

24 October 2002

## **REVIEW OF MORTALITIES – M.V. AL MESSILAH V50**

### **1. Overview:**

Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd exported 77,158 sheep and 141 cattle onboard the MV Al Messilah V50. The vessel was loaded at Portland on 6/8/2002 and Fremantle on 12/8/2002. The consignment was destined for Kuwait, Bahrain and Muscat. The vessel discharged at Kuwait on 28/8/2002, Bahrain on 30/8/2002 and Muscat on 1/9/2002. Final discharge in Muscat was completed at 1350hours on 1/9/2002. The total livestock mortalities at completion of discharge in Muscat were 2173 (2.82%) sheep and 1 steer (0.7%).

The sheep mortality rate of 2.82% exceeds the 2% 'reportable level' as specified in the *Australian Maritime Safety Authority Marine Order – Part 43 (Section 40)*.

AQIS was notified of the mortality rate by AMSA via e-mail on 26/8/2002.

### **2. Scope of Investigation:**

The investigation reviewed events that occurred during the voyage, including climatic conditions, to determine the cause of the sheep mortality rate. The investigation took into consideration the following documents:

- Master's Report Carriage of Livestock
- Accredited Stockman's Report
- Written correspondence from RETWA
- All correspondence received by AQIS from AMSA

### **3. Summary of Findings:**

Export Company: Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd  
43 Ventnor Ave.  
WEST PERTH WA 6005  
Ph: 08) 9322 6649  
Fax: 08) 9322 1240

Vessel: MV Al Messilah  
Voyage: 50

Livestock Loaded: Sheep 77,158  
Cattle 141

Ports Loaded: Portland (6/8/2002)  
Fremantle (12/8/2002)

Port Discharged: Kuwait (26-28/8/2002)  
Bahrain (29-30/8/2002)  
Muscat (1/9/2002)

Voyage length: 26 days – ex Portland  
20 days – ex Fremantle

Climatic conditions: 16 Celsius / 59% humidity – 34 Celsius/ 80% humidity

Mortality Rate: Sheep 2173 (2.82%)  
Cattle 1 (0.7%)

## **4. Cause of Mortalities:**

### **4.1 Stockman's report**

The Stockman's Report provided daily sheep mortality numbers and an opinion that the mortalities were primarily caused by salmonella, which the stockman believed to be a result of utilising the Portland Feedlot. He made this assessment based on the result of several autopsies, and the fact that 306 head (0.55%) of sheep had died between Portland and Fremantle. He also identified shy-feeding as a cause for the mortalities, but not a significant factor.

The average daily mortality rate for the first 3 days was approximately 30/day, while the remainder of the voyage averaged 103/day (highest 150 and lowest 79).

### **4.2 Rural Export & Trading Pty Ltd**

In written correspondence, the company advised that from the information provided to them from the stockman and after reviewing the mortality information, it was the company's opinion that the primary cause of the mortalities was salmonella and to a lesser degree shy-feeding. It was a further opinion that climatic conditions had little influence on the high mortality rate, as the daily mortality rate did not noticeably increase on entering the Gulf region.

Information was provided which identified that of the total 2,173 head of sheep that died, 1,698 head of sheep (78%) were loaded in Portland and the remaining 475 head of sheep (22%) were loaded in Fremantle.

The company advised in a telephone conversation with AQIS that the company had experienced salmonella problems from the Portland feedlot on previous sheep voyages.

### **4.3 Summary of Causal Factors**

Based on the information provided, the following factors have been identified as contributing factors to the mortalities during the voyage:

- Salmonella
- Shy-feeding

It should be noted that mortality rate did not noticeably increase on entry to the Gulf region.

## **5. Proposed Action by the Company**

Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd has proposed the following actions to be taken for the next shipment of the M.V. Al Messilah V51:

- Export out of Fremantle only, to reduce the likelihood of salmonella.
- Livestock selection by independent contractor (as is normal practice).
- Daily inspection and monitoring of livestock throughout feedlot period.
- Majority of consignment will be held in sheds at the feedlot prior to export.
- Sheep medicated in the feedlot prior to loading.
- Quality controller will be briefed to be extra vigilant in withdrawing any scouring or suspect animals from the consignment.
- Experienced accredited stockman will accompany the voyage.

## **6. The Next Voyage of the MV Al Messilah**

The next voyage of the MV Al Messilah V51 is scheduled to load in Fremantle on or about 14 September 2002. The voyage is proposed to consist of:

- 8,000 sheep destined for Muscat
- 44,900 sheep, 150 cattle, 50 camels destined for Kuwait
- 10,000 sheep destined for Bahrain
- 11,287 sheep, 44 goats destined for Jebel Ali

## **7. Proposed Action by AQIS**

On assessment of information provided by the exporter, the accredited stockman, AMSA and taking into consideration that the next voyage of the MV Al Messilah intends to carry approximately 74,187 sheep, 150 cattle, 50 camels and 44 goats, the following conditions are proposed for the next voyage of the MV Al Messilah:

1. An AQIS veterinary officer will oversee the final selection of the sheep for export.
2. A reduced stocking density by 15% for all sheep loaded, in accordance with the Saudi Live Export Program stocking density.
3. An accredited stockman must accompany the voyage to monitor and address animal health, welfare and mortality issues.
4. The accredited stockman accompanying the voyage must report daily to AQIS Canberra on Fax: 02) 6272 3110 on animal health, welfare and mortality issues, using the Saudi Live Export Program report template.

## **8. Results of next voyage**

V 51 departed Fremantle on 15 September with 66,086 sheep bound for Kuwait, Jebel Ali Bahrain, and Muscat under additional conditions described in paragraph 7, prescribed in a Direction issued by AQIS under Order 10(c) of the Export Control (Animals) Orders.

The voyage was completed on 3 October 2002. Mortalities were 938 head (1.42%).