



Australian Government

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Gloucester Express*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in November 2024

July 2025

Voyage summary

Livestock: 3,624 cattle

Vessel: *MV Gloucester Express*

Loading location and date: Darwin, from 1 to 2 November 2024

Vessel departure location and date: Darwin, 2 November 2024

Discharge location and dates:

- Panjang, Indonesia, 7 November 2024
- Belawan, Indonesia, from 10 to 11 November 2024

Voyage length: 11 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.08% (3 mortalities). These mortalities are unlikely to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

Notifiable mortality rate: 1%

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

The observer noted that:

- 1) To facilitate loading, several pens across the vessel were combined, meaning that some pens did not match the load plan. Once cattle in the combined pens settled on day 2, all inter-pen

gates were closed to reconfigure the pens according to the load plan. The observer did not identify any visibly overstocked pens. All cattle in combined pens had access to feed and water and there was no observed adverse impact on animal health or welfare as a result of combining pens.

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:

- 1) The stockperson and crew regularly and efficiently cleaned nose bowls and fodder troughs. The stockperson added extra water troughs to some pens and these troughs were also cleaned and topped up throughout the voyage.
- 2) The stockperson was observed to pre-emptively provide chaff to cattle during the first days of the voyage, so that cattle were encouraged to approach their troughs. Two shy feeders were identified during the voyage and both were treated in a hospital pen.

Ventilation

- 1) Throughout the voyage, the observer monitored cattle around potential hotspots on decks 4 and 5. The observer noted there was an increase up to 0.5°C in wet bulb temperature compared to surrounding pens. The increased wet bulb temperature occurred in areas affected by solar radiation on metal surfaces of the vessel and areas close to the smokestacks.
- 2) On day 4, the voyage's highest wet bulb temperature of 31°C was recorded at approximately midday on deck 4.
- 3) The observer reported that there were no animals observed as heat stressed at any time during the voyage and there were no negative health or welfare impacts observed relating to temperatures on all livestock decks.

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 observer noted that:

- 1) The stockperson was observed to be thorough and attentive to all animals requiring treatment.

- 2) On day 3 a lethargic animal was identified and placed in a hospital pen for treatment as a suspected respiratory case. The animal discharged without incident at the port of Panjang and was observed to be slightly lethargic whilst discharging.
- 3) On day 7 during discharge at the port of Panjang, a recumbent animal was identified and treated by the stockperson. The stockperson monitored and retreated this animal, however it did not respond to treatment and was promptly euthanased approximately 3 hours later.

The stockperson reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, 16 cattle were treated for conditions including lameness, ill-thrift and pneumonia. Livestock requiring treatment were moved to hospital pens.
- 2) A total of 3 mortalities occurred on this voyage. One mortality was euthanised for a nervous system issue that didn't respond to treatment, with no cause identified on post-mortem. Two animals were found deceased, and the stockperson reported that postmortems were unable to be performed due to time constraints.

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, and no regulatory action was taken for this voyage.

Representative photographs of voyage**Day 2 Cattle in pen — combined pens****Day 4 Cattle in pen — no issues identified****Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified****Day 8 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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