

VALE COMMENT ON IO 166 Gelbray Express Portland to China Aug 2019

Exporter documentation

IO SUMMARY: Exporter arrangements were available to address procedures relating to livestock management from loading through to discharge, including contingencies; however, the observer noted that the voyage instructions were written generically and not specifically for this voyage on this vessel.

VALE COMMENT: unacceptable that a voyage that appears to have been carrying winter acclimatised Friesian dairy cows and some Herefords (breeders?) through the equator has no specific instructions.

Ventilation

IO SUMMARY: Livestock deck temperatures were collected each day by a sling psychrometer between 9:30 and 10:30am. The ambient humidity through the equatorial zone was consistent with that generally experienced during this time of year.

VALE COMMENT: no temperatures provide. Temperatures only taken once daily in the morning so may not be representative.

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted that there appeared to be areas on the livestock decks that were relative hotspots that would not be identified through the collection of a single daily measurement using a sling psychrometer, particularly on the starboard side of the engine room in Hold 3, affecting that portion of Decks 4 and 5.

VALE COMMENT: indicates the difficulty of assessing provided deck WBT

IO SUMMARY: The stockperson made repeated requests to the master to increase ventilation in the cattle decks because of unsatisfactory pad drying. The master agreed to this request after voyage day 12, but then reduced ventilation three days later.

VALE COMMENT: concerning that animals had unsatisfactory pads for potentially up to 12 days and then only 3 days of better conditions. Also concerning that the stockperson, the person legally overseeing animal welfare on a voyage without a veterinarian, was ignored.

IO SUMMARY: Despite these concerns, the stockperson rated ventilation as 'good' in each of their daily reports.

VALE COMMENT: this is clearly incorrect information thus a concern re ASEL compliance for reporting.

Pen conditions

IO SUMMARY: In some pens, cattle of a wide range of body weight were penned together, which can lead to stocking density irregularities, and smaller animals potentially missing out on trough access.

VALE COMMENT: unacceptable

IO SUMMARY: Stocking density in a small number of individual pens exceeded ASEL requirements, although some cattle classes were penned below the ASEL stocking rate.

VALE COMMENT: this is ASEL non compliant.

IO SUMMARY: Sufficient bedding was loaded and used during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: no bedding evident at all after washdown in the "representative photograph"

IO SUMMARY: Following the initial wash, and with the increase in humidity at the equator, the pads did not dry out effectively, which meant that many of the pens were maintained with a slurry of up to 5 cm deep.

VALE COMMENT: photographs show the poor conditions

Health and welfare

IO SUMMARY: There was one mortality on the voyage when an animal died after getting its head caught in a gate railing.

VALE COMMENT: this has caused death on a few voyages.

IO SUMMARY: There was mild elevation of average respiratory rates on two days of the voyage in the equatorial zone, possibly related to heat and humidity.

VALE COMMENT: "possibly" ? If the cattle did not have pneumonia and were not exercising, there are not many other causes of increased respiratory rate in feedlot animals.

IO SUMMARY: Some of the veterinary medicines were not stored securely or hygienically.

VALE COMMENT: this has also been noted on other voyages.

Conclusions:

IO SUMMARY: Apart from the voyage instructions being written generically, not specifically for this voyage on this vessel, the exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage, and to be compliant with ASEL requirements.

VALE COMMENT: having less than ASEL space allowance is non-compliant. Providing incorrect records to the Australian Government is also non-compliant. Did the Govt write this or the IO?

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 1 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

Day 5 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

Day 8 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

Day 10 immediately after deck wash – no issues identified

VALE COMMENT: no bedding at all for bony framed Friesian dairy cows

Day 16 Muddy pad

VALE COMMENT: unacceptable. In addition, the centre, recumbent cow would appear to be in poor body condition.

Day 16 Cattle in pen – no issues identified

VALE COMMENT: Herefords in this photograph; Friesians in all other photographs.