

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Bison Express*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in July 2019

Report 165, December 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 1,600 cattle was loaded onto the MV *Bison Express* at the Port of Geelong between 31 July and 1 August 2019. The vessel departed in the morning of the 1 August 2019. The vessel discharged the cattle at the Port of Belawan, Indonesia between 15 and 16 August 2019, making this a 17 day voyage.

There were no mortalities during this voyage.

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

The following comments are 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 arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management, from loading through to discharge, and contingencies.

Loading

Pre-loading preparation was carried out by the crew. Solid panelling was applied to corner areas and sawdust was applied to ramps and main alleyways, as per the voyage instructions.

Loading ramps were operational and positioned correctly, laid flush onto the vessel deck with no gaps or step downs observed.

All livestock had access to fodder and water as soon as they were loaded, as per the voyage instructions and the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 (version 2.3)* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

The observer noted that 3 pens were not stocked in accordance with the load plan and did not meet ASEL requirements. This issue was brought to the attention of the stockperson who made arrangements to adjust the pens.

Personnel

There was 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.

There were dedicated livestock crew, including the bosun that cared for the cattle on the vessel. The observer noted there was sufficient crew on-board who had experience in the care of livestock to assist the accredited stockperson. The observer commented on the professionalism of the officers, crew and stockperson who communicated well with each other and had a common goal of ensuring the health and welfare of the livestock.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held each day at 10:00am and were attended by the master, Chief Officer (CO), bosun, stockperson and observer. At the meetings the stockperson and bosun discussed feed adjustments for the day and emphasised that attention be paid to the cleanliness of nose bowls and water troughs.

The cattle were fed twice a day with top ups of both fodder and chaff made during the day as per the stockpersons instructions.

The stockperson, crew and observer would walk the decks and inspect the condition of animals and pens throughout the day.

The crew were observed on a daily basis checking that water troughs were clean and in working order. The bosun monitored the water trough delivery systems and would carry out maintenance when required.

Two nightwatch crew were each assigned a 6 hour shift to monitor the consignment including patrolling decks, nose bowl inspection and manual watering from 6:00pm to 12:00am, the second shift would perform duties from 12:00pm to 6:00am.

Feed and water

The cattle were fed pellets and chaff daily calculated by body weight. Feed troughs were observed to be clean throughout the voyage. Animals were observed having easy access to fodder troughs.

The stockperson worked with the crew to ensure animals had adequate feed and water during the voyage including as a precaution one animal that was shy on feeding.

Food and water was available throughout the voyage. Animals were very content to move around the pens to access water while others were feeding. The animals fed and drank in a calm manner.

Ventilation

The ventilation was operational throughout the voyage and there were no symptoms of heat stress, animals were relaxed and no signs of panting was observed.

Temperatures were recorded once per day on each deck, generally between 9:00am and 10:00am. However, if ambient temperatures exceeded 31°C, then two daily readings were taken,

with the second reading taken between 3:00pm and 4:00pm to capture the hottest part of the day. Daily temperature and humidity records for each deck were recorded in the stockpersons daily report.

Pen conditions

Pads were well maintained throughout the voyage. Prior to deck wash out, pads were mostly dry and spongy and assisted as a cushion for the recumbent cattle. Pen conditions were rated as good. Additional sawdust was applied to pens containing larger animals. All the decks were washed on three separate occasions and the alleyways were well maintained and cleaned daily.

On multiple occasions, the observer saw 50% or more animals lying down.

Health and welfare

There were no mortalities on this voyage. There were no animals injured, no illness detected and no treatments were administered. One shy feeder was isolated in a hospital pen as a precaution. The cattle appeared to the stockperson visually to be in sound health.

Discharge

All cattle had access to feed and water while waiting to be discharged and during the discharge period. Animals were discharged in accordance with ASEL.

Conclusion

The selection and preparation of suitable cattle contributed to the success of the voyage, as did the on-board management and cooperation between the stockperson, officers and crew was evident.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 4 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 11 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 14 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

