

VALE COMMENT ON REPORT 185: Girolando Express Geraldton to Weifang, September 2019

Voyage length

IO SUMMARY: 20-days

VALE COMMENT: voyage length is similar to ME voyages and a veterinarian should be onboard. Instead a stockperson was in charge of animal health and welfare.

Loading

IO SUMMARY: The cattle were not strictly loaded in accordance with the load plan with several pens observed to be overstocked. The numbers of cattle in these pens were progressively adjusted during the voyage..... The observer noted the redistribution of cattle to rectify pens overstocked at loading was carried out relatively slowly, consequently, penning anomalies remained well into the voyage – one pen contained two head of cattle, while other pens of comparable size contained seven or eight head.

VALE COMMENT: is inappropriate that nearly every voyage requires stock redistribution and that on this voyage, redistribution did not occur in a timely fashion. It is obvious that stocking density was unacceptable for some unspecified time “well into the voyage”. This should have been classified as an ASEL non-compliance.

Mechanical Issue

IO SUMMARY: Six days after the commencement of the voyage the vessel developed mechanical issues. On day 11 the vessel anchored for repairs over a twenty-four hour period just north of the equator. The observer noted there was no evident impact on the health and welfare of the cattle.

VALE COMMENT: there is no mention of where heat stress occurred – was it when marooned at the equator. Mechanical issues are yet another risk for livestock exported by sea.

Ventilation

VALE COMMENT: no temperature or humidity data supplied.

Pen conditions

IO SUMMARY: A significant number of cattle had horns that were blunt, but were longer than the 12 cm as required under ASEL. In other cases, horns were shorter than 12 cm, but not blunt or tipped. Some cattle with untipped horns displayed aggressive attitude to their pen companions, with the potential for trauma to occur although no instances were observed.

VALE COMMENT: ASEL non-compliance.

Health and welfare

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted there was a period during the voyage where, in particular, the heavier cattle in pens near the engine room and in the hospital pens, evidenced increased respiratory rates. This was accompanied with mild signs of increased heat load such as serous nasal discharge, a soft wet cough, and restless or irritable behaviours. Despite this, the observer noted the overall health and welfare of these cattle was maintained during the voyage.

VALE COMMENT: did the IO write this or did the Department write this last sentence requesting that the IO approved it?

Discharge

IO SUMMARY: On arrival at the port of discharge, the vessel was required to anchor and to await the offload of another livestock consignment.

VALE COMMENT: one delay due to mechanical issues, another due to port issues. This highlights the unpredictable risks and voyage times.

Conclusion

IO SUMMARY: The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage, and to be compliant with ASEL requirements with the exception that the horns of some cattle were either too long or short and un-tipped.

VALE COMMENT: incorrect stocking density is also non-compliant with ASEL.