

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ganado Express*

Cattle exported to China in January 2019

Report 60, September 2019

Voyage summary

A consignment of 1,743 cattle was loaded onto the *MV Ganado Express* at Fremantle on 5 January 2019. The *MV Ganado Express* discharged at Lianyungang, China on 17 and 18 January 2019, making this a 14 day voyage.

There were no mortalities on the voyage.

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

The following comments represent a summary of key observations from the independent observer (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, including contingencies.

Loading

Prior to loading, sawdust was spread within each pen, ramps and walkways. The cattle were not loaded exactly in accordance with the load plan. The number of cattle in some pens was adjusted over the first few days of the voyage.

In all pens, at least 50% of the cattle were able to rest at any one time. Due to the light loading of the vessel, in most pens, all cattle could lie down at once.

Personnel

An experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the voyage who was responsible for the health and welfare of the livestock. The stockperson was professional and proactive, self-motivated and displayed a consistent concern for animal welfare and treating cattle.

The chief officer (CO) was very receptive to the observer's observations. The stockperson, bosun and CO shared a very productive and open working relationship. Discussions between the stockperson and the bosun resulted in immediate action.

Daily routine

A meeting was held every day at 12:00pm and involved the stockperson, CO, bosun and observer. At the meeting, the daily treatment list, fodder consumption trends, pad condition, feeding program and observations were discussed.

The stockperson's day commenced approximately 5:30am with assessment of residual fodder in troughs and a general check. Morning pen rounds began around 7:00am and involved inspections and treatments. After morning rounds the stockperson would formulate the daily treatment list for inclusion into the daily report. The stockperson repeated the inspection and treatment rounds commencing around 2:00pm.

Overnight operations commenced at 4:00pm and one crew member was rotated on four hourly shifts during the night until 8:00am. Night watch operations were limited to filling and maintenance of water bowls, reattaching and cleaning fodder troughs.

Feed and water

The crew commenced feeding duties at 7:00am. Fodder troughs were emptied of fine powdery feed and water bowls cleaned and filled. Feeding was carried out manually by crew filling bags from pellet chutes in each of the holds on each deck. Morning feed operations took several hours and was followed by manual distribution of hay. A second feed of pellets was given around the middle of the afternoon.

Daytime deck operations were serviced by one or two crew members per deck.

The vessel generates water for consumption by the cattle. The cattle accepted it immediately and displayed no sign of avoidance. The water was supplied to two water bowls per pen.

Ventilation

The crew recorded wet, dry temperatures and humidity on each deck at approximately 10:00am and 3:00pm. The observer noted that the measuring methodology did not identify hot or cold spots within the deck. Warmer spots were located adjacent to engine room bulkheads and in pens where the deck is above the fuel tanks. Colder spots were located under ventilation structures on the vessel's centre line on each deck and under the hay access hatches. The ventilation was on the lowest setting when cold temperatures were experienced whilst approaching China.

Pen conditions

As the voyage was planned to take 12 days, the stockperson, bosun and CO developed a plan to wash the decks over a two day period. The observer monitored the pad conditions and noted that the pads became thicker and wetter as days progressed. Unused fodder, sweepings from passageways, additional bedding and a reduction of the number of cattle in some pens were used to improve the condition of the pad in the wetter pens.

Early in the voyage, the cleaning of the water bowls was observed to result in adding water to the pad. The crew were instructed to amend the process to ensure the water was swept to the passageway rather than the pad to assist with keeping the pad dry. The pens were washed down on days eight and nine.

Health and welfare

The stockperson used calm stock handling techniques in the movement of cattle from pen to pen and hospital pens. The observer noted that the crew worked well together but language barriers affected their assistance to the stockperson.

There were a high number of cattle that were treated early in the voyage for nasal discharge / respiratory disease. The treatment options became limited after several days due to exhaustion of the appropriate antibiotic treatment. Other treatments administered were for lameness, pink eye and blood in faeces. All animals responded well to the treatments.

Discharge

The discharge was supervised by the stockperson, vessel's crew, receiver's representatives and stevedores. The stockperson was proactive in ensuring the infrastructure used to transfer of cattle from the vessel to the trucks was modified to reduce the risk of injury of the cattle. The local stevedores had limited knowledge of calm stock movement. The observer noted non-compliant handling of livestock in the initial loads. The process was amended at discharge by the stockperson and the cattle moved more smoothly. Discharge was delayed during tidal periods because the ramp contacted the wharf edge.

The stockperson arranged for staged feeding of the cattle by the crew to ensure the cattle were presented with fresh fodder throughout the entire period of the discharge process.

Conclusion

The cattle were handled calmly and with animal welfare at the forefront.

All issues raised by the observer were dealt with swiftly. The stockperson was professional, diligent, and proactive and worked well with all members of the crew. The exporter arrangements 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.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 11 Cattle in pen — no issues identified

