



Australian Government

Independent Observer summary report on *MV Bahijah*

Cattle exported to Israel in October 2022

May 2023

Voyage summary

Livestock: 4,852 cattle

Vessel: *MV Bahijah*

Loading location and date: Fremantle, 08 to 09 October 2022

Vessel departure location and date: Fremantle, 09 October 2022

Discharge location and dates: Eilat, Israel, from 27 to 28 October 2022

Voyage length: 20 days

Independent Observer (observer): Boarded at Fremantle and remained onboard until completion of discharge.

Voyage mortality rate: 0.06% (3 mortalities). These mortalities are unlikely to be linked to any systemic failure by the exporter.

Notifiable mortality rate for cattle: 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

The observer noted that approximately 5% of pens were not loaded in accordance with Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) pen space allocation requirements.

- 1) The Accredited Veterinarian (AAV), stockperson and crew could not move cattle for the first 48 hours of the voyage due to rough sailing conditions.

- 2) Sailing conditions calmed by day 3 and livestock were redistributed to meet spacing requirements. This included moving some cattle on Decks 6 and 7 to unoccupied hospital pens.
- 3) No adverse animal health or welfare effects were observed as a result of the initial overstocking and use of hospital pens.

Personnel

Inappropriate handling of livestock by a member of the import crew was observed, however it was identified and addressed quickly (see below section on [Discharge](#)).

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

The observer noted that:

- 1) On day 3 a small area of Deck 2 was noticeably warmer and more humid than the surrounding area, caused by a vent on a nearby fan that had accidentally been closed. The observer notified the AAV and stockperson, who promptly opened the vent. The temperature and humidity of the affected area improved to match conditions of surrounding areas within 2 hours of the vent being opened.
 - a) On this day, the AAV recorded the maximum temperature as 21.2°C (DBT) and 17.4°C (WBT) on Deck 2.
 - b) No adverse animal health or welfare effects were observed as a result of the temporarily closed vent.
- 2) Over several days of the voyage, the observer surveyed pens across decks that backed onto the multi-deck engine room. These pens were perceptively warmer than most areas of the vessel, however the cattle in these pens did not show any discomfort or increase in respiratory rate. No adverse animal health or welfare effects were observed as a result of the engine room's heat.

Pen conditions

The observer noted that:

- 1) Unsecured and fallen gates were observed in 3 pens across Decks 5, 6 and 7. This was due to cattle licking pins out of the gate hinges. The AAV instructed crew to closely monitor for unsecured gates. Cable ties were used to reinforce gate pins and this was observed to be effective. No further opened or fallen gates were observed, and no adverse animal health or welfare effects were observed as a result of the unsecured gates.
- 2) Pads were effectively managed during the voyage by application of sawdust and wash-downs.

- 3) A hose on Deck 6 repeatedly disconnected from a water trough on day 3, which wet a portion of the pad in surrounding pens. The stockperson, Chief Officer and crew were frequently observed re-attaching the hose until it was sufficiently repaired on day 4. Access to water was maintained as pens were configured with two water troughs, and sawdust was applied to improve pad conditions. No adverse health or welfare effects were observed as a result of the leaking hose.
- 4) Sea swells on day 3 resulted in water ingress into pens on open Deck 5. Sawdust was repeatedly added to affected pens. Sailing conditions calmed following day 3 and the pads remained firm as the vessel approached the equator.
- 5) On day 10, pads on Deck 2 deteriorated while crossing the equator as high humidity prevented them from drying out. Pads were managed by washing the decks on day 11.
- 6) A panel was observed to be unattached in a pen on day 16. The unattached panel opened the pen and exposed a hole in the pen floor, so that livestock could have escaped or been injured. Vessel crew quickly identified the issue and secured the panel with string. A repair was discussed during the next daily meeting with the Chief Officer and master, and the AAV instructed crew to further secure the panel until it could be fully repaired. No adverse animal health or welfare effects were observed as a result of the temporarily unattached panel.

Health and welfare

The AAV reported that:

- 1) There were 23 treatments during the voyage. Conditions treated for included lameness, nasal discharge and pink eye.
- 2) A total of 3 cattle mortalities occurred in this voyage. Post mortems were performed by the AAV on 2 of the mortalities with the causes identified as peritonitis and cardiac abnormality. A post mortem was not required for the final mortality as the bull had been euthanised for a broken leg.

Discharge

The observer noted that:

- 1) Inappropriate handling of one animal was observed by a member of the import crew during discharge. The AAV intervened and instructed the handler on correct handling processes. No further issues relating to animal handling were observed during discharge.
- 2) A bull with preputial prolapse was observed at discharge. The AAV reported during the voyage that they identified the bull, treated it in a hospital pen and assessed it as not requiring euthanasia. The bull was discharged from the vessel onto a hospital truck for receipt and treatment at the importer's feedlot.
- 3) A bull broke its hind leg whilst discharging from the vessel. It was quickly identified by the stockperson who then notified the AAV. The AAV sedated and euthanised the bull in a timely matter and no subsequent misadventures occurred.

Department actions

The department required the exporter to review, amend and vary as required, their processes for the management of low-stress handling of livestock.

Representative photographs of voyage

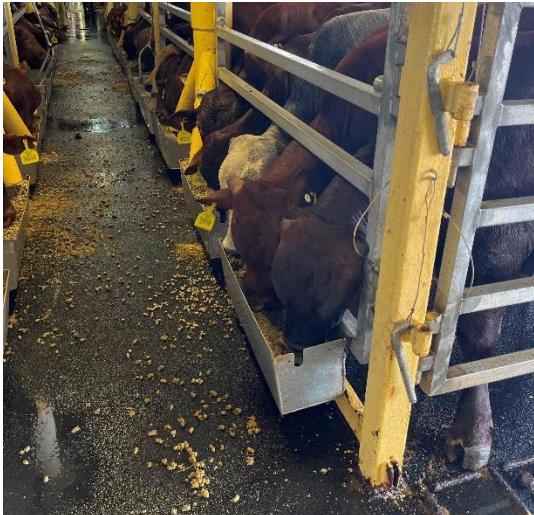
Day 2 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 6 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 10 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 14 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 17 Cattle in pen — no issues identified



Day 19 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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