

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Ocean Drover*

Cattle exported to Indonesia, Nov 2019

Report 204, February 2020

Voyage summary

A consignment of 17,227 cattle was loaded onto the MV Ocean Drover at the Port of Townsville between 23 and 25 November 2019. The vessel departed on 25 November 2019. The first discharge was at Jakarta, Indonesia between 2 and 5 December 2019. The second discharge was at Panjang, Indonesia between 6 and 7 December 2019, making this a 15 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.08% (14 mortalities). This did 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. The summary 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, including contingencies.

Loading

The cattle were loaded in accordance with [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 \(version 2.3\)](#) (ASEL). Sawdust was applied to internal and external loading ramps. All cattle had access to fodder and water as soon as they were loaded, appeared calm and relaxed and settled into their pens quickly. One animal was identified as down in the truck. This animal was observed to be walking well onto the vessel and was loaded directly into a hospital pen for treatment. This animal was observed to have recovered well with no negative welfare concerns and was discharged.

Personnel

There were four LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) and one assistant stockperson aboard the vessel responsible for implementing the exporters' procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage.

The vessel's officers and livestock crew were experienced and worked professionally to achieve a successful voyage with good animal welfare outcomes that met ASEL requirements.

Daily routine

Management meetings occurred daily at 10:00am, with the Chief Officer (CO), bosun, stockpersons and the observer.

Cattle were fed three times daily at 6:00am, 1:00pm and 3:30pm, with trough cleaning occurring at this time.

Livestock crew were assigned to shifts from 6:00am to 6:00pm. The night watch comprised of two crew members working from 8:00pm to 5:00am.

Stockpersons worked from 5:00am until 5:00pm and were available for consultation if required at any time.

Feed and water

Fodder and water was loaded according to ASEL requirements including the appropriate contingency fodder allowance. Fodder was distributed automatically from the vessel silo, with piping to feed troughs manually operated by the crew.

Water was supplied to cattle automatically via float valves within water troughs.

The livestock crew worked diligently to ensure that troughs were maintained in a clean condition at each feed time and would relay information regarding feed and water consumption to the officers daily.

All animals had sufficient space to access feed, with water available *ad libitum*. Shy feeders were identified quickly by the stockpersons and were relocated to hospital pens where they could freely access feed and have actual consumption monitored more closely.

Ventilation

Enclosed decks 1-5 had enclosed space ventilation fans and ventilation columns. Open decks 6-9 had column ventilation and extraction fans. All fans drew air from open Deck 10.

No issues with ventilation were noted throughout the voyage. The observer reported that no animals exhibited signs of heat stress. The maximum dry bulb temperature was 32 °C and maximum humidity was 86%.

Pen conditions

The pens were maintained in a good condition throughout the voyage. Pads were generally dry throughout the voyage. If the pad quality became wet prior to deck wash-down, sawdust was added to pens and no welfare concerns were observed. Deck wash-down commenced on 29 November and was completed on 30 November.

The stocking density and load plan were calculated as per ASEL requirements with cattle observed able to rest, and access troughs at all times.

Health and welfare

The crew and stockpersons worked well together to identify stock in need of hospitalisation or treatment. Shy-feeders and animals in need of veterinary care were identified in a timely manner and were moved to hospital pens and were provided with treatment and close observation by the stockperson.

During the voyage, there were 58 animals admitted to hospital for shy-feeding, injuries during loading, or lameness. These animals were administered the appropriate treatment and 55 of these animals made a full recovery. One heifer died from pneumonia.

There were a total of 14 mortalities on this voyage, of which four were euthanased. Reasons for euthanasia included one case of pneumonia, a downer steer that did not respond to treatment, one steer deemed not fit for discharge and one lame animal rejected for lameness at discharge. Other causes of death were attributed to pneumonia (identified on post-mortem on two animals). A definitive cause of death was not determined in the remaining eight animals as no post-mortem was performed.

Overall, there were no other issues with the health and welfare of the livestock.

Discharge

One steer was euthanased due to injuries sustained during unloading. On the day of discharge at the port of Panjang, one steer was deemed unfit for discharge and was euthanased.

All livestock had access to clean water and fodder during discharge and overall, there were no further negative animal health or welfare issues observed.

Conclusion

The observer noted that the stockpersons and the vessel's crew were professional and worked well together. The stockpersons had animal welfare as their highest priority and were vigilant in upholding communication with the vessel's crew.

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 4 Cattle in pen. No issues identified.



Day 6 Cattle in pen. No issues identified.



Day 8 Cattle feeding. No issues identified.



Day 11 Cattle in pen. No issues identified.



Day 13 Cattle in pen. No issues identified.

