

## **VALE COMMENT ON IO 50: Bahijah Freo to Eilat Dec 2018**

### **Exporter documentation**

IO SUMMARY: the observer commented that there did not appear to be documented contingency arrangements to address procedures in the event of bad weather available.

VALE COMMENT: this despite the fact that it is an inherent risk

### **Loading**

IO SUMMARY: At the time of loading, in the observer's opinion, many of the bulls in some pens on Deck 5 appeared to be significantly heavier than the average body weight listed in the load plan (identified as medium bulls on the load plan) resulting in pens that appeared to be visibly overstocked. The observer raised concerns related to these observations without any visible response.

VALE COMMENT: non-compliance with ASEL and then it seems response to IO also inadequate when raised.

IO SUMMARY: Later in the voyage an amended load plan was supplied that indicated that heavy bulls were in the relevant pens. The amended plan also included an increased average weight across all classes of sheep and cattle.

VALE COMMENT: how convenient to be able to produce an amended loadplan

IO SUMMARY: The observer commented that the apparent overstocking in these pens was progressively made worse as large amounts of pen space were required for the hospitalisation of lame cattle and as cattle loaded in lean condition gained weight during the voyage.

VALE SUMMARY: again ASEL non-compliance likely with respect to space allowance but no specific comment appears in summary (likely sanitised by the Dept – will be interesting to put in an FOI for this voyage)

### **Feed and water**

IO SUMMARY: Sheep fodder troughs were in some instances moved out from under delivery pipe outlets to mitigate the risk of head entrapment and to allow greater access.

VALE COMMENT: good that it was done – bad that it was necessary to do so.

IO SUMMARY: Water troughs were poorly maintained during loading but improved after the vessel journey commenced. Occasional fouling of sheep water troughs was observed.

VALE COMMENT: unacceptable that water troughs not maintained during loading.

### **Ventilation**

IO SUMMARY: 3 lines of ventilation shafts are spaced along the sundeck to provide supply ventilation to the open decks (5, 6 and 7) and to provide supply and exhaust ventilation to the enclosed decks (1, 2, 3 and 4). The observer noted a number of structural features, which, in the observer's opinion, had potential to disrupt airflow in some areas of the vessel. Throughout the voyage the aft open deck space of Deck 7 was noticeably warmer and more humid with visibly wetter sheep pads. The smell of ammonia was easily detected in this area and was stinging to the eyes.

VALE COMMENT: concern re Deck 7 and if ammonia caused ocular irritation to both observer and stock, it likely exceed OH&S limits

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted that the environmental conditions were relatively mild due to the time of the year and the ventilation system was not stretched to capacity during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: fortunate that the voyage was mild if ammonia levels were as high as this

IO SUMMARY: The daily temperatures were collected by using a hand held recording device and the observer did not note any concerns with the temperature recording procedure.

VALE COMMENT: no mention of when and how often temperatures taken and what those temperatures (and humidity) were

### **Pen conditions**

IO SUMMARY: Prior to departure, a very small amount of sawdust was scattered on cattle decks. The observer stated that only a relatively small amount of the total amount of the sawdust loaded onto the vessel was used throughout the voyage with most of the sawdust being used in preparation for discharge. The sawdust that was used during the voyage was predominantly used in the hospital pens.

VALE SUMMARY: heavy cattle travelled basically without bedding for 21 days with bedding saved to show the Israelis how good animal welfare was at discharge.

IO SUMMARY: There was a rapid build-up of manure in the cattle pens and the cattle decks were washed six times during the voyage. Prior to washing, the conditions were very boggy in some pens. *Sawdust was not used in the pens after the deck washes except the wash prior to unloading.*

VALE COMMENT: sawdust for "show"

IO SUMMARY: the dampest sheep pads were confined to the very front of Deck 7. Detectable amounts of ammonia were evident in this area causing eye irritation in both personnel the sheep in this area.

VALE COMMENT: as per previous re ammonia.

### **Health and welfare**

IO SUMMARY: During the first 2 days of the voyage, the vessel was impacted by severe weather that flooded Decks 5 and 6 and left the stowed pallets of chaff and bedding in disarray. Activities were undertaken to identify clinically lame cattle following the rough conditions and to transfer them to hospital pens for treatment.

VALE COMMENT: flooding leading to issues with supplies. No mention of how much bedding and chaff were affected by the flooding

IO SUMMARY: The daily reports included that 3 cattle were euthanased as they were unable to stand with bilateral sole ulcers on day 11. Day 12 included a mortality due to septic arthritis. ***The daily reports did not reflect the observer's observation of a situation of deteriorating lameness between days 1 and 11 following the rough weather.***

VALE COMMENT: there appears to be under-reporting of a health and welfare issue by the AAV on this voyage. It is not known whether the AAV commented on this in the End of Voyage Report so.....another FOI required.

IO SUMMARY: The lesions detected by the observer as causing lameness in the cattle included ulcerated hoof and subsolar tissues, ulcerated/lacerated /necrotic soft tissues of the leg and marked swelling of the distal limbs.

VALE COMMENT: no Dept waiver this time that this wasn't a health and welfare issue.....perhaps that is why it too so long to release the summary.....again an FOI will make interesting reading.

IO SUMMARY: The sheep were in average condition at the time of loading and in excellent body condition at discharge. 18 mortalities were recorded for the voyage with the majority attributed to smothering despite only 1 post mortem being performed that found haemorrhagic enteritis during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: why only one PM? Raises questions about the AAV unless the mortalities occurred during a period where it was impossible eg rough seas/attending to cattle issues etc.

IO SUMMARY: The stockperson was effective in euthanasia of unwell and lambs with ill thrift.

VALE COMMENT: did the AAV not euthanase any animals?

IO SUMMARY: Some scabby mouth was detected during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: not unusual

IO SUMMARY: Very mild heat stress was observed in some of the sheep as the vessel approached the equator.

VALE COMMENT: mild conditions noted by the IO but heat stress still observed

### **Discharge**

IO SUMMARY: Thirty cattle recorded as hospital cases were discharged in Israel. The observer noted a number of lame cattle scattered throughout the flow of discharged cattle.

VALE COMMENT: it will be interesting to see what the IO really said about this?

### **Conclusion**

IO SUMMARY: The vessel was subject to severe weather conditions on days 1 and 2 of the voyage that caused flooding on Decks 5 and 6, a factor contributing significantly to the number of cattle observed with lameness. 8 of the 12 cattle mortalities were euthanased, and of these 7 were identified on the End of Voyage report as being euthanased due to lameness.

VALE COMMENT: IO obviously sighted the EOV

IO SUMMARY: The observer was not aware as to whether or not a specific documented contingency arrangement to address procedures in the event of bad weather was available to the AAV and stockpersons.

VALE COMMENT: Dept added no comment which is inappropriate

IO SUMMARY: The observer believed that a number of pens were overstocked as some cattle loaded into the relevant pens were visually of a greater weight than the average weight used to calculate the pen numbers in the load plan.

VALE COMMENT: this is an ASEL non compliance issue

IO SUMMARY: Other than issues relating to detection of ammonia in the front part of Deck 7, management of the sheep during the voyage was largely uneventful.

VALE COMMENT: ammonia concentrations of this magnitude are a health and welfare issue.

### **Representative photographs of the voyage**

Day 1 Observer concern with heavy visual stocking density

Day 2 Cattle in wet pen