

VALE COMMENTS Report 195 Ocean Swagman Portland To China Oct 2019

A consignment of 5,853 cattle was loaded onto the MV Ocean Swagman at the port of Portland on 12 October 2019 and departed on the same day. The cattle were discharged at the Port of Jingtang, China, between 30 October and 1 November 2019, making this a 21-day voyage. 8 mortalities (0.14%).

SPACE

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted that at least 50% of the cattle were able to lie down at one time.
VALE COMMENT: it appears as though even breeder dairy animals are not given enough space for 100% space to lie down at one time. For a 21 day voyage, all animals should be able to lie down at one time (OIE recommendations).

INFRASTRUCTURE PROBLEMS

IO SUMMARY: Some pens had spare gates that had fallen over in the pen and were lying down in the pad, but these were removed when noticed
VALE COMMENT: appears poor policy re spare gate storage

HEALTH AND WELFARE

IO SUMMARY: There were no issues with the overall health and welfare of the cattle... The observer noted that the stockpersons and the crew ensured that the health and welfare of the cattle was maintained during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: if no health/welfare issues noticed for these cattle then 1) independent observer is not adequately trained or competent to be in this position 2) the Dept of Ag has forced omissions or rewriting (something that is known to have occurred on a number of occasions). The photo of cattle on Day 11 "no issues identified" shows animals in very poor body condition which is an absolute welfare issue and also a contravention to ASEL as they should not have been loaded. Animals in very lean body condition also evident in other photos. In addition to the IO commenting that the health of the cattle was maintained (ie starvation did not occur), it takes about a month of poor nutrition to lower a body condition score by one (on 1-5 condition score) so these animals on Day 11 had to be loaded in poor condition.

ASEL COMPLIANCE

IO SUMMARY: "The exporter's arrangements were implemented during the voyage, and were compliant with ASEL requirements."
VALE: Loading cattle in poor body condition is compliant with ASEL.

PHOTOS:

Bedding: similar to Dr Lynn Simpson's photos, the amount of bedding sprinkled on the floor is totally inadequate for livestock being loaded onto a "moving feedlot". It is hard to believe that this amount of bedding was ASEL compliant as claimed. It is also surprising that valuable dairy animals (presumably breeders) would be transported with such scant bedding.

Cattle body condition: a number of cattle in the photos from Day 3 to Day 15 show lean to poor body condition. Did the IO not notice the animals in poor body condition or was the IO forced to remove comments on body condition from the report by the Dept? That the Dept saw fit to say "no issues identified" on these particular photos is a poor indictment of the Dept of Ag competence to assess animal health and welfare.

Day 11 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

