

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Maysora*

Sheep and cattle exported to Israel and Jordan in March 2019

Report 98, October 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 53,644 sheep and 6,789 cattle were loaded on the *MV Maysora* at the Port of Fremantle between 15 and 16 March 2019. The vessel departed on 16 March 2019. The first discharge was at the Port of Eilat, Israel between 2 and 3 April 2019. The second discharge was at the Port of Aqaba, Jordan between 4 and 6 April 2019, making this a 23 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for sheep was 0.23% (121 sheep mortalities) and 0.28% for cattle (19 cattle mortalities). These do not exceed the reportable mortality rates. The causes of these mortalities was not considered to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

The following comments represent a summary of key observations and have been approved by the observer who accompanied this voyage.

Independent observations of the implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

Exporter documentation

The exporter Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) and load plan were submitted prior to departure as required.

Exporter arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge and contingencies.

Loading

There were no issues noted during loading. Only minor adjustments were made during the initial stages of the voyage. Care was taken to assign the correct number of animals to the pens, however, slight alterations to the loading plan were necessary to accommodate the varying sizes of the animals presented at loading. The number of cattle loaded in pens known as hot spots were also reduced after loading and portable industrial fans were installed to help improve airflow.

Personnel

The Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) had extensive experience as a shipboard veterinarian and was conscientious and demonstrated dedication to their role.

The LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) had significant experience. The assistant stockperson who was in the process of acquiring LiveCorp accreditation worked under the supervision of the AAV.

The master had considerable experience and has periodically worked on *Maysora* over the last 14 years.

The Chief Officer (CO) was very experienced and has been working on the *Maysora* for the past 10 years (CO since 2011). The CO was very professional and hardworking and dealt with issues quickly and efficiently.

The crew were responsible for cleaning, maintenance of fodder and water troughs, applying sawdust for bedding, monitoring and reporting any sick or injured animals and assisting with deck wash downs.

Two night watch persons monitored the animals overnight. They also recorded temperatures and notified the officer in the bridge or if necessary, the master or AAV, of any issues which arose during their shift.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held every day at 10:30am with the master, CO, AAV, one stockperson and the observer. The bosun was also present at some meetings. The meetings involved the CO providing an overview of any issues from the previous day and outlining matters of importance for the day ahead.

The AAV walked through the cattle decks twice daily, and administered treatments or gave advice to the stockperson as required.

Feed and water

Fresh water was produced through desalination using 2 reverse osmosis units. Water was supplied to all pens via automatic ball regulated troughs which were located at the front of most pens. On day 1 and 4 some water troughs were turned off for cleaning purposes and the water was not restarted. The CO informed the crew of this issue, and the observer did not witness any further occurrences. The observer did not note any animal welfare impact from these incidents.

The observer noted that during cattle wash down there were more staff helping with wash down. On occasions, this meant there were fewer crew on the sheep decks and the limited staff on the sheep decks resulted in build-up of fines in feed troughs, subsequently blocking fresh pellets entering the trough. The issue was brought to the attention of the CO, and the crew were instructed to correct and monitor this problem. The observer did not see this issue reoccur.

Ventilation

Overall, the ventilation for the voyage was acceptable. It was noted from the daily reports that the enclosed Decks (1-6) recorded consistently higher dry and wet bulb temperatures than the

upper decks. On this voyage the ambient temperature was relatively mild and the ventilation system did operate to its full capacity.

Pen conditions

Washing of the cattle decks took place three times during the voyage. Drainage was noted as being acceptable, however some pens were observed to have small pooling of water. Saw dust was laid to effectively deal with this issue. The observer did not note any issues with sheep pen conditions.

Health and welfare

The observer noted that from day 5 – 14 of the voyage, almost all sheep (95-100%) were panting with their mouths closed. From day 16 to discharge, all sheep were displaying a normal resting respiratory pattern. No sheep were observed with sustained open mouth panting at any stage during the voyage.

Cattle were observed to have elevated respiration from day 7 with approximately 50% of *Bos taurus* cattle displaying a fast pant with mouths closed. By day 8 – 9 most *Bos taurus* breeds (approximately 80%) had fast panting with drooling, with some occasional open mouth panting. Only one steer had sustained open mouth panting on Deck 5. The *Bos indicus* cattle appeared to cope better with heat and humidity. From day 16 to discharge, all cattle were displaying a normal respiratory pattern.

The observer noted most of the sheep mortalities were due to enteritis and inanition and most of the cattle mortalities were attributed to pneumonia.

The observer reported that on Days 2, 3, 5 and 8 some of the pilot sheep were tethered to a rail without feed or water. The issue was reported to the CO who addressed this with the crew. After day 8, there were no further issues noted until day 17 where one pilot sheep was found without food and water. On each occasion the issue was rectified as it was noticed and the observer did not witness any impact on health and welfare.

The observer noted there was usually enough room in the pens for all or most of the animals to lie down at the same time.

Discharge

During the first day of discharge at Eilat, Israel, the observer witnessed non-compliant handling by the Israeli importers. This included picking sheep up by the ears and pulling sheep by the legs. On one occasion, the observer obtained footage of a worker on the discharge ramp initially kneeling on the backs of sheep, before standing up and attempting to move them with his feet while hanging from an overhead frame. Both the AAV and the CO spoke to the representatives of the Israeli importers about the non-compliant handling of sheep and discussed that this needed to be improved.

The observer noted that there was considerable improvement in the handling of sheep on the second day of discharge, however, there were still sporadic observations of sheep being handled inappropriately (pulled by legs). The AAV was proactive in informing the workers this was not acceptable. The observer saw the tail end of an incident that involved four sheep mortalities on

the discharge ramp. The observer was informed by the AAV that the incident was related to smothering. The event was responded to quickly to prevent further sheep from smothering.

The observer did note that the majority of the time, discharge of sheep was maintained in a calm and gentle manner.

There were no issues observed during discharge at Aqaba, Jordan.

Conclusion

Despite, the majority of the issues relating to feed and water being corrected during the voyage, the issues have been addressed further with the exporter.

The issue of non-compliant handling has been referred to the relevant party, and is being investigated by the department which can be found on the [department's website](#).

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 11 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 17 cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 9 sheep in pen—no issues identified



Day 12 sheep in pen—no issues identified



Day 20 sheep in race—no issues identified

