

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Girolando Express*

Cattle and buffalo exported to Indonesia in December 2018

Report 46, September 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 174 buffalo and 3,253 cattle commenced loading onto the MV *Girolando Express* at Darwin on 4 December 2018, and departed on 5 December 2018. The vessel discharged livestock in Panjang, Indonesia on 9 and 10 December 2018, making this a 7 day voyage.

The mortality rate for buffalo was 1.14% (2 mortalities) for the buffalo and for cattle was 0.03% (1 mortality). These do 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 represent a summary of key observations from the independent observer (observer). 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 arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge, including contingencies.

Loading

The observer was present for part of the loading process. The cattle and buffalo were loaded in accordance with *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)* and the load plan. The observer noted that a small number of pens were overstocked by up to 2 cattle. However, no animal welfare issues were observed as a result.

During loading, the observer was informed that 1 cow had jumped off the loading ramp into the sea. The animal was quickly rescued but was deemed unfit to travel and was euthanised.

Sawdust was spread in the laneways and loading ramps during loading. Hospital pens were initially kept empty of livestock.

Personnel

An experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the voyage who was responsible for the health and welfare of the livestock and who had worked on livestock

vessels for many years. The observer considered the stockperson highly competent and animal welfare was their highest priority

The master, chief officer (CO) and bosun had extensive experience across multiple livestock vessels. The CO was responsible for managing the crew, daily reporting and the condition and welfare of the livestock. The CO was proactive and engaged with the crew and was observed roaming the decks regularly.

The bosun supervised the livestock crew and worked alongside them on deck. The bosun had good cattle handling skills and ensured that feed and water supply was produced to a high standard. The crew worked diligently and cooperatively with the stockperson across the entire voyage and had animal welfare as their highest priority.

Daily routine

A meeting was held each day at 10:00am and involved the CO, stockperson, bosun, and the observer.

The stockperson routinely worked from 5:30am until 5:00pm each day. The stockperson conducted three inspections per day at 5:30am, 10:00am and 3:30pm. The stockperson was available if required at night.

There were 12 crew that provided livestock management services. The crew commenced their morning feeding, watering and cleaning routine at around 7:00am. The routine was repeated at 10:30am and 3:30pm. The bosun ensured the feeding and water tasks were completed to a high standard.

Night watch duties were split into four-hour shifts and one crew member was allocated to each shift between 4:00pm and 4:00am. Night watch duties included cleaning feed and water troughs, ensuring water availability, and cleaning walkways. The stockperson was available if issues arose.

Feed and water

Fodder was supplied by gravity fed chutes to different areas on each of the decks. The chutes were used to load pellets into bags and the crew manually filled the troughs using the bags. Pellets formed the majority of the diet with supplementation of chaff. The livestock were fed three times per day at 7:00am, 10:30am and 3:30pm.

Water was supplied by 2 water bowls per pen that automatically filled using a trigger mechanism. Water was always available to the cattle and buffalo via the water bowls and additional pen water troughs. The crew were vigilant in cleaning the water bowls.

Ventilation

The ventilation system consisted of vents attached to the roof that provided good coverage across all pens in all decks. There were no apparent failures of the ventilation system during the course of the voyage.

Temperature readings were taken once per day at 3 separate points on each deck between 9:00am and 10:00am. Throughout the voyage, the conditions remained relatively consistent throughout all areas measured at around 31°C to 32°C dry bulb and 28°C to 29°C wet bulb.

Pen conditions

The quality of the pad was good throughout the course of the voyage and no deck washing was conducted due to the short duration of the voyage.

Health and welfare

There were 2 buffalo mortalities during the voyage. The cause of first buffalo mortality was not obvious in a post mortem conducted by the stockperson. The second buffalo was euthanised after becoming recumbent and unable to rise. The observer noted that 2 captive bolts were required to euthanise this buffalo. A post mortem investigation was not undertaken because it occurred at the beginning of discharge of the livestock.

During the voyage, one animal had its head stuck in a gate. The animal was sedated and the head was dislodged from the gate. It was observed to have resumed normal eating and drinking on the next day.

The observer noted the cattle and buffalo had mildly elevated respiratory rates during the voyage but there was no panting or gasping.

Discharge

No adverse issues were noted at discharge.

Conclusion

The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements. Animal welfare was primary concern to all crew members from the master, stockperson and the individual livestock handlers. Overall this voyage occurred smoothly with very few issues.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Buffalo in pen — no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen — no issues identified

