

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Brahman Express*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in September 2019

Report 183, December 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 4,124 cattle were loaded onto the *MV Brahman Express* at the Port of Townsville on 8 September 2019 and departed in the evening. The vessel discharged the cattle at the Port of Panjang, Indonesia, between 16 and 17 September 2019, making this a 10 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.05% (2 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 have 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

Loading proceeded smoothly and no animal health or welfare issues observed. The cattle were loaded in accordance with the load plan and the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements with minor adjustments made to the number of cattle in some pens during the first two days of the voyage. The stocking density allowed over 50% of animals to be able to rest simultaneously.

Personnel

The vessel's officers and livestock crew were diligent and effective.

There was a LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) on board responsible for implementing exporters' procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage. The stockperson was experienced in livestock voyages and was accompanied by a trainee stockperson on their first voyage. The stockperson inspected and

assessed the condition of the cattle throughout the day and moved the cattle to hospital pens as required.

Daily routine

The stockperson checked the decks in the early morning and got the animals to their feet to identify any lameness, shy feeders or ill cattle, and then roved intermittently throughout the decks between 6:30am and 5:30pm. A management meeting was held each day at 10:00am and was attended by the Chief Officer (CO), bosun, stockperson and observer. The stockperson would direct the bosun and crew as to feeding requirements, and proportions of pellets or chaff. Cattle were fed three times per day from early morning, late morning and mid-afternoon with top-ups as required.

The cattle were fed 4 times each day for the first four days after which the stockperson noted the cattle did not seem to be eating the desired quantity of fodder. Therefore on Day 5 the stockperson added an additional top up feed of pellets which resulted in higher rates of feeding.

Two livestock crew shared the night watch duties and each worked one of two 6 hour shifts between 6:00pm and 6:00am. Duties included checking for misadventure, water spills, ventilation failures, livestock illness and welfare issues, manually watering all pens through each night as directed by the stockperson from Day 4.

Feed and water

There were no interruptions to the water supply during the voyage and nose bowls and water troughs were kept clean. The stockperson implemented a manual watering system by placing water troughs alongside the pens as a supplement for some cattle that had not yet become accustomed to using the nose bowls.

A prescribed feeding and watering schedule was outlined in the exporter voyage instructions for the master and the stockperson. However the instructions made no mention of chaff feeding, and required two feed-outs with no top-up. It also required set manual watering times from the start of the voyage. Due to these issues, the stockperson and crew developed a feeding and watering routine over the first half of the voyage that the observer considered was more practical, and which resulted in excellent animal health and welfare outcomes for the consignment.

The observer noted there were no observed adverse animal health or welfare outcomes, as all livestock had excellent access to fodder up to and throughout the discharge period.

Ventilation

The ventilation system was reliable and consistent during the voyage and no health or welfare issues were observed.

The wet and dry bulb temperature and humidity were taken daily. The aft portion of Deck 1 on the vessel, which was surrounded by the engine room bulkhead, recorded the highest dry bulb temperatures during the voyage and no adverse animal health or welfare issues were observed on this part of the vessel.

Pen conditions

Pen conditions were consistently firm throughout the voyage and there were no water spill events that created sloppy areas in any of the pens. No wash down of the decks was conducted due to the continued firmness of the pad condition. There were no adverse impacts on cattle health and welfare as a result of pen conditions.

Wood shavings were added to alleyways and ramps before and during unloading. The stockperson ensured that adequate amounts of shavings were present on each deck ready for use during discharge. Lighting on all enclosed decks was adequate.

Health and welfare

The first mortality was consistent with pneumonia, and there was occasional evidence of possible bovine respiratory disease (BRD) in the consignment. The stockperson treated several suspect cases of BRD as soon as possible from Day 6 onwards. During the voyage the stockperson administered approximately 35 individual treatments for lameness, possible BRD, and wounds.

On Day 2 of the voyage, an animal was hospitalised due to weakness in the hind legs. After several days of treatment there was no improvement in its condition and it was humanely euthanased.

There were no cattle observed with symptoms of heat stress during the voyage. No variations in appetite or herd behaviour were observed through the voyage as a result of weather conditions or elevated wet bulb temperatures in the livestock decks.

The drugs and equipment available in the vessels veterinary room exceeded the minimum ASEL requirements.

Discharge

The stockpersons and crew were observed to demonstrate low stress livestock handling techniques and patience during discharge and no animal health or welfare issues were observed.

Conclusion

The observer noted the crew and the stockperson performed their jobs and functions well and the vessel's infrastructure was fit for purpose.

The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements, apart from minor non-compliances noted above.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1. No issues identified



Day 3. No issues identified



Day 5. No issues identified



Day 6 pad. No issues identified



Day 6. No issues identified



Hospital pen. No issues

