



Australian Government

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Ocean Swagman*

Cattle exported to China in March 2025

November 2025

Voyage summary

Livestock: 6,898 cattle

Vessel: *MV Ocean Swagman*

Loading location and date:

- Fremantle, 5 March 2025
- Portland, 10 March 2025

Vessel departure location and date: Portland, 10 March 2025

Discharge location and dates: Tianjin, China, from 27 to 28 March 2025

Voyage length: 24 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.1% (7 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

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 observations 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.

The observer noted that:

- 1) Throughout the voyage, the observer monitored cattle around potential hotspots near the engine room on multiple decks. The observer noted there was an increase of up to 1.4°C in wet bulb temperatures in the aft of decks 3 and 5.
- 2) In the morning of day 14, the voyage's highest wet bulb temperature of 28.5°C was recorded on deck 3. The deck cooled below this temperature after 3 hours and there were no livestock observed as heat stressed during this time.
- 3) In the night from days 21 to 22, the voyage's lowest wet bulb temperature of 4.6°C was recorded on deck 5. The deck remained below a wet bulb temperature of 10°C for most of the night, then warmed after 15 hours. There were no livestock observed as cold stressed during this time.
- 4) 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 daily routine were appropriate and effective in managing livestock health and welfare.

Health and welfare

No systemic issues were observed.

The accredited stockperson reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, 151 treatments were administered to downer cattle and for conditions including leg injuries, pink eye, respiratory disease and ill-thrift. Livestock requiring treatment were either treated in their pens or moved to hospital pens.
- 2) A total of 7 mortalities occurred on this voyage, with 1 animal euthanised and 6 found deceased.

- 3) Post mortems were performed by the stockperson for 5 mortalities, with the main causes identified as respiratory disease and gut issues.
- 4) The stockperson reported that 1 post mortem was not necessary as the cause was apparent, and 1 post mortem was unable to be performed due to time constraints. Both of these mortalities occurred on day 1 with a presumptive diagnosis of bloat.

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 4 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 8 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 12 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 16 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 20 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 24 Cattle discharging from the vessel — 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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