

24 October 2002

## **REVIEW OF MORTALITIES – M.V AL SHUWAIKH V.20**

### **1. Overview:**

Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd exported 85,974 sheep onboard the MV Al Shuwaikh V20. The vessel was loaded at Portland on 18/7/2002 and Fremantle on 23/7/2002. The consignment was destined for Bahrain, Kuwait, Jebel Ali and Muscat. The vessel discharged at Muscat on 14/8/2002. The total livestock mortalities at completion of discharge in Muscat were 5800 (6.8%) sheep.

The sheep mortality rate of 6.8% 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 21/8/2002.

### **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 in excess of legislative requirements. The investigation took into consideration the following documents:

- Master's Report Carriage of Livestock
- Master's Report on the mortalities experienced during the voyage
- Written correspondence from Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd
- All correspondence received by AQIS from AMSA

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

Export Company: Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd  
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WEST PERTH WA 6005  
Ph: 08) 9322 6649  
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Vessel: MV Al Shuwaikh  
Voyage: 20

Livestock Loaded: Sheep 85,974

Ports Loaded: Portland (18/7/2002)  
Fremantle (23/7/2002)

Port Discharged: Bahrain (7/8/2002)  
Kuwait (11/8/2002)  
Jebel Ali (13/8/2002)  
Muscat (14/8/2002)

Voyage length:	28 days – ex Portland 23 days – ex Fremantle	
Climatic conditions:	21 Celsius / 81% humidity – 35 Celsius/ 93% humidity	
Mortality Rate:	5,800 (6.8%)	
Time of Mortality:	Days 1 – 18 (1,501 died – 26%)	1.74%
	Days 19 – 25 (4,175 died – 72%)	6.6%
	Days 26 – 28 (124 died – 2%)	6.8%
Mortality Location:	4,175 (72%) sheep died between arriving at port of Bahrain and completing discharge at Kuwait.	

## 4. Cause of Mortalities:

### 4.1. Master's Report on M.V. Al Shuwaikh V20

The report provided by the Master to Rural Export & Trading (WA) dated 14 August 2002 advised that between Portland and Fremantle a total of 349 head of sheep died (0.56%). The Master reported that the mortalities consisted of shy feeders/skinny sheep and salmonella.

In his report from Fremantle to Bahrain, the Master reported that a lot of skinny sheep were segregated on all decks and given ad-lib feeding. Electrolytes were added to all sheep prior to arrival in the Gulf to prepare them for the high temperatures.

The Master recorded the cause of the high mortalities as due to scouring among sheep/Salmonella, shy feeders/skinny sheep and extreme hot and humid temperatures in the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, particularly during in-port periods.

### 4.2. Rural Export & Trading (WA) Pty Ltd

The company was requested to provide an explanation as to the level of mortality on board the Al Shuwaikh V20. The company provided a written report to AQIS on this issue after considering the Stockman's Report, the Master's Voyage Report and the Master's Report – Carriage of Livestock.

It was the company's opinion that the high mortality level was due to salmonella, shy feeders and weather conditions during the voyage. The company advised that the sheep loaded in Fremantle experienced a 3% lower mortality rate than those loaded in Portland. It was reported that in the sheep loaded in Portland there was a high levels of scouring and a lack of appetite, particularly in those sheep that died.

Following departure from Fremantle, steps were taken to improve the comfort of the sheep, including ad-lib feeding, medication plus altering course of the vessel in the Gulf to enhance ventilation during extreme weather conditions.

### 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:

1. High incidence of sheep scouring/salmonella like symptoms
2. High incidence of shy feeders
3. Extreme weather conditions.

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

The company reported that for the subsequent voyage of the Al Shuwaikh V21, the following additional measures will be taken by the company:

1. Drafting at receipt is done by an independently contracted entity, CQMS.
2. There are daily inspections, observations and monitoring of cargo throughout the feedlot period.
3. Any scouring or suspect animals will be removed from the consignment.
4. Inspection during loading will be rigorous in order to identify any animals, which may pose a salmonella risk.
5. Sheep will be spread and housed in the appropriate manner considering prevailing weather conditions.
6. The feedlot has been spelled for two weeks prior to this receipt and limestone has been spread surrounding all water troughs.
7. Two experienced stockmen will accompany the vessel.
8. Sheep are medicated in the feedlot prior to loading.

## **6. The Next Voyage of the MV Al Shuwaikh V21**

The next voyage of the MV Al Shuwaikh is scheduled to load in Portland on 1 September 2002. The voyage is proposed to consist of 74,740 sheep destined for discharge in Muscat, Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai.

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

On assessment of information provided by the Master of the Al Shuwaikh V20 and the exporter, and into consideration that the next voyage of the MV Al Shuwaikh V21 intends to carry approximately 74,740 sheep to various Middle East ports, the following conditions are proposed for the next voyage of the MV Al Shuwaikh:

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 AQIS approved veterinarian must accompany the voyage to monitor and address animal health, welfare and mortality issues – AQIS Canberra must approve the veterinarian selection prior to export.
4. The AQIS approved veterinarian 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 21 departed Portland on 1 September with 74,740 sheep bound for Muscat, Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai, 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 24 September 2002. Mortalities were 2,304 head (3.08%).

As a result of this level of mortalities, a Direction was placed on the next voyage, V22.