



Australian Government

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Brahman Express*

Cattle exported to China in December 2025

May 2026

Voyage summary

Livestock: 3,265 cattle

Vessel: *MV Brahman Express*

Loading location and date: Portland, 20 December 2025

Vessel departure location and date: Portland, 20 December 2025

Discharge location and dates: Weifang, China, from 6 to 7 January 2026

Voyage length: 19 days

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

Voyage mortality rate: 0.25% (8 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) The voyage's highest wet bulb temperature of 30.1°C was recorded on deck 2 in the evening of day 12. The deck cooled below this temperature after 4 hours and there were no livestock observed as heat stressed during this time.
- 2) On day 18 the side exit door on deck 5 was left open in preparation for discharge. The observer reported the area around the door was noticeably cooler and measured a difference of 2.3°C in pens close to the open door. The voyage's lowest wet bulb temperature of 1.6°C was recorded close to the open door.
- 3) There was a hot spot identified on deck 4 with wet bulb temperatures approximately 2.5°C warmer in pens close to the engine room.

Pen conditions

The observer noted that:

- 1) The stockperson closely monitored pen conditions throughout the voyage and coordinated with vessel crew to ensure pens were washed down regularly and bedding was then applied to wet pens that were slow to dry out. These actions were observed to be effective and no animal welfare issues were identified.
- 2) Around day 15, the stockperson instructed the bosun and Chief Officer to close all entry doors and hatches ahead of the vessel reaching colder weather. All decks were fully washed down 2 days before the vessel arrived at the port of discharge and bedding was applied to pens. On day 16, the observer noted that all pens were dry and no animal welfare issues were identified.

Health and welfare

No systemic issues were observed.

The observer noted that:

- 1) On day 10, the observer identified some cattle with eye conditions and notified the stockperson. The stockperson promptly treated the cattle in their pens.

The stockperson reported that:

- 1) During the voyage, the stockperson reported 133 treatments for conditions including leg injuries, pink eye, respiratory disease, downers or lethargy.

- a) Two cattle were treated after becoming stuck from misadventure on decks 3 and 4, respectively. The two trapped cattle recovered and were later discharged from the vessel.
- 2) A total of 8 mortalities occurred on this voyage, with 1 mortality euthanised and 7 found deceased. Respiratory disease was identified as the cause of 2 mortalities. On day 6, a downer cow on deck 3 was treated in its home pen and was later found deceased.
- 3) Post-mortems were performed by the stockperson for 4 mortalities, with no causes identified. The stockperson reported that there was insufficient time to perform 4 post-mortems.

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 required the exporter to review, amend and vary as required, their processes for treating sick or injured animals in their home pens if appropriate, to comply with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) s5.6.3.

Representative photographs of voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 4 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 7 Cattle in pen — after wash down



Day 11 Cattle in pen — after wash down



Day 14 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 17 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

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