

VALE COMMENT ON REPORT 9 on MV Al Messilah

Sheep and cattle exported to Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates in June 2018
Report 9, January 2019

Voyage Summary

- closed deck ship
- 57428 sheep and 104 cattle to Kuwait, Qatar and UAE 6 June to 26 June ie 21 days (not including loading days)
- 0.53% mortality sheep
- 0% cattle

Loading

IO SUMMARY "The IO did not note any animal welfare concerns at loading"

IO ACTUAL REPORT: "I was not present during the pre-loading or loading phases of the voyage"

IO SUMMARY: no mention of the following:

IO ACTUAL REPORT: "Provided load plan has limited relevance due to active distribution"

Daily Routine

IO ACTUAL REPORT: "powdered feed was removed off the surface of the fodder troughs"

VALE COMMENT: powdered feed also noted in other IO reports eg Report 1, Maysora and Report 7, Al Shuwaikh

Pens

IO SUMMARY: no mention of the following:

IO ACTUAL REPORT: hospital pens not aligned with ventilation shafts; pens porous to lambs and small sheep; abraded knees due to the abrasive surface occurred on "free-ranging" sheep;

Feed and Water

BOTH REPORTS: food and water trough supply dictated by the available fence space for pens.

IO SUMMARY: "each of the decks has just one thermometer...central and handy to access for reading but are unlikely to be representative of the worst environmental conditions on the particular deck"

IO ACTUAL REPORT: Each of the decks/half decks has one thermometer....The effect of these varied setups is unknown however the critical nature of temperature and humidity assessment to the management of livestock that are at risk of heat stress should mandate the capacity for increased and better quality surveillance.

Toward the end of the voyage I came across several thermometers where the wet bulb temperatures was as high and in one case higher than the dry bulb reading with highlighted to the me the importance of maintenance to the usefulness of these rudimentary thermometers.”

VALE COMMENT: this ship has been a livestock carrier since 1995. Despite being the subject of a heat stress high mortality investigation in 2016, this ship still uses single, poorly placed and rudimentary thermometers.

IO SUMMARY: No mention of breached water pipe

IO ACTUAL REPORT: mentioned breached water pipe

Health and Welfare

IO SUMMARY REPORT: more than half of the stock in any pen were able to lie down at any one time

VALE COMMENT: this suggests that not all stock in a pen were able to lie down at the same time, something that is necessary under OIE recommendations

IO SUMMARY and IO ACTUAL REPORT: issues with livestock handling noted with the comment that there was a “general lack of experience in animal handling [including] attempts to move baulking sheep by physically handling them by the forelimbs

VALE COMMENT: this is clearly unacceptable

SUMMARY REPORT: no mention of the following details:

IO REPORT: the IO provided a detailed report of issues affecting the sheep, notably enterotoxaemia [preventable by vaccination], keratoconjunctivitis, a predominant contributor to morbidity with 20% affected in some pens and shearing cuts with survival after body cuts (photos provided) but a comment that cuts on limbs especially hocks results in secondary infection and death or euthanasia. The IO report clearly detailed (with photographs) heat stress in sheep yet there is no mention in the summary report and none of the photos showing severe heat stress (ie with open mouth breathing) were included in the representative photos. The IO noted that 5-6 sheep that were unloaded unable to see ie blind and required

movement with other sheep to ensure they did not collide with fixed objects and that some kills with captive bolts were not successful.

IO ACTUAL REPORT: "Early in the voyage when the temperatures and humidity conditions were comfortable small numbers of sheep were seen to have increase [actual spelling] respiratory rates with periodically lip licking and slightly open mouths. Single sheep such as in MVI 0430 show apparent respiratory distress [VALE: still photo shows recumbent sheep with another sheep appearing to open mouth breathe on the right of it].

When the dry bulb temperature increased to around 32-22 degrees Celsius and the wet bulb was also high around 29-30 degrees Celsius a greater percentage of the sheep showed the slightly open mouth breathing and lip licking in MVI 0862 and MVI 0584.

MVI_0569 Shows the open mouth breathing and panting that were most commonly seen on the day that the voyage entered the Persian Gulf.

The panting was episodic lasting less than a minute after which the sheep would close its mouth for a period of time in a pattern that appeared to be a normal physiological response [VALE COMMENT: response to heat stress!]. The 'irritable' behavior of the sheep on the left in MVI0563 was also observed in a small number of sheep during the same conditions that caused a general increase in respiration rates and open mouth breathing.

VALE COMMENTS:

1. Sheep with shearing cuts should not be loaded under ASEL. Shearing cuts also contributed to mortalities on Yangtze Fortune, Report 4. Both reports note that cuts on hocks particularly problematic. The new version of ASEL has only provided 2 days for sheep to recover from shearing which is clearly insufficient for this recognised cause of mortality.
2. Blind sheep should have been euthanased before leaving the ship as this is a clear welfare issue and these sheep would be unfit to load in Australia (or anywhere else that had animal welfare regulations)
3. Heat stress should have been detailed in the summary report and in the representative photos. As per all IO Summary reports, any reference to heat stress has been removed from the DAWR sanitized summary. Without obtaining the daily checklists, VALE cant assess the likely severity or duration of heat stress. However, from the photos and text, it is evident that heat stress occurred on multiple days of the journey.

Discharge

IO noted an escape at port

VALE COMMENT: after travelling to these same ports for over 30 years, this should not occur. Other reports also note escapes and one, comments that it is surprising that not more escapes occur.

Representative photographs

All show “no issues” identified contrary to the many photographs of issues in the IO Report.

VALE COMMENT: DAWR has sanitised this report