

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Rahmeh*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in November 2018

Report 35, August 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 5,935 cattle and 438 buffalo were loaded onto the *MV Rahmeh* in Darwin on 10 and 11 November 2018. The vessel departed on 11 November 2018. The cattle were discharged at Panjang, Indonesia on 17 to 19 November 2018 making this a ten day voyage.

An independent observer (observer) boarded the vessel in Darwin and remained on board until completion of discharge.

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.05% (three mortalities), and 0.45% (two mortalities) for buffalo.

The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable mortality rate as stated in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)). The causes of the 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 that accompanied the voyage. The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

Exporter Documentation

Exporter arrangement documents were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge and contingencies.

Loading

The cattle and buffalo were loaded in an orderly manner. The observer noted that the cattle were not loaded in strict accordance with the load plan. After loading, early on in the voyage the numbers of cattle in some pens were adjusted and in some cases gates between two adjacent pens were opened to make stock more comfortable. There were many occasions when almost all stock in individual pens were observed lying down.

Personnel

An Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) was not required to be present on the voyage.

The crew included an experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stock person (stock person) and two additional Australian stock persons. The stock persons handled stock during loading, voyage and

discharge with skill and demonstrating genuine care. The three stock persons were swift to identify animals requiring treatments and they were performed in an appropriate manner. Shy feeders were also identified and transferred to a separate pen to encourage feeding.

The Master, Chief Officer (CO) monitored the health and welfare of the livestock. The bosun supervised the crew caring for the livestock and was responsive to stock person advice.

During the voyage the crew went about their business of feeding stock, cleaning troughs, checking troughs for cleanliness, checking for maintenance issues and making repairs, cleaning lane ways and moving stock as requested. There were a few reminders issued by the head stock person via the bosun during the voyage on the quality of their work but the observer considered they did their jobs sufficiently well and responded to requests.

Daily routine

All livestock were inspected at the morning inspection which commenced at 7.00am.

A daily meeting was held at 10.00am and involved the CO, three stock persons, bosun and observer. At the meeting, the feeding plan, treatments, stock movements and any other relevant issues were discussed and instructions issued.

Treatments and stock movements were completed from 10.30am until approximately noon. The afternoon inspection commenced at 3.00pm and was similar to the morning inspection.

There were two night watch persons from 7.00pm until 5.00am. The role of the night watch person was to generally monitor animals and to check and clean feed and water troughs. At the beginning of the voyage the standard of cleaning of water troughs was not satisfactory as the observer noted between three and five dirty troughs per aisle but there was no adverse animal health or welfare aspects. After the head stock person issued instructions, the standard improved significantly. The head stock person checked the standard of cleanliness of the troughs each morning at 6.30am.

Feed and water

The livestock were fed three times per day at 7.00am, 10.30am and 3.30pm. On most days the head stockman requested an additional feed of chaff at 1.00pm. The crew commenced their morning feed, watering and cleaning routine from 7.00am.

Water was available at all times except if a trough was broken or leaking. Repairs were completed in a timely manner. The crew were instructed to clean troughs at feeding times and to check cleanliness at other times. The night watch person was instructed to clean any dirty troughs during the night. The stockperson and observer monitored the crew compliance with cleaning activities. The supply of water appeared to be satisfactory during the voyage.

Ventilation

The ventilation system consisted of large ventilation pipes and fans. The system functioned satisfactorily during the voyage.

Temperature readings were taken on each deck once a day between 11.00am and noon each day. During the voyage, the observer noted that one thermometer was not functioning appropriately and was replaced.

The part of Deck 4 near the engine appeared warmer. However, the exporter was aware of this and loaded the warmer area with cattle more likely to cope with heat at a lower stocking density that was less than the ASEL.

Pen conditions

Pen conditions ranged from friable on the open decks to boggy on the bottom decks with some variation between pens on the same deck. There was build up of manure during the voyage and the pens were not washed or cleaned. The observer noted that the animals did not experience unacceptable conditions during the voyage.

Health and welfare

One of the cattle fractured a leg on board during loading and was immediately identified, sedated and euthanased. Any cattle and buffalo that were identified as unwell were treated. One buffalo was found dead in the pen without any prior detection of illness.

If the animals did not respond to the treatments, it was euthanased by the stock person. No conclusive information was available as to the cause of illness or death of the animals found dead or euthanased.

Feed was available three times a day and the cattle had good access to fresh water.

Shy feeders were placed in separate pens to encourage feeding. Animals in hospital pens were given additional chaff to encourage consumption.

Discharge

Discharge was observed by the observer and appeared to be performed with minimal stress.

Conclusion

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

The stock person was very diligent in ensuring that the two junior stockpersons and the crew had appropriate instructions and the tasks were completed in a timely fashion.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 3 Buffalo in pen—no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 4 Buffalo in pen—no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

