

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Bader III*

Sheep and cattle exported to Israel in May 2018

Report 3, January 2019

Voyage summary

The *Bader III* is a mixed open and closed deck vessel with sheep loaded on open double tiered decks above the main deck and the cattle below the main deck on enclosed artificially ventilated decks.

This voyage comprised two separate consignments for one exporter. It loaded the first consignment in Adelaide, South Australia, and departed for Fremantle, Western Australia on 28 April 2018. Following loading of the second consignment, the vessel departed Fremantle on 3 May 2018 with a total of 62,668 sheep and 5,799 cattle on-board. The vessel sailed directly to the Gulf of Aqaba via the Arabian and Red Seas. Animals were unloaded on 21 May at Eilat, Israel. The vessel then proceeded to Aqaba, Jordan, to unload the remaining animals and this was completed on 27 May 2018 making this a 30-day voyage.

The Independent Observer (IO) joined the vessel in Fremantle.

The overall mortality rate for the voyage was 0.27 per cent for sheep (169 sheep mortalities), and 0.26 per cent for cattle (15 cattle mortalities). 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 IO from loading in Adelaide until discharge of in Aqaba, Jordan. The summary has been approved by the IO who accompanied this voyage.

Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

Exporter documentation

The exporter Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) and load plan was submitted to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources prior to departure as required. Livestock were in general loaded onto the vessel in accordance with the load plan, noting some adjustments were made in the first few days to ensure livestock pen densities were satisfactory.

Consignment Specific Export Plans (CSEPs) were available for sheep and cattle addressing procedures relating to provision of fodder, water, bedding (cattle only) medication, humane destruction, livestock officer instructions from loading through to discharge and contingency stockmen. The instructions included in the CSEPs were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with [Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock \(Version 2.3\) 2011](#) (ASEL) requirements.

Loading

Animals had spent an extra two weeks in feedlot preparation due to consignment delays and were fit and healthy and well adapted to pelleted feed and chaff. Subsequent mortalities were due to diseases of healthy sheep and cattle rather than inanition. All sheep had been shorn. The health and welfare of animals was maintained during loading and no animals were rejected, injured or euthanised during the loading process.

Personnel

The vessel's crew comprised an experienced livestock vessel captain, 26 stock crew, two night watchmen, officers, engineers, electricians, catering and housekeeping staff. An Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) and two LiveCorp Accredited Stock people oversaw arrangements to maintain the health and welfare of the livestock throughout the voyage until unloading. Daily management meetings were held each morning with the Master, the Chief Mate, AAV, Head Stockperson, the IO and others to discuss and review stock management. The journey required specific Equatorial and Red sea management plans as well as forward planning for unloading.

Daily routine

Management meetings were held daily attended by the Master, Chief Officer and accredited Australian staff and witnessed by the IO. Temperatures were consistently monitored by the crew and verified by the IO.

Feed and water

There was ample feed on the vessel to allow 12kg /cow/day and sheep 1.2 kg/sheep/day and a seven day contingency reserve. The feeding regime of the voyage used an automatic delivery system with pellets being mostly used. It was well monitored and when hotter weather was encountered, the more cooling feed stuffs of chaff and oats were fed.

Ventilation

Crew and animals encountered elevated temperatures and high humidity from the third day of the voyage out of Fremantle. There were no issues with the ventilation during the voyage. There was a specific equatorial plan for high temperature periods involving zig-zagging the vessel to increase air flow through the decks, the installation of fans for some pens and a program of washing down cattle and pens. Deck washing (cattle only) procedures were satisfactory, and sheep pads were observed to be in good condition due to regular maintenance and clearing of manure in corridors.

Pen conditions

The monitoring of the hospital pens was thorough and the animals were well looked after. Whenever an animal was well enough to leave the hospital pen it was returned to the general population and still monitored by having a blue paint sprayed on its back. Veterinary drug use was in line with the ailments being treated and the vessel was more than sufficiently supplied with medicaments.

A pen was designated a nursery pen when several lambs were born and staff managed the health and welfare of lambs and mothers well. The crew were very caring for the lambs, the

Master in particular. The lambs left the vessel with their mothers in strong condition at the end of unloading to go to the feedlot with special care instructions.

Health and welfare

The vessel's crew, AAV and Stock people managed the health and welfare of animals well. The voyage had low mortality rates for both sheep and cattle.

The Bader III had its pens set up so the stock had room to move between 2-3 pens and there were two feed bins and two watering troughs per pen. The stocking density of the vessel allowed each animal 17.5 per cent more space than required by the ASEL. This allowed the stock sufficient room to always access food and water, to lay down when required and to have sufficient spacing even when the very hot days of 34 degrees Celsius Wet Bulb Temperature (WBT) were encountered.

Discharge

Discharge took quite a lot longer than expected, however the process maintained the health and welfare of animals. The IO noted that normal crew routines are interrupted during discharge which appeared to let a few minor issues arise.

Conclusion

The observer determined that the relevant procedures relating to the management of livestock exported by sea were consistent with ASEL.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pens—no issues identified



Day 2 Sheep in pen—no issues identified



Day 13 Extra fan in cattle pen—no issues identified



Day 13 Sheep in pen—no issues identified



Day 17 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 19 Sheep in pen—no issues identified

