

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Al Shuwaikh*

Sheep and Cattle exported to Kuwait and Qatar in April and May 2019

Report 117, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 66,995 sheep and 450 cattle was loaded on the *MV Al Shuwaikh* at the Port of Fremantle between 23 and 24 April 2019. The vessel departed on 24 April 2019. The first discharge was at the Port of Shuwaikh, Kuwait between 9 and 10 May 2019. The final discharge was at the Port of Hamad, Qatar between 12 and 13 May 2019, making this a 21 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for sheep was 0.23% (152 mortalities) and 0.22% for cattle (1 mortality). These do not exceed the reportable mortality rates. The causes 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 and has been approved by the observer who accompanied this voyage.

Independent observations of the implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

Exporter documentation

Exporter voyage instructions relating to the care and management of the livestock during the voyage were made available, as were relevant specific management plans.

The exporter Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) and load plan were submitted to the Department prior to departure as required. An additional space requirement was imposed on the sheep consignment which allowed each animal 17.5% extra space than that specified under the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* (ASEL) requirements.

Loading

Based on the calculations of the pen sizes, livestock weights and numbers of animals in pens, the observer was satisfied with the loaded stocking densities. No issues were observed with loading except where an animal jumped a pen panel into the sea adjacent to the vessel. The animal was directed back to the nearby boat ramp and was euthanased.

Personnel

An experienced Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the voyage. The AAV and stockperson communicated and worked well together in managing the daily livestock management tasks.

The master and Chief Officer (CO) were experienced and were seen on the livestock decks regularly.

Daily routine

A management meeting was held daily at 10:00am and was attended by the CO, bosun, AAV, stockperson and observer to discuss and coordinate work plans/issues, daily mortalities, work crew instructions, feeding instructions and trough maintenance issues.

Night watch duties were assigned to 2 crew members who each worked a single 6 hour shift between 6:00pm until 6:00am. Night watch duties included replacing tipped water and feed troughs, fixing leaking water points, closing open gates, checking water pumps and fodder tanks and watching out for any other issues.

The stockperson commenced daytime duties with a walk around the decks to check with the livestock crew whether there were any issues from the previous day.

Feed and water

The observer did not note any issues with feed and water. Feed and water supplies were checked regularly.

Ventilation

Ventilation was adequate at all times with the aroma of ammonia noticeable on some lower decks during the warmer and more humid days around the equatorial region.

Daily temperatures were recorded for each deck. The maximum wet and dry bulb temperatures were recorded around the equatorial regions (days eight and nine) on the lower decks. The maximum temperatures were 31°C wet bulb and 33°C dry bulb.

Pen conditions

There was no washing of the cattle decks during the voyage. The cattle pens were manually cleaned on one occasion with additional manual cleaning each day around the cattle pens to remove manure. The observer noted that the cattle pad management was appropriate.

Around the equatorial region, some sheep pad conditions became moist on the lower decks. However pads were firm and no adverse health and welfare impacts were observed. Management of the sheep pads was considered appropriate.

Health and welfare

There were 152 sheep mortalities during the voyage with most of the mortalities attributed to inanition based on post mortem inspection.

There was one cattle mortality that was a sudden death. No post mortem was undertaken and the cause of death was not definitively established.

Increased respiratory rate was observed around the equatorial region and the average heat stress score was between one and two. Otherwise, no other sign of heat stress was observed throughout the voyage including signs of discomfort.

Hospital pens were used when necessary for three cattle and approximately 20 sheep at different times. Three cattle were treated for suspected respiratory diseases, lameness / leg swelling and pink eye. The sheep were treated for pink eye, lameness and inanition.

Discharge

No issues were noted during the discharge of livestock in Kuwait. The observer disembarked in Kuwait and was not present at the discharge in Qatar.

Conclusion

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Sheep in pen — no issues identified



Day 6 Sheep in pen — no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 11 Sheep in pen — no issues identified



Day 14 Sheep in pen — no issues identified

