

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Yantze Harmony*

## Cattle exported to Russia in May/June 2019

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Report 126, October 2019

### Voyage summary

The first shipment of 2,518 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Yangtze Harmony* at the Port of Portland on 13 May 2019. A second shipment of 1,135 cattle was loaded at the Port of Fremantle on 19 May 2019. The consignment totalling 3,653 cattle was discharged at the Port of Novorossiysk, Russia between 25 and 26 June 2019, making this a 45 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.08 % (three cattle). The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable level. 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 and has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

### Independent observations of the 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 cattle were loaded in accordance with the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)* requirements and the Exporter long haul management plan. The cattle were redistributed to maximise the use of available pen space during the voyage.

Sawdust was spread in all pens at loading and after each deck wash with the exception of the final wash when it was distributed only in hospital and selected pens.

#### Personnel

One Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and two LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) accompanied the voyage. The observer noted the AAV and stockpersons delivered a high standard of cattle husbandry throughout the voyage.

The master, Chief Officer (CO) and bosun were experienced in the carriage of livestock and worked well with the AAV and stockpersons. The bosun effectively supervised the crew and ensured the standard of trough and pen maintenance remained high throughout the voyage.

### **Daily routine**

A management meeting was held each day at 10:00am (except on 2 days due to rough weather) and was attended by the CO, AAV, stockpersons and the observer. The attendees discussed route information, climatic conditions, trough maintenance, fodder rationing, water consumption, pad condition, inspections, hospital cases, treatments and the daily report.

The cattle were fed at 7:00am and 3:30pm each day. Between these times, the crew attended to water trough maintenance, chaff feeding and the clearing of walkways.

Three crew members were assigned to night watch duties over two shifts between 6:00pm until 6:00pm. The night duties include maintenance of water supply and repair of water leaks. The observer attended night watch duties and found tasks were completed to a satisfactory standard.

### **Feed and water**

Fodder was stored in three silos. The feeding system delivered the fodder to chutes on each deck and the crew were required to manually fill the feed troughs. Bagged pellets and chaff were stored on the sundeck and in unstocked pens. The observer noted the fodder loaded exceeded the ASEL requirements.

The cattle were fed twice a day. There were two classes of cattle loaded for the voyage. One class of cattle demonstrated increased competition for fodder compared with the other class of cattle. The class of cattle that demonstrated increased fodder competition were spread into additional pens.

Water was produced by two reverse osmosis plants. The vessel had an automatic water supply system that supplied water to plastic water troughs with floats.

### **Ventilation**

The vessel had a ducted ventilation system that effectively distributed air into to the cattle pens.

Temperature readings were collected using a hand held device each morning at 10:30am. The deck temperatures around the equatorial region were around 31°C dry bulb and 28°C wet bulb. An increase in temperature and humidity were experienced around the Eastern Mediterranean through to the final discharge at the port in Russia. However, no signs indicative of heat stress were observed.

### **Pen conditions**

The observer noted that the pen conditions were considered to be good during most of the voyage due to the relatively cool conditions and regular deck washing.

Higher temperatures and increased water consumption together with Black Sea discharge restrictions combined in the final few days of the voyage to negatively impact on the pad quality.

To mitigate the wetter pads, the crew spread sawdust in the pens and no adverse welfare impacts were observed.

### **Health and welfare**

During the voyage cattle were treated for lameness, eye conditions, pneumonia and shy feeders. The level of competitive feeding at the troughs resulted in a number of animals being segregated and treated for mild traumatic lameness and decreasing body condition. The cattle were spread into additional pens to reduce the fodder competition.

Treatments were administered with early intervention by the stockpersons and the AAV.

A mild increase in respiratory rate was observed during transit of the equatorial region but no signs of heat stress were observed.

There were 3 mortalities during the voyage. The first mortality occurred when an animal died following sedation to examine a deteriorating leg injury, the post mortem investigation found the animal had septicaemia. Two further mortalities occurred due to an intestinal issue and an animal unfit to be discharged because of a leg infection/enlarged foreleg.

### **Discharge**

During discharge, fodder and water continued to be supplied to the cattle remaining on the vessel. No animal welfare issues were noted during the discharge.

### **Conclusion**

The observer noted the AAV and stockpersons delivered a very high standard of cattle husbandry throughout this long haul voyage.

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

## Representative photographs of the voyage

**Day 2 Cattle in pen no issues identified**



**Day 10 Cattle in pen – after deck wash**



**Day 14 Cattle in pen - no issues identified**



**Day 19 Cattle in pen – no issues identified**



**Day 22 Cattle in pen – no issues identified**



**Day 33 Cattle in pen – no issues identified**

