

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Gudali Express*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in February 2019

Report 83, September 2019

Voyage summary

The *Gudali Express* commenced loading 4,034 cattle on 21 February 2019 at Darwin and departed on 22 February 2019. The vessel arrived in Jakarta on 26 February 2019, and completed discharge on 28 February 2019, making this a 7 day voyage.

The mortality rate for the voyage was 0.049% (2 cattle). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The cause 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 independent observer (observer). The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of cattle

Exporter documentation

Exporter arrangements were available to address procedures relating to cattle management from loading through to discharge and contingencies.

Loading

Loading was efficient with large purpose built cattle carrying trucks arriving in an orderly fashion, and facilitated by professional and experienced stevedores.

Livestock were loaded in accordance with the load plan. Where the same classes and consignments of cattle were placed in adjacent pens, dividing panels were removed to allow animals increased movement. Stocking density allowed all animals in pens to lie down simultaneously. The observer noted that, prior to morning feeding and watering, animals would often be observed to be lying down in pens resting.

Personnel

The vessel had a crew of 30 including the master, chief officer and bosun. Other staff included engineers, a fitter and electrician and other crew. All persons were experienced and appeared professional in their roles.

There was a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) on-board who had over 15 years experience.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held each day at 10:30am, with daily stockperson's reports distributed later in the day.

Cattle were fed via troughs twice daily at 6:30am and 3:30pm. Feeding and watering typically took two and a half hours.

Night watchpersons operated in two shifts of two persons each between 6pm and 6am.

Feed and water

Sufficient pellets and chaff were available for the entire voyage. Often before feeding there would still be some pellets remaining in the troughs attached to pen railings. Remaining feed would be poured into the laneways and replaced with fresh pellets which the cattle would quickly start eating.

Feeding and watering typical took two and a half hours. During this time, water troughs attached to pen railings were repeatedly filled by hose. Usually before feeding and watering, troughs would be dry. Access to water was maintained via automated nose bowls in addition to water troughs. Whilst some pressure activated drinking bowls were often found dry and full of faeces, the observer noted that the period was sufficiently short as to not impact animal welfare.

Ventilation

Ventilation was noted as operating optimally. No livestock were observed as suffering from heat stress.

The weather during the voyage was consistently fine and calm, with very little variation observed between decks. No hot points or zones were observed. Conditions each day were consistently recorded as being 29°C wet bulb temperature, 33° dry bulb temperature and 74% humidity.

Pen conditions

The pen flooring was constructed of textured bitumen over steel. The laneways and ramps were steel covered in sawdust. Pens were not washed or cleaned during the voyage, but the pads remained dry and without excessive build up. Excess fodder and faeces was removed from laneways.

Health and welfare

Two mortalities occurred during the voyage. The first mortality was last to get off the truck and appeared lame in its left rear leg, and was later euthanised. The second animal died suddenly during unloading. It had not been observed previously to have been unwell.

During the voyage, 4 animals were treated for various conditions. One down animal and three with eye conditions. These animals all improved by discharge. No stress indicators such as coughing, respiratory distress, panting, loose faeces, diarrhoea or loss of appetite were observed.

Handling of livestock was observed to be professional. An electric goad was used occasionally for moving livestock, but its use was the minimum required to move the animals. The stockperson had access to veterinary supplies and a captive bolt gun.

Discharge

Discharge took a long time as there were periods when the vessel was docked but not unloading animals, as the assigned trucks (approximately 14) had all been filled and were in transit between the port and destination feedlots/farms. The maximum number of cattle any truck carried was 14 head. The observer noted there were no animal welfare issues during discharge.

Conclusion

The voyage was successful with the health and welfare of the cattle being maintained in a professional manner by the personnel on-board.

The observer determined that the relevant procedures relating to the management of cattle exported by sea were consistent with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Cattle (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)* requirements and additional exporter conditions.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 5 cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 5 cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 5 cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 6 cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 7 cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 7 cattle in pen – no issues identified

