



Australian Government

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Bahijah*

Cattle exported to Israel in September 2023

July 2025

Voyage summary

Livestock: 5,746 cattle

Vessel: *MV Bahijah*

Loading location and date: Fremantle, 11 September 2023

Vessel departure location and date: Fremantle, 12 September 2023

Discharge location and dates: Eilat, Israel, 1 to 2 October 2023

Voyage length: 22 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.05% (3 mortalities) of cattle. These mortalities are unlikely to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

Notifiable mortality rate: 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

Based on observations made during this voyage, the exporter arrangements relating to loading were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

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 observation 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.

On day 18, the voyage's highest wet bulb temperature of 33.2°C was recorded by the vessel on deck 6. The observer recorded a temperature of 33.7°C near the engine room on the same deck on the same day. There were no livestock observed as heat stressed during this time. The vessel had 5 days (day 16 – 20) when the maximum wet bulb temperatures were over 30 degrees. There were no health or welfare impacts observed due to the temperatures on livestock decks through the voyage.

Pen conditions

The observer noted that:

1. At least three temporary pens on each of decks 5, 6 and 7 included in the stowage plan were not assembled at commencement of loading and hence were not available to receive livestock. In total 9 pens were not utilised during the voyage. This resulted in less pen space allocation than required by the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL). No direct effects on animal health were noted because of the failure to assemble the temporary pens and subsequent overstocking.
2. Many pens across all decks were overstocked by one head per pen. This overstocking was not in accordance with ASEL standards 5.1.2 and 5.5.1. Generally, over 90% of the animals in affected pens were allocated their minimum space as required by ASEL. The observer noted that there was room for rest, movement and access to feed and water, with no animal welfare issues identified.

Health and welfare

The AAV reported that:

1. During the voyage, 21 cattle were treated for conditions including foot/leg injuries, nasal discharge, coughing, eye discharge and gastrointestinal issues. Some livestock requiring treatment were moved to hospital pens.
2. A total of 3 mortalities occurred on this voyage, with 1 animal found deceased and the others euthanised.

3. Two postmortems were performed by the AAV, with both causes of death identified as gastrointestinal/gut issues. The other animal was euthanised because of a broken limb.

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

1. No adverse animal health and welfare outcomes arising from exporter arrangements were observed, and no regulatory action was taken for this voyage.
2. The department will continue to monitor the use of the temporary pens and penning density on future voyages.

Representative photographs of voyage

Day 5 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 16 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 19 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 20 Cattle 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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