# Independent Observer summary report on MV *Gudali Express*

## Cattle exported to Vietnam in May 2018

**Report 5, December 2018**

### Voyage summary

The MV *Gudali Express* is an enclosed vessel that carries livestock over five decks.

The voyage carried a single consignment for one exporter and commenced loading in Fremantle on the morning of 11 May 2018, with a total of 2,410 cattle loaded. The vessel departed late that night and completed discharge in Hon La, Vietnam in the late evening of 21 May 2018, making this an 11-day voyage.

The voyage loaded at a single port and the Independent Observer (IO) joined the vessel in Fremantle.

The overall mortality rate for the voyage was 0.25 per cent (six mortalities). This does not exceed the reportable mortality rate as stated in the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011* (ASEL). The causes of the mortalities were not considered to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

The following comments represent a summary of key observations from the IO from loading in Fremantle until discharge in Hon La, Vietnam. The summary has been approved by the IO who accompanied this voyage.

### Implementation of procedures to ensure health and welfare of livestock

#### Exporter documentation

Adjustments were made to pen densities following departure from Fremantle. The essential load plan remained as per that submitted to the department with minor adjustments for hospital admissions, and to spread animals and lower density to best preserve positive welfare conditions.

#### Loading

The IO inspected the ship prior to sailing with the Departmental Regional Veterinary Officer (RVO). No jagged edges were noted which could injure animals in pens or along alleyways. The flooring was clean, of a non-slip epoxy type and was in excellent condition permitting a good level of grip whilst not being unduly rough. All tested watering points were functional and feed troughs were clean with no contamination evident.

## Personnel

One LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the consignment who demonstrated themselves to be able and experienced. The stockperson has experience amassed over years on both short and long-haul voyages. They also have experience in feedlot management both in Australia and Vietnam, and pastoral beef experience working in the Pilbara in Western Australia, and in the Northern Territory. The stockperson was proactive in removing animals to hospital pens and providing treatment. They had a satisfactory understanding of medications and an exemplary understanding of effective low stress stock handling.

A minimum of nine vessel crew were assigned to livestock duties including feeding and watering, inspecting and cleaning troughs, maintaining alleyways and monitoring the amount of fodder remaining on board. All crew had good skills when it came to feeding, watering and cleaning. They all took direction well from the Bosun, the CO and stockperson. Language barriers presented some difficulties, however all crew had a basic understanding of English, and the CO was fluent in English and always able to assist. The livestock crew's cattle handling skills were acceptable. The Bosun and stockperson were gentle with the cattle when getting them to stand up during daily inspections.

## Daily routine

A meeting was held at 10:00am every day between the Chief Officer (CO), Bosun and stockperson, which the IO also attended. During the first part of the meeting, general discussion on livestock management and care would occur with the Bosun, including hospital pen cases and movements of animals to better balance pen densities. The feeding schedule was discussed (routinely set at twice daily) with regular updates provided regarding fodder remaining on board. In the second part of the meeting the CO and stockperson completed the Daily Report (Daily) required under ASEL.

Wet and dry bulb temperatures were taken daily in the morning prior to the submission of the Daily report. The time temperatures were taken varied between a 9:30am start and 10:50am finish (local time); with the actual process taking approximately 20 minutes. The responsibility fell to any of the crew on a rostered rotation. A handheld thermometer was used and three readings were taken per deck with the readings averaged across each deck for reporting purposes. Humidity was calculated by using a table of coefficients between dry and wet bulb temperatures. The IO inspected this routine and reviewed its ability to measure temperature and humidity levels on board.The stockperson performed full inspection rounds at least twice each day, checking every pen on each deck ensuring all animals could stand. Feed and water troughs were checked, as well as ensuring ventilation systems were working.

The CO performed rounds each morning checking the cattle and the upkeep of feeding, watering and trough cleaning. The CO was observed inspecting decks throughout the day and consulting with the stockperson. The Bosun performed individual pen checks a minimum of twice daily ensuring all cattle were able to stand, and the crew are trained to report any issues (e.g. lameness) to their supervisor who would then notify the stockperson. The stockperson also communicated that they contact him directly if necessary.

One night watchperson was present on deck between 6:00pm to 6:00am on a rotating four hour roster. They were responsible for monitoring water, cleaning troughs where necessary, keeping watch on cattle health and behaviour, and to ensure the ventilation system was working. If

problems did arise, they were to contact either the CO, stockperson or the Bosun. Lights were left on at all times on deck with no period of darkness.

## Feed and water

The CO was responsible for determining daily water consumption of the cattle, and the levels at the reverse osmosis station and storage tanks. The CO took a computer reading every morning to monitor water consumption. One reverse osmosis plant was used to make fresh water for the cattle. Nose bowls were present in all livestock pens; all were in good working order, robust and fit for purpose. The cargo decks also had the capacity to provide water into feed/water troughs manually with the crew using hoses.

Good quality pellet fodder was loaded and faeces were mostly firm. The cattle did not hesitate to feed strongly once settled nearing the end of the first day. Silos were present on the main deck for storage of pellet feed and extend down into multiple supply points on each deck of the cargo hold (Decks 1-5). From these supply points the crew fill bags (45kg) and feed out to livestock manually. Feed bins were monitored on a continuous basis, at least twice daily, with contaminated fodder emptied into pens. Prior to refilling the troughs were cleaned if required. The water used to clean the troughs was emptied into bilge buckets to minimise an increase of humidity in the pens and surrounding areas.

## Ventilation

Ventilation was working at 100 per cent throughout the entire voyage and commenced from the time the observer was on-board, prior to departure from Fremantle. This included a three hour period where the engine had to be stopped for maintenance in the Java Sea.

## Pen conditions

No deck washing occurred during the voyage. Generally, good control over deck moisture levels was observed with bilge buckets used to transport soiled water from troughs to drains. The IO noted that it was hard to ascertain whether or not washing would have provided an overall net benefit in the circumstances.

## Health and welfare

Not all cattle which received treatments were moved to hospital pens. This was assessed based on the nature of the issue and treatment required, and the ease of moving the animal to hospital pens. Treatment of minor issues was performed in the pen, with every effort made to move more serious cases to hospital pens. Records of all treatments given were kept by the stockperson. Hospital pens were prepared by spreading wood shavings of 5 to 10cm in depth before any cattle were placed into them, and all hospital patients were supplied with ad lib chaff. The stockperson explained that they don't like the use of the lower level designated hospital pens as in their opinion they are small and located where there is insufficient space / shape for a regular pen. Accordingly, this makes it difficult to have more than one animal in the pen (preferable in order to reduce patient stress by not isolating them). The stockperson was also of the opinion that it was easier at discharge to have any sick animals on Deck 5 if possible.

Six mortalities were recorded for the voyage, only one of which was not previously identified and receiving treatment prior to its demise.

### Discharge

Discharge in Hon La was largely carried out by importer-employed stockpersons outside the vessel with the stockperson and crew on-board getting passages ready for the upcoming cattle and then following them to ensure they kept moving. One crew member was counting at the discharge ramp.

## Conclusion

The observer determined that the relevant procedures relating to the management of livestock exported by sea were consistent with the ASEL.

## Representative photographs of the voyage

**Day 3 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**

**Day 4 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**

**Day 7 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**

**Day 7 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**

**Day 10 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**

**Day 10 Cattle in pen—no issues identified**