



Australian Government

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Ute*

## Cattle exported to Indonesia in March 2024

July 2025

### Voyage summary

Livestock: 4,716 cattle

Vessel: *MV Ocean Ute*

Loading location and date: Townsville, 1 March to 2 March 2024

Vessel departure location and date: Townsville, 2 March 2024

Discharge location and dates: Panjang, Indonesia, from 13 March 2024 to 14 March 2024

Voyage length: 14 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.21% (10 mortalities). These mortalities are unlikely to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

Notifiable mortality rate: 0.5%.

### 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

One of the cattle was identified to have fractured a leg during the loading process and was euthanised. This was reported to the observer.

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

The observer noted that cattle were not fed chaff on days 13 and 14 during discharge. The Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) requires that at least 1% of the required feed is chaff or hay. No adverse effects on animal health and welfare were observed as a result of chaff not being fed.

## Ventilation

The maximum wet bulb deck temperature reported during the voyage was 30°C, which was recorded on day 6 on deck 3 and day 7 on decks 3, 4 and 5. The recorded daily maximum wet bulb temperatures ranged from 23°C to 30 °C during the voyage. There were no health or welfare impacts observed due to the temperatures through the voyage.

The observer noted that temperatures recorded at known hotspots near the engine room on decks 3 and 4 were 1 to 2 degrees higher than other sections of those decks. No livestock health and welfare impacts, as a result of temperature, were observed in cattle in pens surrounding the engine room.

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

## Pen conditions

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

## Health and welfare

No systemic issues observed.

The accredited stockperson reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, 35 cattle were treated. Conditions treated included lameness, ill-thrift (shy-feeder), respiratory and gastrointestinal conditions.
- 1) A total of 10 cattle mortalities occurred on this voyage, with 4 mortalities euthanised and 6 found deceased.
- 2) Post mortems were performed for 6 mortalities, with all 6 attributed to respiratory disease. Post mortems were deemed unnecessary for the other 4 mortalities due to clear clinical signs, with 3 mortalities attributed to respiratory disease and the other was euthanised due to a fractured leg.

**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**

No adverse animal health and welfare outcomes arising from exporter arrangements were observed, the department required the exporter to review, amend and vary their processes as required to ensure livestock on future voyages are fed chaff as required by the ASEL standard 5.3.7.

## Representative photographs of voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 9 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 11 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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