

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Yangtze Fortune*

Cattle exported to Indonesia and Malaysia in December 2018

Report 45, August 2019

Voyage summary

A total of 5,175 cattle for two exporters were loaded on the *MV Yangtze Fortune* at Geraldton on 4 and 5 December 2018. The vessel departed on 5 December 2018. The first discharge was at Tanjung Priok, Indonesia between 9 and 10 December 2018. The second discharge was at Belawan, Indonesia between 13 and 14 December 2018. The final discharge was at Port Klang, Malaysia on 16 December 2018, making this a 13 day voyage.

An independent observer (observer) boarded the vessel in Geraldton and remained on board until discharge in Port Klang.

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.02% (one mortality).

The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable mortality rate as stated in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)*. The causes of the mortality 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

The observer monitored loading and no significant welfare incidents were observed. The cattle were not strictly loaded in accordance with the load plan. However, the number of cattle in some pens was adjusted as soon as practical to make the best use of the available area. The observer noted that more than 50% of animals were able to lay down.

Personnel

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

The Master and Chief Officer (CO) have extensive experience and were conscientious and diligent with the application of procedures. The officers and the crew worked well with the two LiveCorp Accredited stockpersons (stockpersons).

The head stockperson had extensive export voyage experience and was effective in managing the health and welfare of the cattle. The second stockperson had been on several voyages and was proactive in identifying livestock that required treatment and maintaining feed, water supplies and pad conditions. The stockpersons effectively communicated with the officers and crew.

Daily routine

The stockpersons inspected, treated and moved cattle to the hospital pens if needed during the morning rounds (7:00am start) and afternoon rounds (3:30pm start).

A meeting was held at 10:00am every day and was attended by the CO, bosun, crew, stockperson and observer. The attendees discussed fodder and water remaining, estimated times of arrival, specific tasks, feeding instructions and reports.

There was one crew member at a time on night watch crew between 6:00pm and 6:00am. The tasks included monitoring for downers, health issues and ensuring water was available. The observer noted the night watch person was active and conscientiously performing the required tasks. The stockpersons were available at night if required.

Feed and water

Feeding instructions were communicated by the stockperson at the morning meeting. The CO and bosun ensured these instructions were understood and implemented. The general routine was that the cattle were fed twice per day. The first feed commenced at 7:00am and second at 3:30pm. Each deck has a chute that is gravity fed with the pellets. The crew manually delivered the fodder to the plastic troughs. Despite the voyage length being two days longer than predicted, there was no fodder rationing.

Water was supplied in troughs via a float activated valve and was available as the cattle were loaded. Monitoring of the water supply ensured that any delivery faults were repaired and had no impact on the health of the livestock. The crew ensured water was available up to the time of discharge and water was maintained to the cattle remaining on board as unloading proceeded.

Ventilation

The ventilation units have air ducts at the front and rear of the animal pens. Air flow is directed into the stock pens. A generator failure during discharge at Belawan resulted in loss of ventilation for 35 minutes. The temperature rose from 29°C to 31°C dry bulb but there were no significant impacts on animal welfare as the ventilation was restored quickly.

The temperatures were generally taken at around 10:00am. There was no significant variation between the morning and afternoon temperatures. The top temperature recorded was 32°C dry bulb with 79% humidity. The observer described the weather as relatively mild.

Pen conditions

No deck wash was undertaken. The observer observed the pad to be generally moist consistency and not excessive depth. On day 10, heavy rain resulted in water entering into some pens. The cattle were moved to drier areas and standard management practices applied. The head Stockperson actively managed excess moisture and manure, directing manure bagging, walkway shovelling, sawdust application and processes to minimising water entering the pens.

Health and welfare

Most cattle settled on board quickly and were comfortable on voyage however a small number did not feed as well at times and required management. The stockperson had ready access to chaff and medication to provide supportive treatment.

During the voyage, cattle were treated for a variety of conditions including pink eye, lameness, recumbency, shy feeders and bovine respiratory disease. Cattle were moved to hospital pens if required. The available medications on board met or exceeded the ASEL requirements.

One bull died during the voyage. The animal had been isolated in a hospital pen and treated for respiratory disease.

Discharge

During unloading, one bull went down in the race after turning around and one was temporarily stuck in the railings. Both animals recovered and no injuries were noted. The crew and stockpersons demonstrated humane animal handling techniques.

Conclusion

The observer noted that the stockpersons, officers and crew ensured the cattle were well cared for and any health or welfare issues were dealt with as a priority. Adequate monitoring and effective responses were consistent with the export programs.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 4 Cattle in pen— no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen— no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pens— no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen— no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen— no issues identified



Day 11 Cattle in pen— no issues identified

