was 85%. There was a prolonged hot period at the equatorial zone, but this did not appear to have an adverse effect on the cattle, as they continued to exhibit normal behaviour.

Pen conditions

Although the pen conditions were humid at times, the combination of the ducted ventilation system, low pen densities, and the livestock crew's prompt attention to leaks and dislodged troughs helped to maintain the pens conditions until deck washdown.

The deck washdown schedule was decided according to pad build-up, the consistency of the pad, and condition of the cattle.

The stocking density of each pen was within the ASEL standards, and there was enough space to allow all the animals in the pens to lie down simultaneously.

Health and welfare

There were three mortalities during the voyage. One mortality was caused by pneumonia diagnosed at post mortem, another caused because the animal's head became stuck under the bottom rail of the pen, and another animal was euthanased before discharge because it was unable to stand on an infected lower leg.

Numerous treatments were administered for ailments such as swollen hocks, pinkeye and lameness and suspected pneumonia.

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

Discharge

All cattle had access to clean water and fodder during discharge. No animal health or welfare issues were observed during discharge.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 3 Lame animal in hospital pen – no issues identified



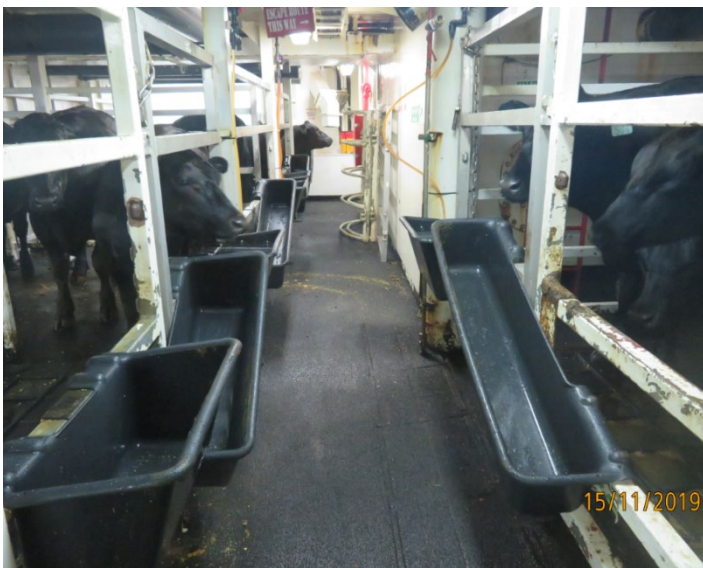
Day 5 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 7 Pad – no issues identified



Day 9 Deck after wash – no issues identified



Day 14 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

