



Australian Government

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Al Messilah*

## Cattle and sheep exported to Kuwait and United Arab Emirates in May 2023

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November 2023

### Voyage summary

Livestock: 54,988 sheep and 632 cattle

Vessel: *MV Al Messilah*

Loading location and date: Fremantle, 11 and 13 May 2023

Vessel departure location and date: Fremantle, 13 May 2023

Discharge location and dates:

- Shuwaikh, Kuwait, from 27 to 29 May 2023
- Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates, from 31 May to 2 June 2023

Voyage length: 23 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.17% (91 mortalities) for sheep. These mortalities are unlikely to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter. There were no cattle mortalities.

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

### 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

The observer noted that:

- 1) Several pens were not loaded according to the exporter's load plan so there was no impermeable barrier between cattle and sheep pens on Decks 6, 7 and 8 for the duration of the voyage. There was no observed adverse impact on animal health or welfare of either species.
- 2) Several pens on Deck 6 were combined so that pens did not match the load plan. All sheep in combined pens had access to feed and water and there was no observed adverse impact on animal health.

### **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) On day 8, the stockperson and vessel crew were observed installing temporary fences around sheep pens on Deck 6 to prevent small sheep from escaping. A previous observer deployed on the MV *Al Messilah* noted that smaller sheep were able to escape on all decks. No smaller sheep were observed to have escaped on this voyage and there were no health or welfare impacts observed due to the temporary fences.
- 2) On day 12, an open swinging gate was observed in a sheep pen on Deck 6. No adverse impacts on animal health or welfare were observed, and the gate was not observed to be freely swinging on subsequent days.
- 3) The Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) reported that cattle pens were cleaned and re-bedded on days 11 and 12.

### **Health and welfare**

No systemic issues observed.

The AAV reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, there were 46 treatments for sheep, for conditions including lameness, wounds and blindness in both eyes. Most sheep requiring treatment were treated in their original pens and some sheep were moved to hospital pens.
- 2) There were no treatments for cattle.

- 3) A total of 91 sheep mortalities occurred on this voyage. There were no cattle mortalities. The AAV euthanised 34 sheep, and the remaining mortalities were found deceased.
- 4) Post mortems were performed by the AAV for 21 sheep mortalities, with the main findings being inanition, water belly and jaundice. The AAV reported that of the remaining 70 mortalities, 48 post mortems were unable to be performed due to proximity to shore, 3 due to the carcasses rotting and 19 were not required due to obvious diagnoses including inanition, wounds and injuries.

### **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**

While no adverse animal health and welfare outcomes arising from exporter arrangements were observed, the department required the exporter to review, amend and vary as required, their processes for the management of penning arrangements to ensure:

- Livestock are penned in accordance with the load plan so species are adequately separated as required by the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) standard 5.1.1c and the exporter's arrangements.
- Livestock pens are not combined partway through the voyage as required under ASEL standard 5.1.1e and the exporter's arrangements.

**Representative photographs of voyage**

**Day 2 Sheep in pen — no issues identified**



**Day 5 Cattle in pen — no issues identified**



**Day 9 Sheep in pen — no issues identified**



**Day 13 Cattle in pen — no issues identified**



**Day 17 Sheep in pen — no issues identified**



**Day 20 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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