

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Maysora*

Cattle and sheep exported to Israel and Jordan in November 2018

Report 32, February 2020

Voyage summary

A consignment of 7,489 cattle and 41,301 sheep was loaded onto the MV *Maysora* at Fremantle Western Australia on 8 to 10 November 2018. Cattle and sheep were unloaded at the port of Eilat, Israel between 29 November 2018 and 1 December 2018. The remainder of the sheep were unloaded in Aqaba, Jordan between 1 and 3 December 2018 making this a 26 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 0.07% (5 mortalities) and for the sheep was 0.23% (96 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

The exporter Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) and load plan were submitted prior to departure as required. Load plan calculations were based on the average weight of each breed/type being allocated to a particular deck and area based on the [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 \(version 2.3\)](#) (ASEL).

Exporter arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge, including contingencies.

Loading

At the commencement of the voyage, some decks appeared to be stocked at higher densities than the load plan. On the first two days of the voyage, adjustments to the number of cattle in some pens and between some decks were made. Minor adjustments were made throughout the journey. After adjustments, the pens were stocked in accordance with the load plan except that some healthy cattle were held in the designated hospital pens. There was ample room when

hospital pens were needed for hospital cases. In many of the cattle pens, more than 50% of the cattle could lie down at any time. The sheep had ample space to lie down on all decks.

Personnel

The crew included an Australian Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and two LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons). The AAV duties included monitoring cattle deck 7 and decks 8 – 11. The stockperson duties included monitoring cattle decks 1–6.

The master was experienced and demonstrated a high level of awareness of the on board conditions and high standard of welfare.

Livestock crew tasks included deck washing, monitoring animals, feeding, cleaning water and feed troughs, caring for recumbent livestock and identifying and repairing leaks. The livestock crew were managed very well under the Chief Officer (CO).

Daily routine

The master was observed to walk the decks at least once daily. A daily meeting was held and the meeting discussions included feeding plans, deck washing, sawdust use, hospital pens and scheduled arrival in ports.

The AAV and stockpersons inspected, treated livestock and monitored the conditions in the morning and afternoon rounds. The livestock crew worked rotating shifts between 6:00am and 6:00pm.

Two night watch persons were rostered between 6:00pm and 6:00am and their duties included checking and fixing leaks, identification of animal welfare issues and cleaning feed and water troughs.

Feed and water

The vessel has a gravity fed system that supplies pellets to the feed troughs. In addition, some pens have troughs that are manually filled. The livestock were fed twice per day. The cattle received an extra feed on the day prior to wash down of the decks.

There were two feed and one water trough allocated per pen. Some gates between pens were opened to enable access to a greater number of troughs. Early on in the voyage, some troughs were lowered because the cattle and lambs were considered smaller than the average carried on the vessel and were having some difficulty accessing troughs.

Minor issues in the first week including not turning water back on after cleaning or repairs and swinging gates blocking trough access were identified and resolved. During the voyage, a small number of sheep were trained to assist discharge operations but had some restricted feed and water access throughout the voyage. However the stockperson made efforts to ensure that the sheep had access to drinking water at all times.

Water was produced by two reverse osmosis units and supplied to automatically filled troughs. Water troughs were cleaned regularly.

Ventilation

The ventilation system is controlled at a control panel on the bridge. There are a range of inlet and exhaust fans with monitoring by specialised personnel. The hottest part of the vessel was in hold 5 on decks 1-6 along the bulk head. Extra ventilation fans were sited to increase the ventilation performance in this area. During the hotter times of the voyage, the vessel took a zig zag route to improve the ventilation.

Fixed thermometers were located in the centre of each deck. Temperatures were taken daily scheduled for 6 hourly intervals. Temperatures were around 25°C and 72% humidity early in the voyage rising to around 31–32°C and 79–83% humidity.

Pen conditions

The cattle decks were consistently boggy and moist and washed on three occasions during the voyage.

Some sheep pens on decks 10 and 11 became wet following rain. Sawdust was spread to improve the conditions. The sheep deck pads remained dry for the majority of the journey.

Health and welfare

There were 96 sheep mortalities during the voyage. The AAV and stockpersons identified sheep with severe diarrhoea, inanition, respiratory disease and lameness. The cause of the mortalities were generally not definitively established by post mortem examination. The observer noted that on occasions, the AAV did not respond with timely intervention of sheep that were very unwell or required euthanasia.

There were five cattle mortalities during the voyage. The cause of the mortalities was not definitively established by post mortem examination. Cattle treatments were administered for lameness, recumbency, leg laceration and respiratory disease.

The stockpersons provided excellent care and handling of the animals on decks that they managed. Recumbent animals were isolated and provided fodder, water and bedding.

However, the observer noted that the care of the recumbent cattle was a lower standard on deck 7 because the recumbent animals were not separated into a pen to provide access to feed, water and bedding.

Some treatments were recorded early in the voyage but later the recording of treatments diminished.

The observer noted that some of the crew were unsure of some of the correct animal handling procedures which resulted in examples of inappropriate incidents. The head stockperson made a significant effort to correct actions by discussions with the bosun and the other stockpersons.

One lamb was born on the voyage and held in a separate pen. The birth was not included in the daily report.

Discharge

Two sheep escaped at discharge. The observer noted some non-compliant handling of the sheep when caught. Poor handling of the sheep was also noted on the discharge ramp including dragging sheep by the legs.

At discharge, the observer noted that one blind bull and some hospital cases that struggled to bear weight on all legs were unloaded. Some sheep which were unable to be discharged were left on empty decks. The AAV subsequently euthanased the sheep.

Conclusion

The master, CO and stockpersons demonstrated high level of concern for animal welfare. No issues were found with feed and water supplies during the voyage.

Although this voyage did not exceed the reportable mortality rate, the standard of care supplied to the animals varied. Some sheep did not have timely care or intervention and the care of some recumbent cattle was not consistent with the standard practice of separation, supply of bedding and ready access to feed and water whilst recumbent. The department has addressed these concerns with the AAV.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 2 Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 10 Sheep in pen – no issues identified



Day 14 Sheep in pen – no issues identified



Day 17 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

