

VALE COMMENT ON REPORT 181 Bison Express, Darwin to Indonesia

Feed and water

The observer noted that some nose bowls had low water pressure and fill rate, so that manual watering into one feed trough per pen was undertaken from the first day. The low water pressure notified by the observer were acted on immediately by the stockperson and the vessel's crew. The low water pressure did not become a welfare or non-compliance issue during the voyage because the water troughs were cleaned and replenished during each feeding time.

VALE COMMENT: lucky there was an IO it seems

Ventilation

IO SUMMARY: Temperature and humidity readings were taken each day at 10:00am and recorded average temperatures of 29–30 °C with 79% humidity. There were no relatively hotter or more humid areas noted on any pen decks. No cattle were observed with symptoms of heat stress, and the cattle appeared to be comfortable for the duration of the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: no heat stress in these northern cattle

Pen conditions

IO SUMMARY: Conditions in most pens remained good during the voyage; however, six pen pads were affected by water leaks caused by aged and corroded water pipes and fittings that led to wetter areas. Wet pads and walkways were constantly managed by covering with sawdust and old feed. The leaks identified as directly affecting pads were repaired within 12–24 hours.

VALE COMMENT: old infrastructure

IO SUMMARY: A second issue related to corrosion to some pen gate hinges, which meant that some pins did not completely secure the pen gates, making it difficult for livestock crew to open and close gates securely to ensure a safe and efficient load and offload of cattle. The observer noted that if the plumbing corrosion and low water pressure issues were not properly remediated, they could become a greater problem on longer voyages at hotter times of the year.

VALE COMMENT: seems like AMSA needs to do an inspection of this particular ship given that there were water leaks on Day 1 and infrastructure issues that appear to be of a chronic nature.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Water leaks

Day 4 Not secured pen gate

Day 4 Misaligned gate pin