

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Yangtze Fortune*

## Cattle exported to China in July 2019

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Report 152, December 2019

### Voyage summary

A consignment of 2,303 cattle was loaded on the *MV Yangtze Fortune* at the Port of Fremantle on 29 June 2019 and departed in the evening. The vessel discharged the cattle at the Port of Huanghua, China on 13 and 14 July, making this a 16 day voyage.

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

The overall mortality rate for the cattle was 0.35% (8 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. 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, and contingencies.

#### Loading

The observer assessed the load plan stocking density and found the plan had referred to the incorrect table used to calculate stocking density in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)*. However, the observer found the actual numbers of animals loaded complied with the correct ASEL table making this an administrative error with no effect on animal health or welfare.

While no adjustments were required as a result of the administrative error, adjustments were made to the stocking densities in the pens during the voyage to ensure good animal health and welfare outcomes.

#### Personnel

There was an experienced Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) on board responsible for implementing the exporters' procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage.

The bosun and the stock crew had good stock skills that enabled them to effectively manage the feed, water, deck washing and identifying animals requiring attention.

The master of the vessel was keen and interested in animal health and welfare and actively managed the daily management meetings. The master and his officers were very helpful in assisting the observer with any concerns or issues raised during the voyage.

### **Daily routine**

The daily management meeting was held at 10:00am and was attended by the master, Chief Officer, chief engineer (occasionally), superintendent, bosun, stockperson, AAV and the observer. Each attendee was given an opportunity to contribute and discuss issues. The AAV and stockperson provided reports on treatments and directions to the bosun on any feeding requirements for particular animal/s. The daily report was provided after the meetings.

The AAV would accompany the stockperson twice a day during their rounds to assess the cattle. The stockperson would ensure that all animals were on their feet and mobile.

Two night watch officers worked 6 hour shifts from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am. Their main responsibilities were to detect any misadventures such as injured animals, water leakages, electrical issues etc.

### **Feed and water**

The cattle were fed high quality, pelletised feed that was the same as the one used in the feedlot prior to loading. In addition to the pellets, chaff was also fed. The quantity of feed was gradually increased over the duration of the voyage until discharge.

The crew manually fed the cattle under the supervision of the bosun. Feed was accessed from secondary silos on both port and starboard sides on each of the 8 decks. The crew kept the decks clean by regularly sweeping the laneways.

The cattle were fed at 7:00am and 1:00pm with up to three top feeds.

The observer noted that when individual feed and water troughs were knocked off the pen rails, it resulted in the stock not having access to feed or water from those troughs until rectified by crew. The dropped feed troughs also led to considerable wastage of feed and the dropped water troughs led to water accumulating in pens. The issue was appropriately raised and a permanent solution of bolting the troughs to the rails was proposed to be implemented prior to the next voyage.

Water was available via a continuous flow troughs with float valves. Water troughs were cleaned and emptied daily. The observer noted that although some feed and water troughs were knocked off the pen rails, there was still adequate, good quality feed and water available to the cattle at all times.

### **Ventilation**

The vessel had an excellent ventilation system that covered all areas of the cargo decks and was supported by ducted PVC pipes to cover dead spots in various areas of the cargo hold.

Temperature and humidity readings were taken and recorded daily on 8 decks during the voyage.

### **Pen conditions**

The deck flooring had a non-slip surface with additional sawdust added prior to the cattle being loaded. The pad varied in condition during the voyage from dry to liquid. The pad was managed by washing to remove waste material.

Deck washing occurred on Day-6 (decks 4-8), on Day-7 (decks 1-3), on Day 10 (decks 4-8) and on day-11 (decks 1-3). Sawdust was applied to decks 4-8 as they contained the heavy cattle. Washing consisted of the floor areas only with no shooting of water above the lower legs.

### **Health and welfare**

The AAV and stockperson both demonstrated a high level of commitment to animal health and welfare and worked well with the bosun and their team to ensure adequate and appropriate feed was available to stock in sick pens.

All animals requiring treatment were assessed by the AAV who determined and administered the type and duration of the treatments. The AAV also made the final decision on any animal that required euthanasia. Mortalities were recorded and a post-mortem was conducted by the AAV.

There were 8 mortalities on the voyage comprising one to misadventure (euthanased), one cellulitis with the cause of death in the other six undetermined. A post-mortem was conducted on three animals, ruling out bronchopneumonia and hyperthermia.

### **Discharge**

The discharge was uneventful and was completed in approximately 20 hours.

### **Conclusion**

The voyage was successfully concluded with good team work from the AAV, stockperson and full support of the vessel's superintendent, master and the crew. There were no major animal health and welfare issues observed.

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

## Representative photographs of the voyage

**Day 1 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 3 Cattle in pen—Dislodged troughs**



**Day 5 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 7 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 11 Cattle in pen—wet pen**



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

