

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Yangtze Harmony*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in March 2019

Report 91, September 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 4,983 cattle were loaded on the *MV Yangtze Harmony* at the Port of Townsville on 7 March 2019 and departed in the evening. The first discharge was at Panjang, Indonesia, on 16 March 2019, the second discharge was at Jakarta, Indonesia between 17 and 18 March 2019, making this a 12 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.02% (1 mortality). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The cause of this mortality was not considered to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

The following comments represent a summary of the key observations from the 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 and contingencies.

Loading

During the first few days of the voyage, adjustments were made to cattle numbers to ensure that stocking density conformed to the load plan. The crew opened the gates of adjoining pens where there was a similar line of livestock housed side by side. The observer conducted a number of checks of stocking rates on pens on each deck to confirm that the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements were met.

Personnel

A LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied this consignment and an assistant stockperson that was in training. The stockperson had many years' experience with the livestock export industry. The assistant stockperson was on their second livestock voyage, and was under direction, but had extensive livestock experience.

On-board the vessel was the master, Chief Officer (CO), stockperson, assistant stockperson, crew and the observer.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held each day at 10:00am and were attended by the master, CO, bosun and the stockpersons and observer.

The stockperson, assistant stockperson and the observer inspected all pens at around 7:00am and 3:30pm each day. This took up to 2.5 hours to complete with numerous treatments being administered.

Sixteen crew were assigned to livestock management duties during the voyage. This included 2 night watch crew that each worked a six hour shift. The night watch crew monitored the watering system and animal welfare. The observer undertook a late night inspection of the animals and crew activity, and found all to be in accordance with ASEL. The observer noted that monitoring all of the 8 decks throughout the night was a huge task for 1 crew member.

Feed and water

Feed pellets and chaff were loaded into the vessels automated feed storage and delivery system.

The livestock were fed and watered almost immediately after departure. A daily regime commenced of pellet feeding at 7:30am and 3:30pm into plastic troughs, supplemented with chaff feeding at 10:30am daily. After the first couple of days, as the animals became accustomed to the environment aboard, feed was available continuously from 7:30am to 4:00pm daily. Any leftover or contaminated fodder was tipped into pens to aid pad formation.

Potable water was created by reverse osmosis and stored in fresh water ballast tanks and pumped from Deck 1 to all the above decks. The animals accessed water by plastic water troughs attached to the side of the pen fitted with a float valve. The watering system was pushed to its limit a number of times and is discussed in more detail below. The trough space for water and fodder met the requirements as stated in ASEL.

The majority of the plastic feed bins were designed for round rails, and these had been modified for the square aluminium rails aboard this vessel. The modification is a poor fix, and they didn't fit securely on the rails. On the first feeding of the day, when livestock are particularly hungry and feeding aggressively, the bins would constantly be dislodged from the rails. There were numerous slightly smaller feed bins with the correct square fixings stored outside on Deck 8. This was raised at the daily meeting and the master advised the crew to action this, but no changes were made.

The crew's practices were also raised by the observer at the daily meetings, where the crew were observed shovelling the walkway muck over the feed bins into the pens, resulting in small amounts of contamination falling into the feed bins. Early on in the voyage, the dividing gates between the pens were swung open and left attached to the front of the pen. This restricted access to the water and feed bins. In one pen, the gate was removed entirely and left on the floor of the pen. These items were actioned by the crew immediately after they were raised at the daily management meeting.

Water was pumped from the lowest deck (Deck 1) to all other decks, via a system of poly pipes, into plastic troughs with float valves. This system worked well while there were no leaks and a number of animals were not trying to access the water all at once. The observer noted that, after the first morning feed out, the water supply to the 2 top decks slowed and at times ceased due to the demand below. The observer waited for approximately 20 minutes for the water to

commence flowing into the troughs on the 2 top decks. This was raised at the 10:00am meeting and the master advised that the back-up plan was to use a separate pump system and fill the troughs manually. The water system required a high amount of maintenance and constant monitoring for leaks as cattle chewed and licked hoses accessible to them. No impact on animal welfare was observed.

Ventilation

The *Yangtze Harmony* is a converted cargo vessel with 8 enclosed decks. The ventilation was provided by a system of exhaust and supply ducts that pass through each deck providing a very good airflow. This is evident in the temperature readings taken during the voyage where the maximum temperature observed was 29°C wet bulb temperature, 33°C dry bulb temperature with a humidity of 74%.

Temperature readings were taken on all 8 enclosed decks throughout the voyage by a crew member at 10:00am each day. There was a noticeable hot spot within the livestock area of this vessel on the stern end of Deck 8 where there is no superstructure above.

No animals were observed panting or demonstrating any signs of respiratory distress on the voyage.

Pen conditions

Sawdust was applied to the hospital pen, and to the ramp areas during the loading and discharge process.

No pen washing occurred on this voyage. The observer noted that in the last few days of the voyage, the pad build up was substantial. As the vessel was very close to land at the time, there was no opportunity to undertake any wash down. This was not helped by the numerous water leaks making pad conditions sloppy in isolated areas. Once the leaks were rectified and sawdust applied, these pad areas were once again acceptable.

Health and welfare

There was 1 mortality whilst underway and another animal was unable to be discharged as it was rejected by importer.

All medications sighted were within their use by date. Injectable medicines were administered by way of the Wester gun, and wounds treated with an antibacterial spray.

Discharge

The unloading of the vessel went smoothly in Panjang although the observer noted that crew numbers were stretched when the vessel came alongside and commenced discharge. The discharge in Jakarta took longer due to the small truck size (8-13 head capacity each) and the unavailability of trucks. Three additional staff came aboard to assist with the feeding and watering of livestock. The vessel was well prepared for unloading and the process flowed smoothly with no injuries occurring.

Conclusion

The observer noted that overall the voyage went well with no signs of animal health or welfare issues observed from loading, during the voyage and through to discharge in Indonesia.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 2 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 8 cattle in pen – no issues identified

