

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Swagman*

Cattle exported to Vietnam in December 2018

Report 53, August 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 4,335 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Ocean Swagman* in Fremantle on 20 and 21 December 2018. The vessel departed on the evening of 21 December 2018. The cattle were discharged at Port Thi Vai and Port Long An, Vietnam on 3 and 4 January 2019 making this a 16 day voyage.

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

The mortality rate for the voyage was 0.05% (two mortalities).

The mortality rate does not exceed the reportable mortality rate as stated in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL)*. 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 observer that accompanied the voyage. The summary has been approved by the observer who accompanied the voyage.

Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

Exporter Documentation

Exporter arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge and contingencies. The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements.

Loading

The observer noted that healthy cattle had been loaded in some pens designated as hospital pens and some pens appeared to be overcrowded. During the first two days of the voyage, the numbers of cattle in pens were adjusted to meet the space requirements in the ASEL and remove healthy animals from the hospital pens.

Personnel

An Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) was not required on the voyage.

The crew included two experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stock persons (stock person). The stock persons demonstrated a genuine care for the animal's welfare.

A total of 22 crew had responsibility for providing livestock feed, water and caring responsibilities. The crew were supervised by the Master, Chief Officer (CO), second officer, third officer and bosun. The stock persons contacted the bosun to ensure the crew take remedial action if feed or water issues were detected.

Daily routine

A daily meeting was held at 10.00am every day and involved the Master, CO, bosun, stock persons, and observer. The meeting agenda included cattle condition, feed, water, animal health and welfare, findings from the day before and the ASEL regulations.

The crew members worked on a 4 hour rotating system 24 hours per day monitoring the animals for injuries, feed and water and cleaning alleys of spilt fodder and faecal matter. The observer observed that the crew were continuing to monitor feed and water availability and clean feed and water troughs during night duties.

Feed and water

The cattle were fed four times per day at 7.00am (pellets), 10.30am (top up chaff) and 3.00pm (3/4 trough fill) and 4.00pm (full trough fill).

No issues were noted with feeding or water supply to the cattle.

Ventilation

All pens surfaces were dry within 24 hours of the wash down. The observer considered the drying of the pens to be a good reflection of the ventilation capacity of the vessel. No heat stress was noted.

Temperature recordings were taken at various times of the day. The range of the conditions were 22 – 31 degrees Celsius (C) dry bulb, 19 – 28 degrees C wet bulb and humidity 79%.

Pen conditions

Pens were washed down on day 7 of the voyage due to the build-up of pad around the edges of the pens. The build-up was not causing distress but the stockpersons considered the wash down necessary because of the remaining time of the voyage. After the wash down, bedding was placed on the floors of the hospital pens and the floors of the pens housing the heavier cattle. The livestock were closely monitored for lameness after the wash down.

Health and welfare

There were two mortalities during the voyage. The cause of the mortalities was not definitively confirmed but the stock persons considered that the causes were trauma and pneumonia. The stockpersons euthanised the cattle in a timely manner and showed experience and care when performing the task.

The stock persons were constantly monitoring the cattle and checking for signs of lameness and other injuries, as well as ensuring feed and water availability were adequate. The stock persons contacted the bosun to ensure the crew took remedial action if feed or water issues were detected.

Hospital pens were available for sick animals to be held if required.

Discharge

The discharge was supervised by both stock persons, undertaken in a professional manner and animal welfare was a priority. The cattle were provided with feed and water until the time of discharge. No issues were noted.

Conclusion

The stock persons were constantly monitoring the cattle and conditions and ensured that animal welfare was a priority. Overall the crew and stock persons were diligent in ensuring the ASEL requirements were being met.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 3 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen - no issues identified



Day 5 Cattle in pen- no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

