



Australian Government

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Balha One*

Cattle exported to Indonesia in November 2025

February 2026

Voyage summary

Livestock: 4,434 cattle

Vessel: *MV Balha One*

Loading location and date: Darwin, 10 November 2025

Vessel departure location and date: Darwin, 11 November 2025

Discharge location and dates: Jakarta, Indonesia, from 16 to 17 November 2025

Voyage length: 8 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.48% (21 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

Relevant exporter documentation for the voyage was made available to the observer.

Loading

The observer noted that:

- 1) Inter-pen gates were left open or removed to combine pens in approximately 25% of all pens across the vessel. Combining pens is in breach of Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) s5.1.7 that requires animals to be loaded and penned on the vessel, in lines segregated according to the load plan. The observer commented that combining pens provided animals with greater trough space availability. This practice exposed some metal

hinge brackets however no injuries were observed in the cattle loaded due to the exposed hinge brackets.

- 2) The observer reported that during the first few days of the voyage, the stockperson moved individual animals, as required, perceived as needing better access to fodder and water. This occurred in approximately 5% of pens and on all decks throughout the voyage, including into a pen marked as empty on the load plan. Stocking densities were observed to be in accordance with ASEL.

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) On day 4, the voyage's highest wet bulb temperature of 30.9°C was recorded at approximately midday on deck 2. The deck cooled below this temperature within 2 hours. There were no reported signs of heat stress in these animals during this period. There were no health or welfare impacts observed due to the temperatures on livestock decks through the voyage.
- 2) A pen on deck 4 located near to the vessel's generator was identified as a hot spot. A nearby sea door was left permanently open, which was observed to be effective in reducing the wet bulb temperatures below the rest of the deck. The Chief Officer left pens in the vicinity empty for the duration of the voyage, and as a result, no adverse cattle health or welfare issues were observed.

Pen conditions

The observer reported that:

- 1) There was heavy rain during loading which led to water leaking through the roof of deck 8. Two pens became wet as a direct result of this leak. Once the heavy rain had stopped, the affected pens dried within 24 hours and no adverse health or welfare issues were observed due to the leak.
- 2) Water run-off from the cattle during loading adversely impacted pen conditions in approximately 20% of pens throughout the vessel. All available sawdust was applied to about half of all pens improving pen conditions. The condition of the remaining pens improved within 24 hours due to the vessel's ventilation system without any sawdust being

applied. The depth of the wet pads remained below the level of the top of the hoof for the duration of the voyage. No adverse impacts on animal health or welfare were observed due to the localised wet pad conditions.

Health and welfare

The AAV reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, 54 treatments were given to cattle, including 15 treatments for ill-thrift or anorexia, 1 treatment for scours, 9 for lameness, 1 to a recumbent animal and 28 treatments for respiratory disease.
- 2) A total of 21 mortalities occurred on this voyage with 4 mortalities euthanised and 17 found deceased. Post-mortems were performed by the AAV for 15 mortalities with the main cause identified as respiratory disease. The AAV reported that 6 post-mortems were unable to be performed due to the vessel's proximity to shore.

The observer noted that:

- 1) Some cattle demonstrated flighty behaviour for the first few days of the voyage. The livestock settled down during the remainder of the voyage but remained wary of humans at discharge.
- 2) The identification and treatment of animals with respiratory disease was discussed in daily meetings, and that this ensured affected animals were identified and treated promptly.
- 3) On day 4, a livestock pen was turned into a hospital pen so that 4 animals being treated could be monitored closely and have better access to fodder and water.
- 4) On day 6, the AAV reported an animal with a leg injury, after it became stuck in an uncovered drain. The AAV treated the animal in a hospital pen and it was observed to recover fully. There were no further injuries observed due to uncovered drains for the remainder of the voyage.

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

The department took the following actions:

- 1) The department requested additional information from the exporter relating to respiratory disease cases and sourcing of livestock. No breaches of ASEL were identified.
- 2) The department required additional inspection and verification activities at the registered establishment and on the vessel for the exporter's next consignment of cattle.

Representative photographs of voyage

Day 3 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen — wet pad conditions



Day 4 Cattle in pen — sawdust applied to pad after rain



Day 5 Cattle in pen — open gates



Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 7 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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