

VALE COMMENT on IO 99 Al Shuwaikh Fremantle to Kuwait and Qatar March 2019

Loading

IO SUMMARY: The cattle on Deck 5 appeared to be fairly tightly packed, but were loaded as per the load plan.

VALE COMMENT: no comment as to whether correct ASEL space allowance for each animal

Daily routine

IO SUMMARY: The night watch duties were split into two shifts with 1 night watchperson on each shift from 6:00pm to 7:00am.

VALE COMMENT: only 1 person to observe all decks overnight – large ship so inadequate.

Feed and water

IO SUMMARY: Fines from pellets appeared excessive, were a constant issue and were very noticeable in the feed troughs. Sheep showed a preference to eat the solid pellets versus the powdery fines, but there was no clear deleterious effect on the animals. The vessel's management were aware of the issues and instructed the crew to empty excess fines into the pens.

VALE COMMENT: of course they were aware of it – the problem is reported repeatedly for this ship.

Ventilation

IO SUMMARY: Maximum dry bulb temperatures in the pens ranged from 27°C in Fremantle to 34°C when the vessel approached the equator. The wet bulb temperature reached a maximum of 31°C.

VALE COMMENT: surprising that there was no heat stress in sheep (even summer acclimatised at this WBT)

IO SUMMARY: There were inconsistencies observed in the daily reports made by the AAV. Higher respiration rates were noted by the observer than those reported by the AAV, however, there were no issues with heat stress on this voyage. The issue with daily reporting has been raised with the exporter.

VALE COMMENT: and this is why independent vets (and/or observers) are required

Health and welfare

IO SUMMARY: the practice was for sick and injured animals to be removed from the pens by the crew, and subsequently treated or euthanised, once each day in the morning. The observer noted that by removing sick and injured animals only every 24 hours, it also meant animals could be ill for a considerable time without treatment.

VALE COMMENT: this is a welfare issue

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted that the AAV attempted to treat sheep which presented in a moribund state, or which lacked vitality and were laterally recumbent, and to give them every opportunity to recover. The sick animals would often die without being offered euthanasia. Typically, these animals had either enteritis or signs of not eating identified at post mortem inspection.

VALE COMMENT: veterinarian should be investigated. This is unacceptable.

IO SUMMARY: There were 190 mortalities for the sheep. The causes attributed to the mortalities included shy feeders, enteritis, pneumonia, trauma, autolysed and other. The AAV advised that the post mortems they recorded as "autolysed" were at an advanced stage in tissue breakdown making it difficult to properly determine an accurate cause of death.

VALE COMMENT: autolysed carcasses could well represent deaths due to heat stress that apparently did not occur with WBT of 31!

IO SUMMARY: The only notable sheep morbidity issue was the higher than normal incidence of leg injuries although there was no evidence the condition of the deck posed any systemic health of feet/leg related injuries during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: what caused the leg injuries – no details?

IO SUMMARY: It was also observed that the very few sheep on-board the vessel with scabby mouth were not segregated, as required by the exporters Approved Export Plan.

VALE COMMENT: a non-compliance.

Conclusion

The observer noted there were opportunities for the exporter to improve the implementation of procedures related to daily reporting of conditions, segregation of animals with scabby mouth, and also the regular and immediate treatment of livestock.

The observer determined that the relevant procedures relating to the management of livestock exported by sea *were, with a few exceptions, were consistent with the ASEL requirements and additional conditions of export.*