

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Girolando Express*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in March 2019

Report 90, September 2019

Voyage summary

The MV *Girolando Express* commenced loading 3,183 cattle in Darwin on 1 March 2019 and departed on 1 March 2019. The vessel discharged at Panjang, Indonesia on 6 and 7 March 2019, making this a 7 day voyage.

An Independent Observer (observer) boarded the vessel in Darwin and remained on board until discharge.

The mortality rate for the voyage was 0.09% (3 mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. 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. The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of cattle

Exporter documentation

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

Loading

Loading went well, with no incidents reported. All decks were given feed at 2:00pm, which was within the requirement to provide feed less than 12 hours after the completion of loading, as stated in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)) standard. The pens with the highest density were observed to conform to the load plan. Most pens seemed to provide ample space for movement and rest. Pen sizes were adjusted during the first two days of the voyage with hospital pens opened up to give more room for the cattle.

Personnel

The crew on-board the vessel were found to be very caring and committed to their duties and responsibilities. The observer noted they worked hard on-board the vessel and had the cattle's health and welfare as their main priority.

A LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson), who was responsible for the welfare of the livestock, accompanied the voyage.

The master had overall responsibility for the vessel, cargo and all personnel on-board. The Chief Officer (CO) and bosun were responsible for the cattle. The CO took a very active role in the vessels operations, crew and cattle. They were very supportive to the stockperson and kept the observer updated.

The bosun managed 14 dedicated crew that were responsible for the daily health and welfare of the cattle. The bosun coordinated the loading, discharge, feeding, watering, cleaning, and any cattle movements requested by the stockperson.

The stockperson's animal husbandry skills were very good and they were dedicated to their role and responsibilities. The stockperson was always available, day or night, to deal with any health and welfare issues, or when daily movements of cattle were made. During their daily morning checks, the stockperson ensured the cattle were on their feet so they could detect any injuries or health issues. They reported any mortalities, injuries or health issues in the daily meetings and daily reports as well as any treatment plans being implemented. The stockperson performed all of the treatments to cattle, and humanly euthanized cattle when required.

Daily routine

The daily management meeting would take place at 11:00am. The CO, stockperson, and observer would discuss issues including the movement of cattle between pens or hospital pens, treatments administered to the sick or injured animals, and any other matter regarding the health and welfare of the cattle.

The cattle were fed at 7:00am, 9:30am and 3:00pm each day. The crew maintained and cleaned the water nose bowls, laneways and added sawdust when needed into pens with dirty pads as well as any other management of the cattle as directed by the bosun or stockperson. There was 1 night watchperson rotating every 4 hours at night. During a night walk between 1am and 2am, the observer witnessed a crew member observing the cattle and replenishing their water nose bowls.

The observer also noted that if any welfare management issues arose, the crew would immediately contact the bosun, stockperson or observer.

Feed and water

Pellets for fodder were stored in silos. The chaff supplies were stored under weather proof tarps on the upper deck. There were several chutes from the silos into each hold of the decks. From these chutes feed was distributed by the crew into bags which then emptied into the feed troughs.

Water was available 24 hours a day, to each pen, via nose bowls. The crew checked the supply pressure and cleanliness of water during their 4 hour shifts.

Ventilation

The CO took temperature and humidity readings at the same time every morning, around 9am, so the reading was able to be included in the daily meetings and reports.

Livestock deck temperatures initially remained steady during the voyage at 30°C dry bulb temperature, 27°C wet bulb temperature with humidity at 78%, but steadily climbed after passing the equator. On 5 March 2019, readings were recorded as 31°C dry bulb temperature,

28°C wet bulb temperature and humidity at 79%. The cattle appeared very comfortable, and there was no level of stress observed. Behaviour appeared normal.

Pen conditions

On a daily basis, 98% of pads were observed to be good dry pads. As the voyage progressed, around 10% of pads became dirty and sloppy. Sawdust was spread to aid pad establishment and was found to assist pad recovery and lessen ammonia build up. The crew cleaned spilled fodder back into the pens which also helped with maintaining a good pad. There was no deck washing on this voyage.

Health and welfare

No stress indicators or morbidities were observed during this voyage. The first mortality resulted from a broken leg during loading. The animal was euthanized after being placed in a pen. The second mortality was during the voyage on the first night when an animal would not rise and subsequently died during the night. The third animal was unable to rise prior to discharge and was euthanized after all the other cattle were discharged.

Animal husbandry was observed to be very good throughout the voyage. The vessel's management, crew and the stockperson demonstrated that the cattle's welfare was always a high priority. The stockperson always used a Wester gun for administering treatment and a captive bolt gun for euthanasia. Medications were observed to be used in accordance with ASEL requirements.

Discharge

Discharge was very slow. The delay was due to the distance of the feedlots from the port, which was an 8 hour turn-around, and the number of available trucks. The delay did not have an adverse effect of the health and well-being of the cattle. The cattle were looked after very well in that time as additional labour had been organised to provide feed to the cattle.

Other than the animal which had not been able to stand, there were no other injuries reported during the discharge.

Conclusion

The observer noted the health and welfare management of the cattle was very well managed during the voyage.

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

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in Pen — no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle at feeding — no issues identified

