

VALE COMMENT ON IO 153 Girolando Express; Darwin to Jakarta, July 2019

Loading

IO SUMMARY: The observer noted 50% of cattle could lie down at a time in each pen. No animal welfare issues were observed during loading.

VALE COMMENT: one of the few voyages that doesn't state >50%.

Feed and water

IO SUMMARY: The vessel feeding system delivered pellets to each deck, and the crew would manually fill troughs.

VALE COMMENT: manual fill

IO SUMMARY: Troughs that were located under the floor grates were continually contaminated with falling debris from the deck above, which made the feed in these troughs unpalatable to the cattle. The observer noted that these troughs were usually still almost full before the next morning's feeding. This impacted on the welfare of the cattle in the effected pens by reducing their access to feed. When these troughs were cleaned of debris, the cattle would immediately commence eating, which indicated that their consumption had been reduced by the contamination.

VALE COMMENT: major welfare issue noted

IO SUMMARY: Pelletised feed and chaff was loaded slightly in excess of ASEL requirements for a 4-day voyage, however, the observer noted that some cattle were on the vessel for 9 days. This was mainly due to a delay in berthing of the vessel, then slow unloading of the cattle that took 63 hours meant that during days 6–9 there was insufficient feed to supply the cattle according to ASEL requirements.

VALE COMMENT: 1 insufficient food is a recurring theme on short and longer haul cattle voyages.

VALE COMMENT 2: Given that ASEL requires an extra 3 days of food is required, it would appear that there was insufficient food loaded to cover the extra days.

Expected duration of voyage was 4 days so 7 days should have been loaded.

IO SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture raised the issue of insufficient feed with the exporter. The exporter identified the best way to deal with the issue was to source local feed, and therefore arranged the loading of approximately 10 tonnes of supplementary feed at the port. During days 6–9, the cattle displayed behaviour such as vocalisation and excessive licking of empty troughs, which indicated a degree of hunger.

VALE COMMENT: even with supplementary food, cattle were hungry.

Ventilation

IO SUMMARY: Temperature readings were taken each day on each deck between 9:30am and 10:00am using a sling psychrometer. The maximum dry bulb temperature recorded was 30 °C, and the maximum wet bulb temperature was 27 °C. The highest humidity recorded was 79%. The observer did not see any evidence of heat stress in the cattle during the voyage.

VALECOMMENT: once daily early morning readings not ideal.

Pen conditions

IO SUMMARY: There were several areas around the engine room and the aft of the vessel that were hotter, although cattle in these pens did not exhibit any symptoms of heat stress.

Health and welfare

IO SUMMARY: As described above, the cattle exhibited signs of hunger on days 6–9 during the prolonged period of berthing and unloading and the observer noted the welfare of the animals was impacted at this time. The issue of the contamination of feed in troughs that were located under floor grates which made the feed unpalatable, and therefore reducing the access of those cattle to suitable feed also contributed to level of feed available.

VALE COMMENT: significant welfare issue.

Discharge

IO SUMMARY: Discharge took approximately 63 hours which contributed significantly to the shortage of feed for the cattle.

VALE COMMENT: no cause for unloading delay provided but seems common in Indonesian voyages.

Conclusion

IO SUMMARY: The exporter arrangements were observed to be implemented during the voyage and to be compliant with ASEL requirements up to the point of unexpected delay during unloading.

VALE COMMENT: it would seem that inadequate food loaded for ASEL contingency.