

# **VALE COMMENT ON IO 94: Ocean Swagman Portland to China Mar 2019**

## **Loading**

The cattle were loaded reasonably close to the load plan, and in accordance with ASEL requirements. The moving of cattle, and removing of gates in the lower three aft decks, continued for a week into the voyage. This was mainly due to the heat coming off the engine room walls on Decks 2 and 3 aft, where the AAV had identified panting, or mild heat stress, on Days 6, 10 and 12 of the voyage. VALE COMMENT: this would not be a new issue: why aren't load plans modified appropriately for each vessel?

## **Feed and water**

IO SUMMARY: Lower enclosed decks were observed to be too deep for the number of cattle in these pens, not all cattle were able to access sufficient fodder. It was observed that, on average, 14 cattle per pen (approximately 50%) were waiting their turn to feed. When they finally got to the trough there was usually nothing left. Staff rectified this issue by removing skinny and weak cattle and transferring them to the hospital pens where they were able to feed without competition.

VALE COMMENT: food deprivation issues due to poor pen layout – which will not be a new problem.

IO SUMMARY: There were ongoing issues with empty water troughs throughout the voyage. For example, on one late night occasion the observer found four pens throughout the vessel without access to drinking water. Two of these pens troughs had the valve turned off and the other two had problems with the ball float valve. It was determined that the crew had turned the valves off so they could clean the troughs. In the meantime, the cattle had consumed the water. Empty troughs were also caused by float valves being incorrectly set.

On day 9 of the voyage, Decks 6 and 7 were observed to be out of water. The cause was determined to be higher demand for water on the lower decks than the supply allowed for upper decks. The observer noted 45 minutes without water.

VALE COMMENT: yet another voyage where animals deprived of water due to human error or infrastructure issues.

## **Ventilation**

IO SUMMARY: Ventilation ducts were located in positions to allow maximum airflow on each deck. However, ventilation, humidity and temperature did become an issue during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: heat stress occurred.

IO SUMMARY: Temperature readings were recorded by the CO numerous times per day on each of the seven decks. Temperature readings recorded during the voyage gave an overview of the variance of temperatures on the vessel, including for the pens that backed onto the engine room wall.

Temperatures seemed to be higher at these locations.

In the lower aft decks, there were a few areas observed in which the ventilation was minimal. Extra wash-downs were requested along with the hosing down of the cattle. This seemed to assist in the cattle becoming much more comfortable.

## **Pen conditions**

IO SUMMARY: Aft lower enclosed decks required more regular washing due to increased temperatures, less ventilation and humidity caused by the engine room wall heat. Washed decks usually had sawdust distributed after wash down, except when there was only a two day period between washes.

VALE COMMENT: bedding is required for all cattle south of the 26<sup>th</sup> parallel under ASEL.

IO SUMMARY: Usually, on the first observations of the day, the observer found wet pens that were due to overnight rain or water leaks. Wash downs, although affective on cleaning pens and lowering temperatures, also created problems with wet pens.

VALE COMMENT: wet pens an issue

### **Health and welfare**

IO SUMMARY: The observer informed the senior stockperson, and the AAV, that the assistant stockperson had been observed exhibiting behaviour towards some cattle that was non-compliant with ASEL requirements regarding the implementation of procedures to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock during the morning procedure of standing the cattle up. The senior stockperson and AAV discussed the issue with the assistant stockperson, which resulted in no further instances observed during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: 4 day stockperson course not enough to prevent ASEL non-compliance – not surprising.

### **Conclusion**

IO SUMMARY: The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements. The stockpersons were considered professional and vigilant in ensuring that the crew were informed of what was required, and that the crew undertook their duties on board the vessel.

VALE COMMENT: this is clearly a Dept sanitisation as there was non-ASL compliant handling of cattle by a stockperson detailed. It should be noted that this would not have been recorded or rectified had an IO not been present.