

VALE COMMENTS on Report 56 Yangtze Harmony Portland to China December 2018

Feed and water

IO SUMMARY “The observer noted that ad lib supply of water to the upper decks was not continuous on days 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 18 as evidenced by the presence of empty water troughs. Remedial action by the crew was undertaken on each occasion to resolve the issue and supply water. After longer outages, the cattle were queuing to drink. In addition, some water troughs were identified as contaminated with faeces early in the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: cattle queuing to drink indicates that the cattle were thirsty and must have had significant water deprivation. This is inconsistent with OIE recommendations.

Temperature

VALE COMMENT: Temperature monitoring was only performed once daily which is non-representative and inconsistent with normal practice on other ships. The IO noted heat and humidity through the Equator but apparently none of the cattle displayed heat stress. What is concerning however is that these same cattle were then subjected to very cold temperatures in China (with wet, muddy and sloppy pens).

Conclusion

IO SUMMARY: “The water supply system struggled to meet the demands of the cattle on the upper decks. **Ad lib water supply was not supplied** on various upper decks on **nine individual days** of the voyage. The lack of drainage in walkways, water leaks and overflow from the bilge contributed to **numerous incidents of wet pens** with repairs and clean-ups required. Overall, the water issues and pen issues did not appear to adversely impact on the health and welfare of the livestock.

VALE COMMENT: if lack of water supply was of sufficient duration that cattle queued to drink it, then it was a significant welfare issue in addition to being “non-compliant” with OIE. One would also have to question the statement that poor draining did not impact on livestock welfare. Animals do not choose to stand in wet conditions routinely but were forced to do so on this voyage. It is unacceptable that such poor drainage should exist on a regular cattle carrier.

Representative Photos

VALE COMMENT: Note the unacceptable lack of space for cattle to lie down in Photo 15. It is unlikely that all cattle would have been able to lie down at one time. There was no reference to space allowances in the IO summary.