Independent Observer summary report on MV *Ocean Swagman*

Cattle exported to China in September 2018

Report 19, March 2019

Voyage summary

The MV *Ocean Swagman* is a mixed open and closed seven deck vessel. It commenced loading in Portland on 9 September 2018 with 6841 head of breeder cattle. It arrived in China on 27 September 2018 and completed discharge on 28 September 2018, making this a journey of 20 days.

The *Ocean Swagman* has an AMSA Australian Certificate for the Carriage of Livestock (ACCL).

The Independent Observer (IO) joined the vessel in Portland, Victoria.

The overall mortality rate for the voyage was 0.06 per cent (four mortalities). The causes of the mortalities were not considered to be linked to any systemic failure on behalf of the exporter.

The following comments represent a summary of key observations from the Independent Observer from loading at Portland until discharge at Tianjin, China. The summary has been approved by the Independent Observer who accompanied this voyage.

Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

Exporter documentation

The exporter load plan was submitted to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources prior to departure as required. The Load Plan was based on carriage of 7,225 head; but only 6,841 cattle were loaded. The health and welfare of animals was maintained during the loading process.

Consignment specific export plans (CSEPs) were available for the cattle addressing procedures relating to provision of fodder, water, bedding (cattle only) medication, humane destruction, livestock officer instructions from loading through to discharge and contingencies. The instructions included in the CSEPs were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* (ASEL) requirements.

Loading

The crew used the Load Plan to count the livestock on to decks. If the Head Stockman assessed the pen was already sufficiently stocked, he instructed that subsequent animals went into the next pen. As a result the pens were loaded according to visual capacity not strictly according to the load plan. This was a more accurate way of providing a good stocking density and it was not a problem because the vessel was not being loaded to capacity. There were spare pens once

loading was complete. The stocking density was such that most, if not all animals, could lay down at once.

Personnel

The crew were required to maintain the vessel and care for the livestock. Those involved with the livestock were the Master, Chief Officer (CO), Bosun, 16 stock crew and a night watchmen. There were three LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons overseeing the health and welfare of cattle.

Daily routine

Meetings were held at 10 am each morning with the CO, all stockmen and the Bosun. Plans were reviewed and any issues such as feeding, pen transfers, hospital pens and deck washing were discussed. Temperature and humidity readings were recorded at 8:30 am each day by the CO and entered into the daily report.

Feed and water

The water troughs were emptied, cleaned and filled after the morning and afternoon feeds. Occasionally there was faecal contamination of water or feed troughs but this was removed before filling.

The water quality was good and accessible continuously.

The cattle were fed pellets and chaff. The IO and stockpersons reviewed feed and water access and consumption and found it to meet the ASEL requirements.

Ventilation

Deck 5 had consistently lower temperature and humidity readings because the thermometer was directly opposite a ventilation shaft. The back of deck 4 was generally the hottest and most humid deck. The thermometers on this deck were nearest the access ramp on the port side, so the temperatures on the starboard side of the deck were likely higher than what was recorded.

The IO recorded temperatures most mornings at around 6.30am and afternoons before 5pm. There was not much difference in the afternoon readings.

Ventilation was deemed acceptable throughout the vessel.

Pen conditions

The pens were overall kept in good condition. Some became wet or sloppy for a variety of reasons including leaking water, bilge pump issue, waves washing over decks. Mechanical issues were identified and rectified quickly. Additional sawdust was added when pens became sloppy. It was generally the enclosed aft pens that were wet but it varied throughout the voyage.

There were two deck washes on the voyage. The first wash was on Day 8 and 9. A light cover of sawdust was then applied to the pens. The second washing was done over a two day period, a few days from arrival into China. A thick cover of sawdust was spread across the pens.

Health and welfare

All decks had identified and marked hospital pens, but some were used to accommodate normal animals and to ease some crowded decks. Lame animals or those showing clinical signs of

pneumonia were put into hospital pens. Other hospital pens were set aside for shy feeders and cattle found to be in light condition so that crew could provide them with extra feed.

Veterinary drug use was in line with the ailments being treated and the ship was more than sufficiently supplied with medicaments.

All decks were fully lit 24 hours.

Discharge

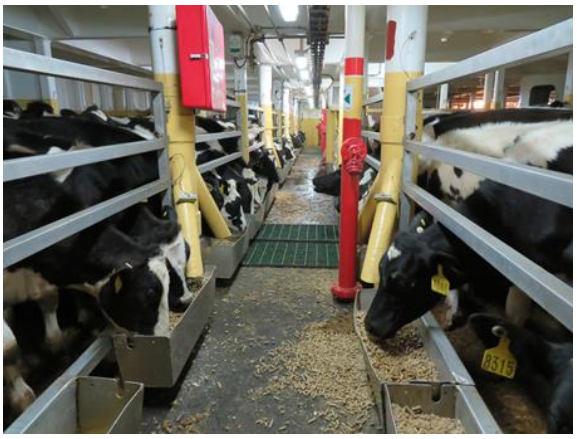
The IO considers that all elements of discharge of the vessel were conducted in a fashion which did not impede animal welfare.

Conclusion

The IO determined that the exporter's procedures to the management of livestock exported by sea were effective in ensuring compliance with the ASEL.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 Cattle in pen—no issues identified



Day 2 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 10 Cattle in pen—flooded pen

Day 10 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 17 Cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 20 Cattle in pen—no issues identified