

Independent Observer summary report on MV *Maysora*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in September 2019

Report 184, February 2020

Voyage summary

On 9–10 September 2019, a consignment of 10,325 cattle was loaded onto the MV *Maysora* in Townsville. The cattle were discharged from the vessel at Jakarta, Indonesia, on 18-20 September 2019, making this a 12 day voyage.

The Independent Observer (observer) boarded the vessel in Townsville, then remained on board until completion of discharge.

The mortality rate for the cattle was 0.09% (9 mortalities), which does not exceed the reportable mortality rate.

The following comments are a summary of key observations from the observer who accompanied the voyage.

Independent observations of the 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.

Loading

Loading in Townsville was done efficiently. Appropriate animal handling equipment was used minimally and responsibly. One animal with a broken leg identified at loading was euthanased on board.

Personnel

Two LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons (stockpersons), and an apprentice stockperson were responsible for the health and welfare of the cattle during the voyage. One of the stockpersons was a veterinarian with significant live export experience. The livestock crew worked effectively to maintain as best possible conditions as they could for the cattle.

Daily routine

Cattle were feed pellets at 6:00am, 13:00pm and 15:30pm. Chaff was fed at 10:30am and troughs were topped up with chaff during the night.

Feed and water troughs were regularly cleaned.

A Daily meeting between the master, Chief Officer (CO), stockpersons, and observer was held at 10:30am. Any issues from the previous day were discussed, as well as forward planning for the coming day.

Feed and water

Pellets are stored in 2 main bunkers in an area in front of the 1st to 5th cattle decks. Pellets are centrifuged upwards to the top deck (Deck 11) and then delivered via gravity feed through PVC pipes to troughs in the decks below. Towards the end of the voyage, troughs in the lower decks often had a high proportion of fines due to the handling of the pelletised feed.

Water produced by reverse osmosis is delivered to each pen by an automatic refilling system to an open trough that is automatically filled by a float valve system. This system worked effectively with the refill rate providing cattle with constant water supply throughout the journey.

Most cattle were observed to keenly feed on the pellets from the first day of the voyage and thereafter.

Ventilation

Ventilation was by forced air flow delivered through rectangular grill vents of various sizes and positions throughout the decks.

The maximum reading across all decks on each day from day 3 to day 11 inclusive, ranged between 29–34 °C (dry bulb), 26–30 °C (wet bulb) and 78–79% humidity.

Pen conditions

The observer calculated; based on the load plan, individual pen dimensions and cattle numbers; that some pens on Decks 2, 4, 7 and 8 appeared to be overstocked.

Mid-voyage, the stockperson raised the issue of a deck wash-down, however the master was not in favour of doing so and as a result no wash-down was conducted.

Most of the manure pads throughout the decks were dry and crumbly or slightly tacky up until day 7, but by day 9 the manure pad was up to 25 cm deep in many pens. By the last day, most manure pads became increasingly heavy and sticky.

The observer noted a high level of ammonia associated with accumulation of manure in the pens later in the voyage causing eye irritation in personnel. The observer expressed concern that a high level of ammonia had potential to impact on the health and welfare of the livestock. During discharge livestock crew actively worked to prevent cattle from laying down to minimise exposure the poorer quality air above the manure pad which led to fatigue in some cattle.

The observer raised concerns about certain pens with infrastructure that risked injury to cattle. No action was taken during the voyage by the master or stockmen as cattle had never been observed being injured by these obstacles. The observer noted 8 cattle with wounds identified as occurring during the voyage.

Health and welfare

16 cattle were successfully treated for lameness or shy feeding. Another 2 remained obviously lame at discharge. The observer noted that a small number of cattle showed signs consistent with the ASEL rejection criteria and should not have been loaded for export. These cattle were discharged in Jakarta.

During discharge, 15 recumbent cattle were observed to require physical intervention to get them to stand up so that they could be discharged.

Of the 9 cattle that died on the vessel, 1 was euthanased due to a broken leg, one had gross signs of pneumonia at post mortem, and 7 died without any pre or post mortem signs of illness or trauma noted by the observer. Of these 7 cattle, 6 died on days 9–11 while the vessel was discharging at Jakarta.

The observer noted that the first cattle loaded were some of the last cattle discharged. This added to the length of time the livestock were on the vessel which had potential to impact on their health and welfare.

There were no other issues with the overall health and welfare of the cattle.

Discharge

Other than the issues noted above, discharge went relatively smoothly over the 60 hours, interrupted at times by lack of available trucks. No animal welfare issues were observed during discharge.

Conclusion

The stockpersons and livestock crew worked effectively to manage the livestock during the voyage.

The department addressed the concerns regarding pen infrastructure with the exporter to ensure the health and welfare of animals on this vessel. The exporter has since indicated that the vessel will undergo upgrades to improve the pens of concern. These outcomes will be monitored by the department on upcoming voyages.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 3 Injury hazard



Day 9 Animal down in pen



Day 11 Cattle awaiting discharge—no issues identified



Day 11 Cattle awaiting discharge—no issues identified

