

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Rahmeh*

## Cattle exported to China in February 2019

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Report 84, September 2019

### **Voyage summary**

A consignment of 6,386 cattle were loaded onto the *MV Rahmeh* in Portland on 19 February 2019. The vessel departed on 19 February. The cattle were discharged at Qinhuangdao, China between 14 and 15 March 2019, making this a 25 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for cattle was 0.06% (4 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 from the observer. 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.

#### **Loading**

The vessel was not fully loaded so the cattle had sufficient space move around the pens, lay down and had good access to feed and water. Once loaded, the master advised of a change of route that involved sailing up the Western Australian coastline to avoid cyclone activity on the far north east coast of Australia.

#### **Personnel**

Two LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockperson) and one additional stockperson accompanied the voyage.

The master had overall responsibility for the vessel, personnel and livestock.

#### **Daily routine**

A management meeting was held each day at 10:30am and was attended by the Chief Officer (CO) and the stockpersons. Topics of discussion included animal health and welfare issues, treatments, cause of mortalities, deck maintenance issues and wash down schedules. The

daily report was prepared after the meeting. The CO relayed the daily requirements to the bosun and the crew after the meeting.

The stockpersons daily routine started at 5:00am with the team commencing a full walk around to inspect the cattle. Treatments commenced after the inspection.

The crew began their morning feeding, watering and cleaning routine between 6:00am and 7:00am. Feed bins and water troughs were cleaned prior to the morning feed. On days when deck washing occurred, the crew commenced at 5:00am.

Two crew members carried out night watchpersons duties each night of the voyage. The duties included ensuring adequate access to water, clean water was provided, displaced feed and water troughs were replaced and any sick or injured cattle were monitored and reported to the stockpersons in a timely manner.

### **Feed and water**

The cattle were initially fed pellets 3 times per day through an automated gravity feed system. Consumption was reduced during the middle part of the voyage to ensure feed supplies for the duration of the voyage were met. Due to design features, the gravity feed system supplied more feed to the lower decks. To address this issue, the feed chutes on the lower decks were blocked for one feed per day to ensure the top decks received adequate supply.

Water was supplied in long troughs which operated with a float system. The water supply system worked well and ensured that cattle had easy access to water. A minor issue occurred on day 4 where a water supply issue was identified on the upper decks. The crew rectified the issue within 2 hours and put in place follow up monitoring to ensure an adequate water supply was maintained.

### **Ventilation**

Decks 1-4 were fully enclosed and decks 5-8 were open and were generally cooler during the voyage. Ventilation systems and fans were installed on each deck.

Wet and dry temperature measuring devices were installed on every deck of the vessel and the readings were taken at 11:00am each day.

There was a significant variation in temperatures during the voyage. In the tropical regions on day 12, the temperatures included readings from 26°C to 32°C dry bulb and 86% humidity. In the temperate regions, on day 21 the temperatures recorded ranged from 2°C to 13°C dry bulb and approximately 77% humidity.

### **Pen conditions**

Due to the length of the voyage (25 days) the pens were required to be washed down regularly. The number of times a deck was washed was dependent on the pad condition and its location on the vessel, some decks were washed more frequently than others. If wet pads occurred they were managed by adding sawdust between wash downs.

### **Health and welfare**

The 3 stockpersons worked well as a team to ensure every pen was inspected at least once per day and that livestock were identified for treatment. Any tired or shy feeders were moved to a

hospital pen as required. The main reasons for treatments were pink eye, lameness and respiratory disease. Treatments were undertaken in a timely manner.

The observer noted that the stockpersons primary concern was the health and welfare of the livestock on the vessel. Overall the strategy implemented and the work ethic by the stockpersons ensured a high level of animal health and welfare was maintained during the voyage.

### **Discharge**

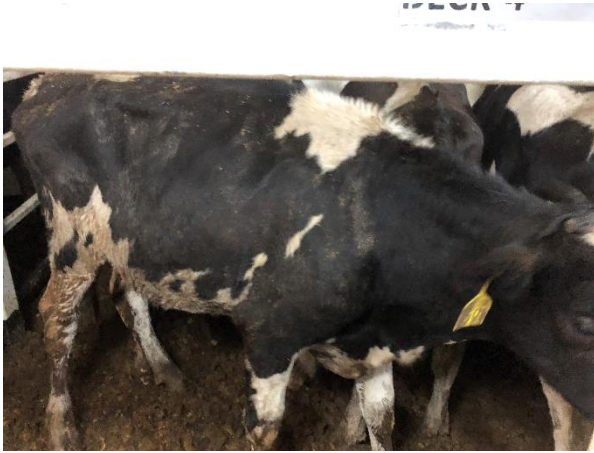
The discharge was supervised by the stockpersons who worked on a rotating roster basis. Sawdust was laid on all discharge ramps to minimise the risk of cattle slipping and falling. Water and feed was maintained during discharge. The unloading was undertaken professionally and with animal welfare a priority.

### **Conclusion**

Overall the crew worked well with the stockpersons to ensure the success of the voyage. The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) requirements.

## Representative photographs of the voyage

Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Cattle in pen – no issues identified



Aisleway – no issues identified

