

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Ocean Drover*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in October 2019

Report 197, April 2020

Voyage summary

Four consignments totalling 17,970 cattle were loaded onto the MV Ocean Drover at Townsville between 29 and 31 October 2019. The vessel departed on 31 October 2019. The first discharge was at Jakarta, Indonesia between 6 and 10 November 2019. The second discharge was at Panjang, Indonesia, and completed on 11 November 2019, making this a 14 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate was 0.08% (14 mortalities). This did not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The following comments are 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, including contingencies.

Loading

Cattle were loaded according to the load plan, which was compliant with the [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 \(version 2.3\)](#) (ASEL) requirements.

Additional requirements for a consignment of dairy heifers on this voyage for extra bedding and pen density were adhered to.

No animal welfare issues were observed during loading.

Personnel

Five LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) accompanied the consignments and were responsible for implementing the exporters' procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage.

The vessel's officers and crew worked well together to maintain conditions for livestock.

Communications between all staff was generally easy going and professional during the voyage.

Daily routine

Meetings were held daily at 10:00am between the Chief Officer (CO), stockpersons, bosun and the observer. The master and CO engaged with the stockpersons regarding livestock care routines. There was **generally a positive atmosphere** between staff during these meetings.

Feed and water

Fodder was loaded in accordance with ASEL requirements.

The vessel was fitted with both reverse osmosis and desalination machinery to produce water which was delivered automatically via a float-valve mechanism to troughs. The observer noted that the refill-rates in some water troughs was slow, **however no negative health implications were observed.**

Cattle were fed twice daily via automatic gravity-fed delivery pipes. Most cattle adapted quickly to pelleted feed, with daily feed and water consumption progressively increasing throughout the voyage.


Ventilation


The ventilation system functioned without interruption on this voyage. Decks 1-5 were fully enclosed and decks 6-9 were open.


Some **dairy cattle** on Deck 7 were identified during discharge in Jakarta on day 10 of the voyage with elevated respiratory rates and were assigned a **heat stress score of 2**. Affected animals were moved into available pens vacated by discharged animals, which alleviated signs of heat stress in these animals.


On day 10 during discharge in Jakarta, a **maximum wet bulb temperature of 30.6°C** was recorded by the observer on Deck 6 forward. Cattle from this deck were due for discharge at the port of Jakarta. They appeared heat affected and were assigned a **heat stress score of 2** and were discharged later that day.

Pen conditions

The observer verified that the vessel pen area allocation was within ASEL requirements. Wash down of closed decks occurred on days 5 and 6, which was noted by the observer to improve the pad conditions and air quality for the cattle. No wash was performed on Deck 5 forward as the stockperson had deemed this to be potentially too stressful for this particular group of animals. This resulted in heavier pad conditions, however the observer commented that this did not have visible negative health implications for the cattle. 

The observer identified sections of flooring were a potential welfare risk for cattle. In several pens, stacked metal gates were lying on the pen floor. The observer noted cattle slipping on these gates. One heifer, which originated from this affected pen, was identified by the observer in a hospital pen with a foot laceration. No other animals were noted to have negative health implications as a result of this issue. 

On day 8, during the first point of discharge in Jakarta, some pens on Deck 6 and Deck 7 demonstrated build-up of effluent up to 30cm deep. Some cattle experienced these conditions for 30 hours. The observer understood that this was due to the inability to drain effluent whilst the vessel was in port. No obvious negative health implications were observed upon the cattle despite these poor pad conditions, with affected animals later discharged at Panjang. 

On day 9, also during the first point of discharge in Jakarta, water troughs were observed to be leaking, affecting some pens on Deck 6 aft. There were no obvious negative health implications for the cattle in the pens affected by this water leak. 

Overall, other than the above issues, pad conditions in the main pens were generally managed acceptably throughout the voyage.

Health and welfare


A total of 14 mortalities occurred on this voyage, accounting for a mortality rate of 0.08%. The causes for mortalities were unknown for one animal, attributed to pneumonia in eight animals, euthanasia for injury or lameness in three animals, and euthanasia for ill thrift in two animals.

The observer noted that five cattle with pneumonia on Deck 5 were not improving on 4 November and died despite treatment. Observations indicated that some cattle within this group appeared less accustomed to handling and demonstrated flighty behaviour.

The observer noted that three cattle showed signs consistent with ASEL rejection criteria. Two steers were identified on day 9 with short cut horn buds which were not completely healed. No health issues developed with these cattle and they were discharged in Jakarta. One animal was identified on day 1 demonstrating non-weight bearing lameness consistent with ASEL rejection criteria, however it was unknown if this occurred during the loading process. This animal remained non-weight bearing for the duration of the voyage despite treatment and was later discharged in Jakarta on day 9.

One animal was identified on day 4 by the observer demonstrating non-weight bearing lameness as a result of a traumatic injury. This animal remained non-weight bearing despite treatment and was later discharged in Jakarta on day 9.

Discharge

During discharge at the port of Jakarta, the observer witnessed non-compliant handling. No negative health or welfare issues were observed during unloading at the port of Panjang. 

Conclusion

The observer determined that the majority of procedures were complied with during the voyage, however some were not consistently followed.

The department addressed the animals which were consistent with ASEL rejection criteria with the relevant exporter.

The department addressed the non-compliant handling at discharge with the exporter.

Representative photographs of the voyage (examples)

Day 3 - Cattle in pen. No issues identified.



Day 5 Cattle in pen. No issues identified.



Day 4 – Cattle in pens. No issues identified.



Day 7 – Effluent build-up in affected pens on discharge.



Day 9 – Cattle in pens awaiting discharge. No issues identified.



Day 9 – Cattle in pen. No issues identified.

