

Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission Report

October 2007

USA Comments

CHAPTER 1.5.1.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORT

General comment: The United States agrees that most of the revised text is sound and based on objective measures of aquatic farmed animal success. However, any reference in the recommendations to welfare should be omitted until there is acceptance of a definition of aquatic animal welfare.

Article 1.5.1.1.

...

2. *Vehicles* (or *containers*) used for the *transport* of *aquatic animals* shall be designed, constructed and fitted in such a way as to withstand the weight of the *aquatic animals* and water and to ensure their safety and ~~welfare~~ during *transportation*. *Vehicles* shall be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected before use according to the guidelines given in the *Aquatic Code*.

Comment/rationale: Delete any reference in the recommendations to welfare until there is acceptance of a definition of aquatic animal welfare by the Member countries.

Article 1.5.1.7.

Particular arrangements for the transport of aquatic animals by well boat

A well boat is a boat with integrated tanks to carry live fish in sea water, **and which, depending on design, that may operate with open valves to may** allow exchange of sea water. Therefore, well boats can present a biosecurity risk if the fish being carried are infected. ~~Well boats are inherently difficult to disinfect.~~

Comment/rationale: first sentence changed/re-worded for clarity. The last sentence is not necessarily true. Some modern well-boat tanks may be effectively and relatively easily disinfected

1. Only healthy fish showing no clinical signs of disease on the day of loading should be transported. The well boat must have the capability of fully closed containment of fish during its operation if so required. The stocking densities should be determined by taking both the total volume of available space for each species of fish and the oxygenation/aeration capacity available to supply the fish during all stages of transport into consideration.

Comment/rationale: 'full containment' is not necessarily the intended level of biosecurity. 'Fully closed containment' is more precise.

2. In exceptional circumstances fish may be transported by well boat from an infected site if this is part of a disease response plan agreed to by the *Competent Authority*.
3. Provision shall be made to enable preliminary observation of the contents in the well, and monitoring equipment should be available where appropriate.
4. Access by farm staff to the vessel and from the vessel to the farm cages, including the equipment, should be restricted.
5. Well boats shall be loaded with only one type of fish at a time.
6. Well boats may ~~operate with open valves~~ **exchange water in its tanks with the environment** except in designated areas in proximity to aquaculture establishments or areas with protected wild populations. The *Competent Authority* should designate the areas based upon a risk assessment.
7. Multiple deliveries of fish during the same trip should be avoided. Where unavoidable the order of deliveries should be made to the youngest year class of fish first, taking into account health status. Deliveries should be made to sites of a higher health status first, to a single aquaculture establishment, or establishments of the same health status.
8. In the event of mortality occurring during transport, a contingency plan capable of dealing with full containment and disposal of dead fish, via an approved disposal method, should be available. This plan should be prepared according to the Guidelines on handling and disposal of carcasses and wastes of aquatic animals [in preparation].
9. Well boats should not operate in adverse inclement weather conditions that may force the operation to divert from the ~~agreed planned~~ route and **schedule** of transport.

Comment/rationale: The suggested wording changes are clearer in their intent.

10. The well boat should be cleaned and, where required, disinfected to an acceptable standard before re-use. The level of disinfection should be proportional to the risk. Well boats should maintain a disinfection checklist which should be kept with the ship's log and should be open to audit. It is essential to ensure that all fish are removed from the system before cleaning. All organic matter should be removed through the process of cleaning before disinfection commences. The general principles and specific recommendations as outlined in the Aquatic Manual should be consulted for guidance.

Comment/rationale: 'commas' added for clarity

11. When travelling between areas and zones of different health levels, cleaning and, if required, disinfection procedures should be followed and implemented to a standard approved by the *Competent Authority*.

Comment/rationale: 'commas' added for clarity