

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Gudali Express*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in March 2019

Report 95, September 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 3,743 cattle were loaded onto the *MV Gudali Express* at the port of Townsville on 11 March 2019 and departed on the same day. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Panjang, Indonesia, on 20 March 2019 making this a 10 day voyage.

An Independent Observer (observer) boarded the vessel in Townsville and remained on board until discharge in Panjang, Indonesia.

There were no mortalities on this voyage.

The following comments represent a summary of 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 cattle

Exporter documentation

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

Loading

Cattle were provided with access to fodder and water within 12 hours of loading as required with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

The observer checked the compliance of the load plan with ASEL requirements throughout the voyage. After loading, some pens were found to be overstocked and adjustments were made to the number of cattle in pens over the next 2 days. The LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) relocated cattle to other pens of a similar line or opened two adjoining pens. The observer noted that this method resulted in effective management of stocking density.

The stockperson also managed the changing stocking density, as cattle put on weight, towards the end of the voyage. During the voyage, some hospital pens were utilized to expand the pen area of neighbouring pens. There were empty hospital pens still available throughout the voyage. At least half of the cattle were observed to be lying down in multiple pens throughout the day and during the night watch inspection.

Personnel

The stockperson who accompanied this voyage was experienced in working with cattle and applied low stress stock handling techniques when moving or inspecting the cattle.

There were 30 crew including three officers and the observer on board the vessel that were all experienced and undertook all their duties with animal health and welfare in mind. Fifteen crew worked primarily with the cattle undertaking feeding, cleaning and watering.

The stockperson was observed to have a professional relationship with all officers and members of the crew. They provided direction to the bosun and crew as required, and gave feedback to officers during the morning management meeting in a professional and respectful manner.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held each day at 10:00am and were attended by the Chief Officer (CO), stockperson and observer after the morning rounds. The attendees discussed any observations or issues raised. Both the stockperson and CO were proactive in reporting any concerns, and acting on them immediately. The CO was also observed on the cattle decks on multiple occasions during morning rounds.

The crew followed an established standard routine during the day; cleaning and filling both feed and water troughs between 7:00am and 5:30pm. Night watchpersons monitored cattle, cleaned and topped up water between 6:00pm and 6:00am.

The stockperson and observer completed rounds between 7:00am and 10:00am, and again between 3:30pm and 6:00pm. The stockperson was conscientious in identifying animals that required treatment (e.g. lame, injured), made note of them, supplied treatment, and revisited to monitor and re-treat if required.

Feed and water

Fodder and water were both available in excess of the ASEL requirements.

Pellets were stored in three separate silos with chaff stored on the upper deck. Chaff was fed three times during the voyage, to supplement the cattle's diet in addition to the pellets. For one pen with lighter cattle, chaff was also mixed in to encourage them to eat the pellets.

Each pen had at least one automatic nose bowl, and one 30L water trough. Water troughs and nose bowls were cleaned, filled and tested regularly. When tipped out, water was tipped into a bucket and poured into the bilge, or flicked away from the pens to avoid adding moisture to the pad.

Most cattle did not know how to use the nose bowl in the first couple of days, but later more cattle were observed to use them. Some water troughs were observed to be contaminated, dry or low at certain periods during the voyage, however they still had access to nose bowls.

On Day 8, there were concerns about water availability for Decks 4 and 5; most were empty, low, or contaminated. When the crew cleaned and topped up the nose bowls, many cattle proceeded to drink immediately, and some jostling for access to the nose bowls was observed. Cattle were observed to drink from the water troughs as soon as they were filled, and many were already low by the end of the round. At the morning meeting, a suggestion was made to turn on two water pumps during watering times to avoid the reduction in pressure that occurs when all crew are watering at once. It was observed that the majority of troughs had clean water available that afternoon.

Ventilation

Ventilation was on for the duration of the voyage, and was well distributed throughout all pens. The observer randomly checked ventilation during morning rounds and noted there was a continual supply of cool air.

On day 6, an issue was observed that related to the construction of the vessel's ventilation system. During the previous night the upper deck hatches had been partially closed to prevent rain getting onto the cattle decks. As a result of this, and the combination of unfavourable winds, the presence of exhaust fumes were noted in hold 3 (particularly Decks 4 and 5). The issue was rectified immediately by re-opening the upper deck hatches. No cattle displayed signs of distress or increased respiration. The department has since received advice that this issue has now been rectified by extending the main engine exhaust.

Dry bulb temperatures ranged between 30°C to 33°C, wet bulb temperatures ranged between 26°C to 29°C and humidity ranged between 66% and 88%. No animals were observed to be panting, or exhibiting signs of heat stress during the voyage.

Pen conditions

The pads maintained condition and cattle were comfortable. Only two pens were observed to have sloppy pads on day 1, but this was resolved the next day when the pad became more formed. The stockperson noted that as this was a short voyage, deck washing would not be necessary, deck washing would only be considered if the pens became sloppy or animal welfare was a concern.

Health and welfare

The stockperson identified cattle that required treatment, noting the pen number and cattle description in a notebook. The voyage instructions requested vet treatments to be recorded daily with the animal ID, dose rate, medication, expiry date, batch number and withholding period. The stockperson noted that, as these were feeder cattle, they would be at the Indonesian feedlot for longer than the withholding period. They did not record all treatment details as per voyage instructions.

A number of cattle had treatments administered, including 20 cattle with mild lameness, one with pink eye, one that had its head stuck between bars and one with an open wound on its leg. All cattle responded to treatment and were fit for discharge. No hospital pens were required, and the stockperson noted it often caused more distress to move or isolate cattle.

Medications were stored at room temperature. When medications were administered, opened bottles were kept on Deck 5 unrefrigerated. The same syringe was used for the duration of the voyage, for all cattle and both injectable medications. This needle was sometimes observed to be washed in the cattle water troughs at the conclusion of treatments. The department has since recommended to the exporter that they review relevant procedures and training concerning medications and record keeping.

Discharge

Discharge was completed without incident.

Conclusion

The staff displayed a professional approach, and were quick to identify and remedy issues as they occurred. This resulted in a voyage where all cattle were delivered in a state of health that was fit for discharge and without mortality.

The voyage was successful, and the master, CO, stockperson and the crew worked well to maintain animal welfare in accordance with ASEL requirements.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 4 Species in pen—no issues identified



Day 6 Species in pen—no issues identified



Day 8 Species in pen—no issues identified



Day 9 Species in pen—no issues identified

