

# Independent Observer summary report on MV *Maysora*

## Cattle and sheep exported to Israel and Jordan in September 2018

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Report 21, October 2019

### **Voyage summary**

The MV *Maysora* commenced loading on 20 September 2018 in Fremantle and departed on 22 September 2018 carrying a consignment of 9,997 cattle to Israel and 21,337 sheep to Jordan. Discharge was completed on 13 October 2018 in Jordan making the total voyage 24 days in length.

The Independent Observer (observer) joined the vessel in Fremantle, remaining on board until the completion of discharge.

The overall mortality rate for cattle was 0.07% (7 mortalities) and 0.13% (28 mortalities) for sheep, which does not exceed the reportable mortality rate. The causes of the mortalities were not considered to be linked to any systemic failure on behalf of the exporter.

The following comments represent a summary of key observations from loading in Fremantle until discharge in Aqaba, Jordan and has 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**

Exporter voyage instructions and Approved Export Program (AEP) addressing procedures for the care and management of the livestock from loading through to discharge were made available.

The exporter Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) was submitted prior to departure.

#### **Loading**

No welfare issues were observed during loading.

The pens were not stocked in accordance with the load plan as healthy livestock were loaded into the majority of designated hospital pens. This provided additional space for the livestock and no adverse welfare outcomes were recorded as a result of this practice. The observer reported that hospital were made available throughout the voyage as required.

Some pens were also initially loaded with a mixture of various sized cattle. Stockpersons drafted the cattle and relocated them into more consistent groups within three days of departure. Further minor adjustments were made throughout the journey.

## **Personnel**

There was an experienced Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and three LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons) on board responsible for implementing the exporter's procedures to support the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage.

The master had been in command of livestock vessels for 6 years and also had extensive experience on the *Maysora* as a Chief Officer (CO).

It was the CO's first voyage in that position however he has been working on livestock vessels since 2007, starting on the *Maysora* in 2010.

## **Daily routine**

A daily meeting was held at 10:30 am, usually with the AAV, Master and head stockperson. The AAV walked the deck each morning inspecting livestock, discussing issues and assisting stock people with diagnosis and treatment options. Issues were recorded for discussion at the next meeting. The AAV was also responsible for daily reporting to the department as required.

The stockpersons were responsible for identifying livestock requiring intervention, administering treatments, as well as monitoring feed, water and animal welfare.

The Chief Officer (CO) gave the bosun direction, organised deck washes and chaff feeding, and was responsible for management of the crew. The CO was also responsible for identifying issues and for monitoring equipment.

The bosun was in charge of the crew, repairs, feeding protocols and water trough monitoring as well as managing deck washing.

The crew provided livestock with feed and clean water, monitored stock for issues and alerted stockpersons to livestock that required intervention. They recorded temperatures every 6 hours. There were 3 night watchmen on duty between 06:00 pm and 06:00 am checking for and fixing any leaks, as well as cleaning soiled water and feed troughs.

## **Feed and water**

Fresh water was generated by reverse osmosis units and delivered to automatic ball regulated water troughs.

Feed was delivered from storage tanks to roof hoppers then distributed by auger and gravity to pipes supplying the troughs. Each deck had some troughs that required manual feeding while the majority were gravity fed, controlled by metal slides.

On both cattle and sheep decks there were 2 feed and 1 water trough per pen. The observer reported that swing gates which were left open or not adequately tied restricted access to some feed troughs. At times water was turned off to repair a leak or not turned back on after a trough was cleaned. The observer reported that when water was reconnected some animals showed signs of thirst, however adverse health outcomes were not observed. The observer noted that

many of the feed and water issues identified by the stockperson and discussed in daily meetings were resolved in the first days.

Approximately 5 pilot sheep were taught to walk on lead so they could be used to lead sheep off the vessel at discharge. These sheep were tethered for approximately 2 weeks and received 2 feeds a day. The stockperson reminded crew to provide pilot sheep with water at all times, generally this was followed, however some sheep only received water when fed. The observer did not record any adverse health outcomes associated with this practice.

Chaff was provided to cattle on deck wash days. Feeding hierarchy observations were made during chaff feeds with smaller cattle excluded from chaff feeds as larger cattle dominated the available trough space. Suggestions by the AAV and stock people to have the chaff mixed with pellets to correct this problem were not taken up by the crew. No feeding hierarchy was observed with pellet feeds.

During the initial phase of the first deck wash down, some cattle troughs were contaminated with faeces as the waste from Deck 8 flowed through hatches onto Deck 7 resulting in some cattle pens not having access to feed and water from 6:00am till 4:00pm. The observer reported that the inexperience of the crew contributed to these problems and that improvements were noted during the 2 subsequent deck wash downs.

### **Ventilation**

Extra ventilation fans were placed in the hottest part of the ship on Day 11 to increase the ventilation in these areas.

The observer recorded video of sheep exhibiting mild panting and raised respiration rate on Day 16 correlating with the hottest conditions recorded during the voyage.

### **Pen conditions**

Three deck wash downs were undertaken on the cattle decks. In many of the pens, more than 50% of the cattle could lie down at any time.

The observer identified several sections of flooring were a potential welfare risk for sheep. Removable squares of aluminium were opened by crew during wet weather for floor drainage which exposed sheep to potential foot injury. The observer did not report any issues relating to the pad conditions of the sheep pens, and reported that they had ample room.

### **Health and welfare**

Stockpersons administered the treatments documented in treatment plans provided by the AAV.

A bull was attempted to be euthanised using a captive bolt pistol, however the stockperson did not confirm death prior to leaving. After the stockperson left, the observer determined the animal was still alive. The stockperson attempted to euthanase the bull with the captive bolt again, however it was inoperable. The bull was then bled out.

The AAV reported 3 downer cattle and 3 cattle with Bovine Respiratory Disease were euthanised. The AAV also advised 3 sheep with inanition were euthanised. Causes for the remaining sheep mortalities were not provided.

## **Discharge**

No welfare issues were observed during the unloading process.

## **Other**

The observer reported that the master failed to communicate agreed AAV recommendations to the CO. The observer noted that the master did not accept a recommendation to apply wood shavings to hospital pens in lower decks in order to avoid blockages, resulting in the wettest pad conditions on the vessel.

There was no adjustable head bale or nose grip as required in appendix 4.1.9 of *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* ([ASEL](#)).

A single lamb was born on this voyage and a separate pen was created to house it and the ewe. Both were discharged successfully after all other animals were unloaded.

## **Conclusion**

The observer determined that the majority of procedures were complied with during the voyage, however some were not consistently followed. It was observed that several of these problems were resolved as the inexperienced crew became more competent and communications between the AAV, stockpersons and crew became more effective.

The department has addressed a breach of procedures with the exporter to ensure health and welfare of the livestock in relation to the inexperienced crew and the provision of clean fresh water during the first deck wash. Subsequent voyage observations did not indicate ongoing issues related to inexperienced crew.

The department addressed a breach of the procedures with the exporter to ensure health and welfare of the livestock in relation to the training the pilot sheep, and euthanasia of the bull. The department has also provided advice to industry more broadly regarding accepted alternate methods of euthanasia in the event of captive bolt failure.

Considering available information, the issues identified by the observer do not demonstrate a systemic failure of the exporter's procedures.

## Representative photographs of the voyage

**Day 3 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 6 Sheep in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 10 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 11 Sheep in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 16 Sheep in pen—no issues identified**



**Day 19 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**

