

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Dareen*

Cattle exported to Oman and Pakistan in January 2019

Report 62, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 4,020 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Dareen* in Portland, Victoria on 12 January 2019. The vessel departed on the morning of 13 January 2019. The cattle were destined for Oman and Pakistan.

An Independent Observer (observer) boarded the vessel in Portland and remained on board until completion of the discharge of 1,600 cattle in Oman. The observer did not remain on board for the second part of the voyage from Oman to Pakistan. Therefore, this report only covers the voyage to Oman.

The discharge of the cattle at the port of Sohar, Oman, was completed on 1 February 2019 making this a 21 day leg of the voyage. The vessel then departed Oman destined for Pakistan with 2419 cattle remaining on board.

The mortality rate for cattle at the time of the observer disembarking the vessel in Oman was 0.025% (one mortality). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The cause of the mortality was 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.

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

The observer noted that the cattle were not loaded in accordance with the load plan. Decks 6 and 9 had stocking densities below those specified in the initial load plan and Decks 2, 3, 4 and 8 had stocking densities above those specified in the load plan. Some pens on Deck 9 were empty or used as hospital pens, and some pens in Deck 6 were used to store fodder. However, the observer considered the crew managed the stocking densities well. At any time, 50% of the animals could lie down comfortably in each pen.

Most designated hospital pens were utilised during the entire voyage for holding healthy cattle. Other pens that were considered to be more practical by the LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson

(stockperson) were used as hospital pens as the need arose. The observer noted that the position of cattle loaded on board is subject to the important considerations of vessel stability and unloading order.

Personnel

A very experienced Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and a very experienced stockperson were on board for the voyage.

The vessel officers and crew were diligent to ensure the cattle were managed appropriately and any animals that required assistance were identified promptly.

Daily routine

The Chief Officer (CO), second and third officers and the bosun were involved in the daily monitoring of the decks. At times the master monitored the deck conditions.

The crew were actively involved in the manual feeding, water checking, cleaning and identification of health issues twice daily. The morning and afternoon rounds commenced at 7:00am and 3:00pm respectively and generally took approximately two hours to complete.

A daily meeting was held at 11:30am and involved the master, CO, AAV, stockperson, and observer. The topics discussed included fodder and water consumption, stocking density and relocation of livestock, deck wash schedule, health and welfare, treatments and mortalities.

Two nightwatch persons were on duty from 7:00pm until 6:00am. The night watch duties included cleaning feed and water troughs, ventilation checks and specific maintenance duties.

Feed and water

Pellets are automatically dispensed to each deck via pipes to troughs. The livestock were fed grain based pellets twice daily. The first feed commenced at 7:00am and the second at 3:00pm. Fine cut hay was also fed every second day usually at 1:00pm between the two pellet feeds. Pens which were not automatically supplied had additional troughs which were manually filled by the crew during regular feeding times. On occasion the stockperson reminded the CO that his crew needed to ensure the extra troughs were filled. Some rationing for a five day period was implemented as there was oversupply and wastage of fodder for a short period. The rationing ensured enough fodder for the remainder of the voyage and no adverse outcomes were noted.

Water is supplied automatically into watering troughs. Water was generally found to be continuously supplied to all pens and all animals for the entire voyage. There were some blockages identified which were attended to as they arose.

Ventilation

The MV *Dareen* has a total of 9 Decks. The ventilation was observed to be operating at all times during the voyage and without incident. The four upper decks have open sides. Temperatures on the open decks were 2 – 4°C cooler than the lower decks. Deck 4 had consistently warmer temperatures due to the location being close to the engine. The stocking density was reduced in the pens close to the engine and additional ducting was connected to fans to displace some of the warmer air. All lower decks have additional fans to assist with ventilation. These methods of

providing airflow and ventilation appeared to be effective in these conditions at this time of the year.

Temperature readings were taken on each deck and hold once daily at 10:30am. Whilst dry bulb temperatures correlated with the recorded temperatures. The temperatures were found to be 1 – 2°C warmer than the recorded temperature when taken between 1:00pm and 4:00pm.

The observer noted that the vessel humidity records were not accurate because the wet bulb readings were recorded as 3°C below the dry bulb thermometer reading. The observer noted that the wet bulb temperatures differed by 0.5 – 4°C. The vessel records indicated humidity range as 70 – 79%. However the observer noted that humidity ranged from 70 – 93%. There were no signs of heat stress in the animals during the voyage.

Pen conditions

The progression of the pen pads from dry and crumbly to muddy or boggy was gradual. Sawdust was placed on the lower decks to assist with pen conditions as the lower deck pads were relatively wetter than the upper decks. The pads were 10 to 15 cm deep just prior to washdown. Pens were first washed 5 - 6 days after loading and approximately every four days until arrival in port. Overall, the pad was maintained in good condition.

Health and welfare

The AAV inspected the cattle twice per day and arranged for treatment, feeding and transfer of animals as required to the hospital pens. The stockperson inspected the cattle three times per day, arranged for treatments, transfer of animals to the hospital pens and was responsible for ensuring the fodder supplies were adequate up to and including the days of discharge.

There was one mortality in a heifer that was unresponsive to treatment following an injury. On two occasions the recumbent heifer was found without water. In addition, one heifer had a full term dead calf and another had a premature calf estimated at 30 weeks gestation length. There were a small number of abortions (4) that also occurred during the voyage.

The AAV and stockperson identified eye infections, shy feeders, lameness and diarrhoea during the voyage. Cattle with eye infections or lameness were treated. Cattle with diarrhoea were identified early in the voyage and responded to allocation of chaff. Shy feeders were identified and allocated to a hospital pen for care and monitoring. Of approximately 12 shy feeders identified, none lost excessive condition during the voyage.

The observer noted incidents of striking animal on the face with plastic pipe and using a metal tool to attempt to get cattle move during unloading as the only welfare issues noted.

Discharge

Discharge in Oman was slightly longer than predicted because a custom ramp and truck set up was not able to be utilised. The cattle were unloaded safely and no incidents were observed.

Conclusion

From loading to discharge in Oman, the processes and procedures to ensure good animal welfare outcomes for the voyage were implemented to a good standard. The vessel officers and

crew were diligent to ensure the cattle were managed appropriately and any animals that required assistance were identified promptly.

The AAV treated any cattle that had signs of illness. The oversight by the stockperson ensured the cattle arrived in good condition at Oman. The weather conditions and time of the year were favourable and did not place any stress on the pregnant heifers during the voyage.

The observer noted variations in the loading plan compared with actual cattle loaded including using hospital pens for holding healthy animals, using normal pens as hospital pens, empty pens on Deck 9, some pens used for fodder storage on Deck 6 and some decks containing a number of cattle higher than the load plan. However, the observer noted that the crew and stockperson managed the stocking densities well and generally 50% of the animals could lie down at any time in each pen.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 6 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 11 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 14 Cattle in pen – wet pad condition



Day 14 Cattle in pen - no issues identified

