

## **ASEL Review Draft 2 Submission.**

I am a LiveCorp Accredited Australian Stockwoman, who works in the live export industry. My interests lie in good animal welfare and how we achieve that onboard through low stress handling,

I would like to submit the following recommendations, which include new recommendations. I had intended to contribute to Stage 1, however, I was at sea when Stage 1 comments were due for submission, which made it impossible for me to meet this deadline.

### **3 Stocking Densities**

#### **3.2 Onboard Stocking Densities**

Understandably, an exporter wants to maximise on the available space on-board each ship. However, in my experience, voyages which are stated to be “10 day voyages or less” (i.e. Townsville to Haiphong, Vietnam), regularly run over that time frame. Despite this, these ships are stocked at a <10day stocking rate. From the time the first animal is loaded onto the ship, to the time that the last animal gets off the ship in the destination country, that animal might have been onboard for much longer than ten days – often 12, 13 or 14 days. During that time, these animals have been stocked at the lower rate, however, due to breakdowns, maintenance or prioritisation of another vessel into berth, the ship may be running late.

These reasons are all understandable and that is just part of life at sea, however, while that is happening upstairs, it is the cattle downstairs who are becoming increasingly more tired and cramped as the time goes on (despite utilising space and shifting pens around as best we can to cater to this).

Perhaps there can be some further thought around stocking densities on regular routes if previous voyages on the same ship or charterers ships in general, often take longer than the originally stated voyage length.

In referring to Table A4.1.1 Minimum pen area per head for cattle exported by sea, we can see the difference between space that a 500kg slaughter steer is allocated for a trip to Vietnam – he receives 1.725 metres squared space for voyages under 10 days, but if the voyage is to be over 10 days, he would receive 1.790 metres squared.

And if the particular ship that he is on has many breakdowns during the voyage, and runs over the ten days, he is disadvantaged because he was stocked at the lower density.

In the seven voyages I have taken to Vietnam this year, I cannot remember one which arrived within the 10 stated days.

## **7 Onboard Personnel**

### **7.1.3 Stockpersons**

In reference to information found in Draft 2 on the subject of calculating stockmen to a livestock ratio, I am in agreeance. Stockmen and women are there to care for their livestock, however, set limits would be a good way to go to ensure all livestock have their needs cared for.

#### **Minimum requirements for Equipment**

My background and interests lie in good livestock handling and how that results in good animal welfare outcomes, so one item that I believe is a necessity on ships is cattle/sheep talkers.

Good handling results in good animal welfare outcomes which begins on-farm and proceeds through transport and registered premises to the ship, where the most intensive and high pressure part of the journey awaits the animals. With good stockmanship becoming rarer to find, the implementation of aids while loading and unloading a ship has many positive welfare outcomes.

Despite most ship crews generally being knowledgeable in how to move livestock, this is not always the case, and if an individual does not know to effectively communicate what he wants to the animal, then negative handling techniques may be employed such as hitting with poly, excessive use of jigger, or using fear tactics.

In my experience onboard, no ships carry 'cattle talkers'. Ships will carry jiggers (necessary) and poly pipe, but I haven't found cattle talkers onboard.

A cattle talker, which is an aid to the handler and very effective when used correctly, is a piece of poly pipe, with a flapper or a bag on the end, which is usually brightly coloured, and can be used to move livestock effectively and in a non-threatening way. If the 'flapper' section falls off, it can be reattached with tape easily and quickly and continued to be used.

With cattle and sheep having poor depth perception and requiring effective communication and movement from their handlers to have their wishes understood, a lot of livestock fall prey to "getting hit to go forward". This is a combination of lack of training for crews, incorrect tools for the job and unfortunately the reality of loading and unloading a live export ship.

In my time on-board, I have enlisted the help of the crew to create cattle talkers for our use. These cattle talkers, which are easy to make, give the cattle a visual aid and help facilitate calm and safe movement of stock. This results in good animal welfare in the following ways: there is less stress through reduced noise and touching of livestock, it creates a calmer environment, it respects the animals right to have time to react to stimuli and think and move forward, less likelihood of cattle jumping rails due to the reduced stress, and it results in fewer injuries to stock through leg injuries caused by rushing or jumping when being loaded/unloaded. Livestock also tend to come onto feed and water sooner if they have been

loaded onto the ship in a low stress manner with cattle talkers used, as it reduces the stress felt by each individual and allows him to feel safer in his new surroundings.

My view as an Australian stockwoman is that you cannot expect non-Australian ship crews to be savvy in principles of livestock handling techniques i.e. pressure and release, flight zone, parallel movement – the communication techniques that livestock understand, but you can expect the crews to follow their stockman/woman's requests which in this case is "please use this cattle talker in this way to facilitate movement", rather than allowing them to use the same piece of poly without the 'flapper' on the end, which then becomes a tool for undesirable livestock handling techniques.

Upon completing the LiveCorp Accredited On-board Stockman's course in Fremantle in 2010, course attendee's walked away with a cattle/sheep talker, from Boyd Holden – who was the livestock presenter at the time.

These talkers, which were green and had a yellow flapper (very visible to livestock), were designed to be used on board and they were created by Boyd in conjunction with MLA and LiveCorp.

It is of my opinion that there should be a minimum number of these talkers onboard all ships used in Australia to transport livestock, and provisions be available to repair them. I think these items could fall under the "Vet Kit" onboard, and be counted in the Vet Kit stocktake and be replaced by the exporter chartering the ship, if necessary.

If a minimum requirement by ASEL stated that there must be at least 3 cattle/sheep talkers per ship, then we would be certain we were providing the best possible means to have livestock handled in line with good animal welfare.

Thank you.

Alexandra Snape