

VALE COMMENT ON IO SUMMARY 55 Shorthorn Express Portland to China December 2018

IO SUMMARY: An independent observer (observer) boarded the vessel at Portland and remained on board until completion of discharge.

VALE COMMENT: this is incorrect. 2 animals were left onboard the ship so discharge was incomplete. This is ASEL non-compliant.

Loading

IO SUMMARY: Although the load plan complied with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock 2011 (version 2.3) (ASEL) requirements, the cattle were not loaded strictly in accordance with the load plan. Adjustments were made to the stocking density in some pens early in the voyage, however some pens remained overstocked throughout the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: ASEL non-compliance for space allowance

Personnel

IO SUMMARY: An experienced LiveCorp Accredited Stockperson (stockperson) accompanied the voyage.. had a very attentive and caring attitude towards the cattle.

VALE COMMENT: stockperson failed to direct appropriate food rationing – was this due to lack of stockperson competence or crew issues? No veterinarian onboard.

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted that although the number of crew on-board the vessel seemed to be sufficient, generally their application to pen and deck cleaning tasks and maintenance was considered unsatisfactory. Poor maintenance, for example, not attending to leaks in the water supply system or broken nose bowls, contributed to a 20cm deep build-up of a boggy mixture of fodder, chaff and manure in most alleyways and pens.

VALE SUMMARY: unacceptable

Daily routine

IO SUMMARY: Night watch crew were rostered between 6.00pm and 6.00am. Their duties included feed and water checks, cleaning troughs and checking the cattle. The observer found many nose bowls soiled with faeces that the night watch crew should have rectified.

VALE SUMMARY: unacceptable for a live export voyage

Feed and water

IO SUMMARY: Sufficient feed was loaded for the expected 16-day voyage, plus an additional 3 days feed in reserve, in accordance with ASEL requirements. However the following factors led to a feed shortage and feed rationing during the voyage:

- Sea conditions were rough or very rough during 13 of the 19 days at sea. Vessel speed was reduced during rough weather, which increased voyage length by two days.
- The vessel diverted to the southern Chinese port of Zhoushan on Day 16 to take on additional fuel and fresh water, which led to a delay of one day.
- The vessel anchored outside Jintang Port overnight while waiting for a pilot to enable the vessel to enter the port.
- Completion of discharge subsequently took a further 19 hours.
- The observer noted that the method used for estimating remaining pelleted feed in the silos was considered unreliable. Bagged chaff calculations were considered to be fairly accurate.
- The CO and livestock crew did not manage feed distribution well.

VALE SUMMARY: another voyage where insufficient food loaded to cover Chinese voyage length. This is a recurrent theme in voyages to China with >10% of voyages having inadequate food (at Sept 2019). The Dept should be insisting that at least 6 days extra food be carried on every China voyage

– 3 days plus an extra 3 days to cover the possibility that voyage delayed even longer than 3 days as this has happened repeatedly.

IO SUMMARY: Despite concern from Day 2 that feed supply might need to be rationed due to reduced vessel speed, fodder was not managed conservatively during the voyage, with observations of unspoiled fodder spilling out from troughs during manual supply by the crew.

VALE COMMENT: presumably stockperson was either inattentive or ineffective in addressing this

IO SUMMARY: Fodder provision to different sized pens was also not considered, resulting in some pens not being fed ASEL-required levels for between 5 and 13 days of the voyage. Larger pens with a higher number of cattle had generally the same number of feed troughs provided as smaller pens with a lower number of cattle. This led to reduced access to feed troughs for individual cattle in larger pens and sometimes an over-supply of feed to cattle in smaller pens.

VALE SUMMARY: this is something that should have been addressed by an experienced stockperson

IO SUMMARY: The observer reported competition for access to feed troughs increased later in the voyage with pen hierarchy becoming obvious and incidents of trampling observed.

VALE SUMMARY: hungry cattle causing injury in order to get to food indicates a poor welfare state both with respect to hunger and injury. It must be noted that these were dairy cows, and likely a higher space allowance than routine shipments

IO SUMMARY: shy feeders in larger pens not able to adequately access feed, sometimes for several feeds at a time.

VALE SUMMARY: poor welfare and poor stockmanship

IO SUMMARY: Very limited feed was available from late on Day 19 as the fodder supplies had been almost exhausted. It was the observer's understanding that some cattle were not fed at all during the day of discharge as no fodder remained on board, meaning ASEL standard 5.5 could not be met.

VALE SUMMARY: major animal welfare issue; ASEL non-compliant and contrary to OIE recommendations also

IO SUMMARY: Water was loaded onto the vessel before departure from Australia in accordance with ASEL. The vessel had a reverse osmosis (RO) unit and a fresh water generator intended to produce sufficient fresh water during the voyage. However, the RO unit was not able to produce the required amount of water on many days due to rough seas, RO unit breakdown, and restricted time of use when the vessel was close to ports.

VALE COMMENT: this contingency must be assessed appropriately by Dept. There is no indication that this has been done

IO SUMMARY: Water consumption by the cattle increased as temperature and humidity rose when the vessel approached the equator. From day 5 of the voyage, there were periods when the cattle did not have access to ad lib water because the vessel's water-generation capability was insufficient to meet demand for the reasons identified above. Water was unavailable to some or all decks—for up to 4 hours per day—for days 5, 8, 9-13, and 16-18.

VALE SUMMARY: water deprivation is not acceptable or consistent with ASEL. That it occurred in times of heat stress is not just an animal welfare issue it is animal cruelty

IO SUMMARY: Although water consumption reduced as temperature and humidity levels decreased (around day 15), the vessel diverted to the Chinese port of Zhoushan on Day 16 as a precaution. The vessel was resupplied with additional water and fuel from a barge outside the port.

VALE SUMMARY: it appears to be luck and not good management that resulted in this voyage not becoming a high mortality disaster. Mortality is a crude measure of morbidity and animal suffering.

Ventilation

IO SUMMARY: Fresh air was supplied to the livestock by a series of ventilation pipes running along the decks. The openings were angled and positioned to direct air down to the cattle in the pens. It was reported that the ventilation system had only one setting.

VALE COMMENT: unless this setting was very high, it would appear that ventilation is inadequate on this vessel and that AMSA should reassess.

IO SUMMARY: Hotter areas were identified within the decks due to ventilation infrastructure and impediments to air flow such as ramps, walls and piles of feed. Other obstructions inhibiting ventilation included feed troughs suspended from overhead wires when not in use.

VALE SUMMARY: this is one ship that should not be used to export Australian livestock. Crew incompetence and practices not aligned with animal welfare.

IO SUMMARY: During the hotter period of the voyage, some hatches were opened in an attempt to improve the deck conditions, resulting in a reduction in temperature and humidity observed on decks 4 and 5.

VALE COMMENT: this would not have been possible in some sea conditions

IO SUMMARY: During the voyage, the cattle encountered mild southern Australian temperatures, high heat and humidity around the equator, then very low temperatures in northern China, as shown in the table below:

Day	Dry bulb temperature range °C	Relative humidity %
2	22–26	58–69
6	33–34	77–90
10	31–34	82–86
14	28–31	69–85
20	2–9	58–64

VALE SUMMARY: heat stress to cold stress. A recurrent theme on voyages to Chinese winter.

Pen conditions

IO SUMMARY: The observer commented that unsatisfactory pen and deck conditions were experienced during the voyage. These conditions were mainly due to inadequate corrective maintenance by crew, leaking water pipes and fire hydrants, malfunctioning nose bowls, build-up of the thickness of the pad, spilled feed in the aisles, high temperatures and humidity and blocked drains.

VALE COMMENT: see previous comments on the adequacy of this ship for Australian live export

IO SUMMARY: Washing of decks commenced on Day 7, with Deck 1 washed five times throughout the voyage. The remaining four decks were washed four times each on days 8/9, 12, 15 and 18. Wash down was observed to improve pen, environmental and animal welfare conditions.

IO SUMMARY: During the deck wash on days 9 and 12, flooding of Deck 1 was experienced due to deficiencies in the drainage system. The flooding reduced the number of hatches that could be opened to manage temperature and humidity conditions. This resulted in an increase in relative humidity experienced by cattle on Deck 1, with the observer approximating 5% of animals with a heat stress score of 3.5 on day 9.

VALE SUMMARY: severe heat stress

IO SUMMARY: During washing of the decks, cattle in the hospital pens on decks 1 and 2 were affected by overflow of wash-down material from the decks above resulting in soiling of feed and water troughs and coat contamination.

VALE COMMENT: similar to the comments made by Lynn Simpson about routine contamination of food and water troughs from decks above and her last voyage was in ?2011

IO SUMMARY: Sawdust was used in the hospital pens after each deck wash but not applied in general stock pens. The remainder of the sawdust was reserved for after the final deck wash.

VALE COMMENT: as per usual, sawdust kept for show, hospital pens and discharge and not for the poor animals. These bony framed dairy cows travelled with no bedding for 22 days where seas were rough for the majority of the voyage. This is a significant animal welfare issue.

Health and welfare

IO SUMMARY: Days 7-15 recorded wet bulb temperatures ranging from 29-34°C as the vessel crossed the equatorial region. Varying degrees of heat stress became apparent to the observer over these days. Most animals exhibited behaviours consistent with a heat stress score of 0-2. These adverse environmental conditions, particularly noted by the observer in pens close to the engine room and ventilation shafts, coupled with the lack of continuous water supply, contributed to the increased susceptibility of up to 5% animals who were observed with a heat stress score of 4 over days 7-13. A reported <10% of cattle were more affected on days 7-9, and were ascribed heat stress scores from 3.5 to 4 by the observer. By day 15, the average wet bulb temperature reduced to 25°C, with no cattle observed affected by heat.

VALE COMMENT: serious and sustained heat stress. Some animals in heat stress score 4 for 6 consecutive days.

IO SUMMARY: The observer reported that the storage and utilisation of drug administration devices was not hygienic.

VALE COMMENT: no details provided but on another voyage, a stockperson used the same needle and syringe throughout for 2 types of medication and all cattle, washing the syringe and needle in

trough water (IO SUMMARY 95). It would be interesting to know the details of this “non hygienic behaviour”.

IO SUMMARY: The hospital pen on Deck 5 was poorly positioned in a location which was considerably hotter due to the adjacent engine room.

VALE COMMENT: inappropriate

IO SUMMARY: Of the eight mortalities during the voyage, six occurred at sea. The causes of death were not definitively determined as no post mortems were performed.

VALE SUMMARY: necropsies are not performed routinely on voyages in which there are stockpersons rather than veterinarians

IO SUMMARY: Two more cattle were rejected at discharge by the importer because of leg injuries. These cattle could not be euthanased immediately as Chinese authorities would not allow use of the captive bolt in port. These cattle were left on the vessel and the bosun was instructed by the stockperson to euthanase both of them.

VALE SUMMARY: this is ASEL non compliance as the stockperson left the voyage before all cattle discharged. It is also an indication of the lack of control Australia has over its animals once they are sent overseas to countries with poor animal welfare standards. It is also a clear indication that Australian live export has failed to improve animal welfare in these countries. The fate of these 2 animals, being euthanased by an inexperienced operator is unknown.

Discharge

IO SUMMARY: Delays in unloading were encountered because of a limited availability of trucks.

VALE COMMENT: this is a common issue in many Asian destinations

Conclusion

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted the health and welfare of the cattle was adversely affected during the voyage due to a number of contributing factors, some of which were outside the control of the exporter.

VALE SUMMARY: many of these are within the control of the exporter – training stockperson adequately to deal with adverse situations, inadequate food, inadequate bedding, exporting southern Australian cattle on an inappropriate vessel to go through the equator to a northern hemisphere winter etc

IO SUMMARY: “outside the control of the exporter.” These include the shortage of ad lib water, inadequate feed availability, rough sea conditions, a longer voyage than expected, prolonged hot and humid conditions around the equator, inadequate ventilation, flooding of Deck 1 during deck washing, poor pen and deck maintenance and exposure to very low temperatures on arrival in China.

VALE SUMMARY: hot and humid conditions at the Equator occur all year around and cold in China is also completely predictable. Rough seas should have been predictable also given that they occurred soon after the commencement of the voyage. Anyone that can use a computer can predict routine weather conditions; they are definitely within the control of the exporter. Exporters routinely send southern Australian *Bos taurus* cattle to China regardless. Sending animals on this ship into these conditions was definitely in the control of the exporter.

IO SUMMARY: The exporter was required to review and amend processes to address the issues identified during this voyage.

VALE COMMENT: oh yeah...and do what exactly? Continue to send animals regardless of weather forecasts and keep all fingers crossed perhaps. There are issues of ASEL non-compliance here and the exporters should have had penalties applied.

Representative photographs of the voyage

Day 6 Cattle showing heat stress

Day 7 Cattle in poor pen conditions

Day 13 Cattle in pen after deckwash