



Australian Government

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Al Messilah*

Cattle and sheep exported to Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Oman in April 2023

August 2023

Voyage summary

Livestock: 264 cattle and 59,546 sheep

Vessel: *MV Al Messilah*

Loading location and date: Fremantle, from 5 to 6 April 2023

Vessel departure location and date: Fremantle, 6 April 2023

Discharge location and dates:

- Al Shuwaikh, Kuwait, from 20 to 22 April 2023
- Jebel Ali, UAE, from 25 to 26 April 2023
- Muscat, Oman, 27 April 2023

Voyage length: 23 days

Independent Observer: Boarded at Fremantle and remained onboard until completion of discharge.

Voyage mortality rate: 0.14% for sheep (81 mortalities). These mortalities are unlikely to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter. There were no cattle mortalities.

Notifiable mortality rate: 0.5% for cattle and 1% for sheep.

Summary of observations

This report summarises key observations of the implementation and effectiveness of exporter arrangements to ensure the health and welfare of livestock. The report has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

Exporter documentation

The observer reported no issues regarding exporter documentation.

Loading

Based on observations made during this voyage, the exporter arrangements relating to loading were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

Personnel

Based on observations made during this voyage, the exporter arrangements relating to personnel were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

Daily routine

Based on observations made during this voyage, the exporter arrangements relating to daily routine were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

Feed and water

Based on observations made during this voyage, the exporter arrangements relating to feed and water were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

Ventilation

Based on observations made during this voyage, the exporter arrangements relating to ventilation were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

Pen conditions

The observer noted that:

- 1) Sheep were observed escaping their pens on all decks throughout the voyage. The main cause was due to sheep licking pins out of the gate hinges, with some sheep jumping out and some smaller sheep able to fit through the pen rails. All escaped sheep had access to feed and water. Sheep that were found to have escaped were immediately returned to their pen by crew. There were no adverse effects on animal health and welfare noted for the escaped sheep.
- 2) A hole was observed in a pen floor on day 8. The observer notified a member of the vessel crew and discussed with the vessel master. Livestock were temporarily moved to surrounding pens and the hole was sufficiently sealed within 5 hours of being observed. As a result of early intervention, no adverse impacts on animal health or welfare were observed.

Health and welfare

No systemic issues observed.

The AAV reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, 253 sheep were treated. Conditions treated for included inanition, eye disease, lameness and incoordination. No cattle treatments were administered.
- 2) A total of 81 sheep mortalities occurred on this voyage. No cattle mortalities occurred.
- 3) Post mortems were performed by the AAV for 44 mortalities, with the main causes identified as respiratory disease and gut issues. The AAV reported that post mortems could not be performed for 35 mortalities due to proximity to shore, and 2 due to decomposition.

Discharge

Based on observations made during this voyage, the exporter arrangements relating to discharge were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

Department actions

The department required the exporter to report on corrective actions taken to prevent miscounts of livestock.

Representative photographs of voyage

Day 2 Sheep in pen — no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 10 Sheep in pen — no issues identified



Day 14 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 18 Sheep in pen — no issues identified



Day 23 Sheep in pen — no issues identified



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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