



Australian Government

# Independent Observer summary report on *MV Brahman Express*

## Cattle exported to China in April 2025

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November 2025

### Voyage summary

Livestock: 3,539 cattle

Vessel: *MV Brahman Express*

Loading locations and dates:

- Fremantle, 07 April 2025
- Portland, 12 April 2025

Vessel departure locations and dates:

- Fremantle, 08 April 2025
- Portland, 12 April 2025

Discharge location and dates: Dafeng, China, from 28 April 2025 to 29 April 2025

Voyage length: 23 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.141% (5 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**

The observer reported that:

- 1) Throughout the voyage, water troughs were manually refilled one deck at a time, three times daily, after each feed delivery. Automatic nose bowls on all decks did not work while water troughs were being manually filled. This resulted in some animals having no access to water for up to 2 hours, against the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) standard 5.1.12. No adverse health or welfare effects were observed for the cattle affected by the empty nose bowls.

**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 reported that:

- 1) On the morning of day 15, the vessel, including ventilation on all decks, shut down for approximately 10 minutes. No negative health or welfare impacts were observed for the livestock as a result of this issue.
- 2) In the afternoon of day 14, the voyage's highest wet bulb temperature of 30.4°C was recorded on deck 2. The longest duration above 30°C wet bulb temperature was for 3 hours and 20 minutes.
- 3) There were no livestock 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**

The observer noted that:

- 1) On days 14 to 20, pad conditions on all decks became sloppy while crossing the equator, with some cattle displaying minor to moderate hair coat contamination. The observer reported that at times the pad height was seen to be between the hoof and fetlock. Discarded pellets and chaff were observed to be swept up and added to the pen floor twice daily, however this had little impact upon the pad condition. The Accredited Veterinarian (AAV) directed deck washing every day or every second day to manage the sloppy pad conditions, followed by application of bedding material. These actions were observed to be

effective for ensuring the health and welfare of the livestock in affected pens. No adverse health or welfare outcomes were observed as a result of the pen conditions or washing.

## Health and welfare

No systemic issues were observed.

The AAV reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, 302 cattle were treated. The majority were treatments for lameness and limb injuries, but also included pink eye, respiratory disease and general illness.
- 2) A total of 5 mortalities occurred on this voyage, with 1 animal euthanised and 4 found deceased.
- 3) Post-mortems were performed by the AAV for 4 mortalities, with causes identified as respiratory disease, gastrointestinal disease and unknown for the remaining 2 mortalities. The AAV reported that 1 post-mortem was not performed on an animal euthanised for 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 exporter was required to review, vary and amend, where necessary, their written instructions in accordance with ASEL 4.1.19 c) for situations where water cannot be supplied *ad libitum* as per ASEL 5.1.12.

## Representative photographs of voyage

Day 3 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 — hair coat contamination and sloppy pad



Day 17 Cattle in pen after wash down — no issues identified



Day 21 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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