

VALE COMMENT ON IO 98 Maysora Fremantle to Israel and Jordan March 2019

Loading

IO SUMMARY: The number of cattle loaded in pens known as hot spots were also reduced after loading and portable industrial fans were installed to help improve airflow.

VALE COMMENT: hotspots identified – recently or always known?

Feed and water

IO SUMMARY: On day 1 and 4 some water troughs were turned off for cleaning purposes and the water was not restarted. The CO informed the crew of this issue, and the observer did not witness any further occurrences. The observer did not note any animal welfare impact from these incidents.

VALE COMMENT: likely human error but occurs not infrequently on live ex voyages

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted that during cattle wash down there were more staff helping with wash down. On occasions, this meant there were fewer crew on the sheep decks and the limited staff on the sheep decks resulted in build-up of fines in feed troughs, subsequently blocking fresh pellets entering the trough. The issue was brought to the attention of the CO, and the crew were instructed to correct and monitor this problem. The observer did not see this issue reoccur.

VALE COMMENT: feed issues noted

Ventilation

IO SUMMARY: Overall, the ventilation for the voyage was acceptable. It was noted from the daily reports that the enclosed Decks (1-6) recorded consistently higher dry and wet bulb temperatures than the upper decks.

VALE COMMENT: interesting that ventilation was only described as acceptable and not good?

IO SUMMARY: On this voyage the ambient temperature was relatively mild and the ventilation system did operate to its full capacity.

VALE COMMENT: sheep had some degree of heat stress for 9 continuous days in these mild conditions.

Health and welfare

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted that from day 5 – 14 of the voyage, almost all sheep (95-100%) were panting with their mouths closed. From day 16 to discharge, all sheep were displaying a normal resting respiratory pattern. No sheep were observed with sustained open mouth panting at any stage during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: panting scores not provided but failure to show open mouth panting does not negate the significant issue of 9 continuous days of panting on this March voyage. The fact that cattle also had significant heat stress with open mouth panting suggests that the level of heat stress was quite substantial and perhaps not well observed in the sheep.

IO SUMMARY: Cattle were observed to have elevated respiration from day 7 with approximately 50% of Bos taurus cattle displaying a fast pant with mouths closed. By day 8 – 9 most Bos taurus breeds (approximately 80%) had fast panting with drooling, with some occasional open mouth panting. Only one steer had sustained open mouth panting on Deck 5. The Bos indicus cattle appeared to cope better with heat and humidity. From day 16 to discharge, all cattle were displaying a normal respiratory pattern.

VALE COMMENT: severe heat stress in the Bos Taurus cattle with 80% panting with drool plus or minus open mouths.

IO SUMMARY: The observer reported that on Days 2, 3, 5 and 8 some of the pilot sheep were tethered to a rail without feed or water. The issue was reported to the CO who addressed this with the crew. After day 8, there were no further issues noted until day 17 where one pilot sheep was found without food and water.

VALE COMMENT: this is a repeated issue on LSS voyages where pilot sheep training occurs. Is the Dept addressing this?

Discharge

IO SUMMARY: During the first day of discharge at Eilat, Israel, the observer witnessed non-compliant handling by the Israeli importers. This included picking sheep up by the ears and pulling sheep by the legs. On one occasion, the observer obtained footage of a worker on the discharge ramp initially kneeling on the backs of sheep, before standing up and attempting to move them with his feet while hanging from an overhead frame. Both the AAV and the CO spoke to the representatives of the Israeli importers about the non-compliant handling of sheep and discussed that this needed to be improved. The observer noted that there was considerable improvement in the handling of sheep on the second day of discharge, however, there were still sporadic observations of sheep being handled inappropriately (pulled by legs). The AAV was proactive in informing the workers this was not acceptable. The observer saw the tail end of an incident that involved four sheep mortalities on the discharge ramp. The observer was informed by the AAV that the incident was related to smothering. The event was responded to quickly to prevent further sheep from smothering.

VALE COMMENT: inappropriate handling has been noted previously in Israel in the media and footage available in the public domain. This would appear to be a repeated issue.

Conclusion

IO SUMMARY: Despite, the majority of the issues relating to feed and water being corrected during the voyage, the issues have been addressed further with the exporter.

VALE COMMENT: ho hum

IO SUMMARY: The issue of non-compliant handling has been referred to the relevant party, and is being investigated by the department which can be found on the department's website.

VALE COMMENT: ESCAS non-compliance?

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 2 cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 11 cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 17 cattle in pen—no issues identified

Day 9 sheep in pen—no issues identified

Day 12 sheep in pen—no issues identified

Day 20 sheep in race—no issues identified

VALE COMMENT: there was significant heat stress on multiple days so these photographs are not representative.