

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Bahijah*

Cattle exported to Israel in June 2019

Report 145, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 5,173 cattle were loaded onto the MV *Bahijah* at the Port of Fremantle between 13 and 14 June 2019. The vessel departed on 14 June 2019. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Eilat, Israel between 2 and 3 July 2019, making this a 21 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.06% (3 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. 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.

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

There were sufficient competent and experienced personnel and crew available to load the vessel in a manner that prevented injury and minimised stress on the animals. Fodder and water were provided to the cattle well within 12 hours of loading and there were no mortalities or other serious injuries to the cattle observed during loading.

The pens were not strictly loaded in accordance with the load plan; however, the Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and the LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) made adjustments to pen densities in the first 5 days of the voyage in order to utilise the space available on the vessel.

Personnel

The master and officers were responsible for the management of the vessel and livestock. The master was observed inspecting the cattle decks on several occasions. The Chief Officer (CO) was actively involved on-deck recording temperatures and inspecting the practices of the crew.

The bosun directed the crew in the feeding and watering of the cattle, cleaning troughs, pens and laneways, moving cattle around the decks and making repairs and maintaining equipment.

The stockperson and AAV accompanied the consignment. The stockperson and AAV made decisions relating to the health and welfare of the livestock.

Daily routine

A management meeting was held each day at 10am and was attended by the master, CO, stockperson, bosun and the observer. The attendees discussed the estimated time of arrival at Eilat, cattle mortalities, treatments, temperature recordings, pen conditions, cattle condition, fodder and water consumption and the remaining fodder and sawdust.

Night watch duties were performed each night. The duty of the night watch personnel was to ensure clean feed and water was always available and to report any issues.

Feed and water

Pelleted fodder was stored in bunkers and the feeding system delivered the pellets directly to troughs which were hung on the outside of each pen. Some pens were required to be manually fed by the crew. The cattle were fed three times a day starting at 6:00am, 10:00am and 3:00pm. Top up feeds and hay distribution also occurred when requested by the stockperson.

Desalinated water was reticulated to aluminium troughs in the pens throughout the vessel. The deck fitter was observed numerous times carrying out required maintenance, adjusting floats and fixing water leaks.

The automatic feeding and water supply worked effectively throughout the voyage.

Ventilation

The enclosed lower decks 1 to 4 were well ventilated. Special Deck 4 seemed to have a strong smell of ammonia. A portable fan was requested by the AAV and was installed which improved the ventilation. Decks 5 to 7 had ducted air and exhaust fans and natural open deck ventilation.

An area on Deck 5 was found to be very warm and humid and further investigation established that the ventilation fan was drawing air from outside the adjacent engine room. The ventilation fan supplying the area was reversed which had a noticeable effect and improved the conditions.

There was 1 fixed thermometer on each deck that was read every day before the morning management meeting. A hand held device was used to confirm the readings. No heat stress was observed during the voyage.

Pen conditions

Bedding was spread in the pens prior to the vessel's departure from Fremantle. The decks were washed down on three occasions during the voyage. The drainage of the deck during washing worked effectively.

Rough weather was encountered as the vessel crossed the Arabian Sea so the deck washout was delayed by two days due to safety issues. Deck 5 was inundated with sea water during the rough sea conditions however no animal welfare issues were observed.

No issues were noted with the pad condition other than inundation on Deck 5 during rough sea conditions.

Health and welfare

The stockperson and the AAV inspected the cattle twice a day and they were quick to identify sick or injured cattle requiring treatment and administer treatments as required.

The *Bos taurus* cattle were given extra room, especially the heavy bulls. The observer noted that in many of the pens all the cattle could lay down at one time.

There were three mortalities during the voyage. The cause of the mortalities were a fractured leg, a recumbency due to injury and a severe infection.

The stockperson and the AAV treated cattle for lameness, swollen legs, respiratory disease and shy feeders. There were sufficient doses of veterinary drugs and equipment on-board the vessel.

The stockperson, AAV and crew were observed using low stress stock handling methods to load, discharge and move cattle around the vessel.

Discharge

During the discharge the stockperson, AAV and crew were observed using low stress stock handling methods. There were no animal welfare issues observed.

Conclusion

No animal welfare or heat stress issues observed during the voyage. The stockperson, AAV and crew worked well to maintain a high standard of animal welfare.

The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)* requirements.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 13 Cattle in wet in pen – inundation from rough sea conditions



Day 14 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

