

Mortality Report 87

Cattle exported by sea to Indonesia in July 2023

November 2023

Summary

On 16 July 2023, Frontier International Northern Pty Ltd (FIN) exported 544 feeder cattle to Indonesia. The journey was completed in 6 days and discharged in Jakarta on 21 July 2023.

A voyage mortality rate of 0.55% (3 head) was reported for the cattle. This exceeded the notifiable level of 0.5% as prescribed by the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL).

Of the 3 mortalities, 2 were reported by the shipboard accredited stockperson as being a result of respiratory disease and one was a downer cow that was euthanased during discharge.

Information reviewed

The department reviewed the incident by assessing the following information:

1. A report from the exporter
2. Daily reports and the end of voyage report from the accredited stockperson
3. Property of origin details
4. A report from the Master of the vessel
5. Department records from previous and subsequent voyages
6. The exporter's approved arrangement and approved management plans

Background

Prior to this voyage, FIN had exported 229 consignments of feeder cattle to Indonesia with a total of 644689 cattle. This is the fifth notifiable mortality incident for FIN. The four previous incidents occurred in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 and involved consignments to Vietnam.

Investigation Findings

The livestock

The consignment consisted of 544 feeder cattle – 328 heifers and 216 cows.

Preparation in the registered establishment (RE)

One RE was used for the preparation of cattle in this consignment. It is located in the Northern Territory and is routinely used to prepare livestock including cattle for export.

The required time for cattle to be held in an RE for short haul voyages (voyages under 10 days) with a single port of discharge is a minimum of 2 clear days. The cattle in the consignment met the ASEL requirements of minimum length of time that livestock must remain in an RE.

The cattle were inspected by an Australian Government Accredited Veterinarian on 14 July 2023. One animal was rejected due to lameness. Otherwise, the cattle were deemed to be in good health.

The cattle were inspected on 14 July 2023 by the department's regional veterinary officer who approved transport of the consignment to the port for export.

The vessel

The vessel involved in this incident is a purpose-built livestock carrier used to export livestock to a range of markets. There has been one previous notifiable mortality incident on this vessel involving buffalo exported to Vietnam in August 2019 (#81).

Loading onto the vessel

Loading of the consignment onto the vessel was completed in 1 hour on 15 July 2023. No issues were reported during loading.

Conditions during the voyage

An accredited stockperson accompanied the voyage and was responsible for reporting to the department. The stockperson works with the Master of the vessel and crew to manage the health and welfare of the livestock on board.

According to the End of Voyage Report and Master's Report there were no reported issues with the vessel ventilation, watering system, or feeding throughout the voyage and temperatures were within normal ranges and sailing conditions were good.

Mortalities and treatments

There was a total of 3 cattle mortalities in the consignment of 544, leading to a voyage mortality rate of 0.55%. Two cattle were found deceased on day 3 of the voyage and one was euthanased on day 6, during discharge, as a downer cow. The notifiable level for voyage mortality rate (0.5%) was reached on day 6.

Post-mortem examinations were carried out on the two cattle found deceased. Based on the post-mortem examinations, the accredited stockperson attributed these mortalities to respiratory disease.

On both day 4 and 5 of the voyage, 2 cattle were identified with nasal discharge. All 4 were treated with antibiotics (Draxin[®] - tulathromycin) and all made a full recovery.

Department's Actions

The department required additional reporting and AAV oversight for FIN's next consignment which was due to depart later in July 2023.

This consignment reported one mortality out of 2124 giving a mortality rate of 0.0471% and no evidence of systemic issues.

Conclusions

After review and analysis of the reports from the on-board stockperson and exporter which detailed the clinical signs of the cattle on board, the department determined that the suspected causes for the mortalities raised by the stockperson were plausible. There is no evidence to suggest any breaches of ASEL that may have led to the mortalities.