

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Greyman Express*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in November 2018

Report 33, August 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 2,437 cattle were loaded onto the MV *Greyman Express* in Townsville on 10 November 2018. The cattle were unloaded from the vessel at the port of Hai Phong, Vietnam on 20 and 21 November 2018, making this a 12 day voyage.

An independent observer (observer) boarded the vessel at Townsville and remained on board until completion of discharge.

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.16% (four mortalities).

The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable level as stated in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)*. 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 from the observer that accompanied the voyage. The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

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

Loading

During the process of loading, all ramps were covered with deep sawdust to prevent slipping and injury whilst on ramps. After loading, some of the larger framed cattle were noted with minor trucking injuries and abrasions.

Hospital pens were located on each deck. During the adjustment of stocking densities in the first few days of the voyage, some hospital pens were used to hold healthy cattle. However, adequate hospital pens were available.

Personnel

An Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) was not required to be present on the voyage.

The crew included a LiveCorp Accredited stockperson (stockperson) with extensive experience on livestock vessels.

The Master, Chief Officer (CO) and bosun were very experienced officers. Each officer was competent, professional and familiar with reduced stress livestock handling methods. The officers, stockperson and crew were proactive in managing and mitigating potential risk factors.

Daily routine

A daily meeting was held every day at 10:00am with the CO, bosun, stockperson and the observer. The topics of discussion included fodder, water, temperature and humidity readings, pad conditions, treatments of cattle and issues of concern.

Each morning, the stockperson and bosun liaised with the night crew and walked all decks noting the fodder and water consumption rates and cattle with issues of concern. Emergencies were attended to, treatments, feeding and deck management duties were continued until noon. The livestock then left to rest until the afternoon feeding time.

In the afternoon, the stockperson and bosun walked all decks before liaising with the night crew as they commenced their shifts.

The crew understood and appreciated their roles relating to livestock management, husbandry and reporting.

Night watch crew work two shifts each evening of the voyage between 6:00pm and 6:00am. A single night watch person is responsible for monitoring the five decks during each shift. The duties of the night watch is to monitor the health and welfare of the livestock, ensuring clean water is supplied, feed troughs are clear of faeces and checking pen infrastructure.

Feed and water

Feed consisted of pellets and chaff. All livestock were fed two to three times daily. The first pellet feeding commences at 7:00am and the second pellet feeding commences 3:30pm. Chaff was fed to all decks on five voyage days and only to Decks 4 and 5 on the other voyage days at 10:30am.

Prior to each feeding, contaminated, unconsumed fodder is discarded. Some larger framed cattle were having some issues with access to feed troughs because of their size. Troughs were placed on the floor in the front of the pens to improve the fodder access.

Throughout the voyage and discharge, the livestock were never without access to good quality uncontaminated fodder.

The water was supplied to the cattle by one or two water bowls in the corners of all pens and by the spare empty feed troughs that were filled with fresh water. The water supply system was efficient and well maintained. At no point during the voyage or discharge did the observer observe that the cattle were without access to quality fresh water.

Ventilation

The ventilation system forces fresh air directly into each pen and six exhaust towers configuration prevents stale air being drawn back into the vessel hold. No issues were noted with the ventilation system.

No livestock were observed with respiratory distress during the entire voyage or during discharge in Vietnam.

Temperatures were recorded on each deck immediately before noon on each day using a whirling thermo-hygrometer. The temperature ranges were 30°C - 32°C and humidity ranged from 73% to 80%. The observer noted that deck four flooring was warmer due to the location of the engine under deck four.

Pen conditions

No wash down of decks occurred during the voyage. Pad conditions on all decks remained acceptable throughout the voyage. Cattle continued to receive fodder during discharge.

Health and welfare

The crew were calm and quiet when handling livestock.

The older, larger framed line of cattle had a temperament that did not settle during the voyage and initially had a higher incidence of trucking abrasions and minor injuries. Troughs were placed on the floor to improve water and fodder access for the larger framed cattle.

The stockperson examined the cattle twice daily. The main causes of treatments and hospitalisation pen use were downers (unable to rise), lameness, respiratory disease and illthrift. The causes of mortalities were not definitive but attributed to respiratory disease and one downer.

Downer cattle were cared for in their original pen and the cattle in the pen were moved to new pens. All but one of the downer cattle were discharged safely.

Four mortalities were recorded for the voyage. The causes of mortalities was attributed to respiratory disease, acidosis with secondary respiratory disease and one downer that was unable to be discharged.

The cattle were mainly *Bos indicus* type cattle and showed no signs of heat stress.

Discharge

During the process of loading, all ramps were covered with deep sawdust to prevent slipping and injury whilst on ramps. No issues were observed during discharge and cattle were discharged safely.

Conclusion

The Master, officers and stockperson were proactive to mitigate issues prior to them developing into more serious issues. The cattle were handled using low stress techniques. The cattle had excellent fodder and water access and no heat stress signs.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen — no issues identified

