

VALE COMMENT ON IO 97 GL Kai Hou Fremantle to Vietnam Mach 2019

Voyage summary

IO SUMMARY: Due to the death of a crew member and delays at Haiphong anchorage in Vietnam, the duration of the voyage was extended beyond the planned 12 days. The vessel completed discharge in Vietnam on 3 April 2019, making this a 19 day voyage.

VALE COMMENT: the unique and inherent risks of live export

Loading

IO SUMMARY: The vessel was not loaded as per the load plan. Some pens, particularly on the lower decks, were initially loaded in excess of the load plan. The stockperson adjusted pens, which appeared to have higher pen densities within the first couple of days of the voyage. The majority of the pens were within Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (Version 2.3) 2011 (ASEL) requirements. In all pens at least 50% of the livestock were able to lie down at the same time, and in many pens 100% of livestock were seen lying down at once.

VALE COMMENT: this is a recurring theme with most vessels not loaded to loadplan or loadplan found to be inappropriate

IO SUMMARY: The provision of fodder to cattle on-board went beyond the maximum time frame of 12 hours after loading as required by ASEL (Standard 5.4). This non-compliance with S5.4 was raised with the exporter. The exporter has implemented procedures to ensure this requirement is complied with on future voyages. The observer on the exporter's following voyage verified compliance with this requirement.

VALE COMMENT: another issue of food deprivation on live ex voyages

Personnel

IO SUMMARY: The crew were all competent in handling of cattle, with varying degrees of expertise. Both the CO and the bosun were approachable, however there did seem to be some difficulty in communications. The bosun and the CO were not particularly responsive to requests from the stockperson e.g. the application of sawdust in wet areas.

VALE COMMENT: this is unacceptable

Feed and water

IO SUMMARY: Calculations indicated ample feed stores had been loaded; well within ASEL requirements for the proposed 12 day voyage. Access to feed was adequate for most of the voyage. However, on days 13–16 feeding was reduced to twice a day when the voyage length increased due to the required diversion to Indonesia following the death of a crew member. During this time, both the observer and the stockperson noted that the cattle were hungry. Aggressive feeding behaviour was witnessed with cattle pushing and bullying to reach the troughs. On day 17, the fodder rate was able to be increased, and this increased rate was fed until the completion of discharge.

VALE COMMENT: this is another voyage where due to unforeseen circumstances cattle had insufficient food.

IO SUMMARY: Access to water during the voyage was generally good. However, it was observed on two occasions that there was no water, or very little water, available to nose bowls on Decks A and B. The observer has clarified that water was unavailable for less than 12 hours and there was no impact on animal welfare. The shortage was caused by supply being interrupted when changing between water tanks.

VALE SUMMARY: actual water deprivation time not stated

Ventilation

IO SUMMARY: The maximum temperatures reached during the voyage were 33°C dry bulb temperature, 31°C wet bulb temperature. Ventilation to the pens was good.

When heat started to increase, the stockperson requested the crew move fodder stacks, which had been placed on hatches, to improve air flow.

VALE COMMENT: is this routine?

IO SUMMARY: The *Bos indicus* cattle in all areas of the vessel did not show any signs of heat stress during the voyage and overall appeared to handle hot and humid conditions much better than the *Bos taurus* cattle.

VALE COMMENT: as expected

IO SUMMARY: On days 5, 6 and 7, *Bos taurus* breeds on Decks C and E showed signs of heat stress with increased respiratory rates and some isolated cases of open mouth panting. Affected pens on these decks were consistently hotter than the rest of the vessel. The stockperson destocked the affected pens and provided electrolytes in an attempt to reduce the impact of the heat. The first mortality of the voyage occurred in these pens, and was attributed to heat stress. Increased humidity associated with washing on day 4 seemed to increase the heat stress on these cattle. By day 10, these cattle appeared to be less heat affected, with night time temperatures dropping from day 10 onwards. The observer has clarified that the deck washing was performed with the welfare of the animals as a primary consideration and, on balance, led to improved welfare outcomes.

VALE COMMENT: significant heat stress in *Bos taurus* cattle

Pen conditions

IO SUMMARY: Sawdust was provided to pens containing heavy cattle, and in hospital pens, throughout the voyage. Sawdust was only applied to the other pens to manage pad condition, as directed by the stockperson.

VALE COMMENT: bedding not routine on cattle voyages even when southern cattle exported.

IO SUMMARY: When washing pens, all decks drained to Deck E. This caused a large build-up of water on Deck E during the washing process with cattle standing in water for a number of hours. The vessels extraction pumps did not seem to be able to keep up with the volume of water and waste produced by the deck washing process..... Remedial action was to be undertaken by the vessel to correct this issue and will be monitored by the department when an observer is on-board.

VALE COMMENT: and was it done?? Note Deck E is the deck that had heat stress issues also.

IO SUMMARY: The observer has clarified that they were unable to determine whether the incidence of lameness was greater where water inundation occurred as a result of poor drainage.

VALE COMMENT: lameness may not have been the most significant effect. WBT would have been increased also so the problem may have contributed to heat stress.

IO SUMMARY: There were two pens of note that experienced heavy water logging due to rain ingress from the top deck. Sawdust was applied to manage the pad condition, however these pens were observed in notably poorer condition.

VALE COMMENT: another instance of pen waterlogging with rain. This one however is unusual in that the IO didn't report resolution with sawdust ie particularly bad.

Health and welfare

IO SUMMARY: One animal suffering from heat stress was euthanised and another animal was found dead in its pen. A third animal died, following unsuccessful attempts to free it, when its head was caught in pen rails.

VALE COMMENT: 1, maybe 2 heat stress deaths

IO SUMMARY: The observer found the on-board medications and equipment to be compliant with ASEL requirements; with the exception of 40ml syringes which the vessel did not have in the appropriate quantities. This was brought to the stockperson's attention and was noted on their replenishment request list.

Conclusion

IO SUMMARY: Other than the failure to provide feed to cattle within 12 hours of loading, relevant procedures relating to the management of cattle exported by sea were consistent with the ASEL and additional conditions of export.

VALE COMMENT: that is incorrect – there was animals loaded over ASEL stocking density relative to loadplan and inadequate 40 ml syringes. Did the Dept sanitise this. The IO would appear to have most diligent.

IO SUMMARY: There were a number of challenges presented to the crew and stockperson during the course of this voyage, as a result of the extensive delay due to the death of a crew member. The stockperson worked well to maintain overall animal health and welfare in a difficult situation.

VALE COMMENT: unpredictability of voyages

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 14 Lower Deck E – build-up of drainage