

CHAPTER 10

ACTIONS REQUIRED ON COMPLETION OF THE VOYAGE, DURING AND AFTER DISCHARGE

The end of the voyage is not the end of the journey and much quality losses can be induced during and after discharge. It is therefore important to move the product to the market as fast as possible, to maintain the cold chain and to handle the product with the utmost care.

1. STOPPING OF REFRIGERATION

It is very important to maintain refrigeration on board ship until discharge. Integral containers must be kept on power to the last minute. Refrigerated decks must be kept under cooling until ready for discharge. Cooling must be resumed during breaks in discharge.

2. PROTECTION OF THE CARGO

Containerised cargo not directly dispatched to the market must be taken straight to the container terminal and recooling be applied immediately. Palletised cargo discharged from conventional decks or containers must be -

- Protected against the elements. Special care must be taken when the ambient temperatures are below zero and above 15°C.
- Protected against any chemical, physical and microbiological contamination.
- Perishable products must be put in cold storage at the correct temperature immediately after discharge from conventional decks or containers.
- Protected from any possible taint from other products in the same cold store.

3. IN-TRANSIT COLD TREATED CARGO

The Master must allow the quarantine officials on to the vessel to inspect the cargo and the temperature logs. All temperature logs, notes on the cold treatment process and PPECB certificates must be handed over to the quarantine authorities as and when requested. The cold treatment must not be stopped on arrival in the port of discharge. Refrigeration can only be stopped and discharge started after approval by the quarantine authorities of the importing country.

4. QUALITY SURVEYING

Quality surveyors must be called in immediately when a product quality problem occurs or is expected. It is absolutely important that the exporter, importer and the shipping line are simultaneously informed of a possible survey to allow them to be present or to also appoint a surveyor. It is strongly recommended that the international guidelines documented by the International Cold Chain Technology (ICCT) group based in Cambridge (UK) are followed. It is also extremely important that:

- The quality survey is done immediately when the problem or potential problem is discovered. Survey reports done long after discharge or in the market are useless.
- The identity of the product, container or stowage position must be correctly identified in order to trace (back track) the product through all the steps in the cold chain and back to the production unit.
- All relevant information pertaining to the quality and condition of the product must be recorded. The nature of the defects must be correctly defined and conditions such as temperatures in various positions, distribution of defects through the load and the condition of the packaging must be noted.
- Digital photographs reflecting the true situation are very helpful. Photographs of all the collected defects collated into one carton are useless.
- Temperature data loggers, if installed, must be retrieved and returned to the official representative of the owner of the instrument for downloading of the data.

5. INSURANCE CLAIMS

The exporter, importer, shipping line and insurance company must be immediately informed of an insurance claim or potential claim. All the parties have the right and responsibility to obtain as much information on the incident as possible and need to do so when such information is still available. Most common risk factors that may delay or result in rejection of claims are found to be:

- The cargo is taken to distant cold stores or markets with a break in the traceability chain. Loss of pallet and container identification is definite risk areas.
- Cargo defects are reported some time after discharge and after the product has moved through various subsequent stages in the supply chain. Records of transport, storage conditions and handling are usually absent, incomplete or incorrect.
- Shipping information was lost or incomplete. Integral containers were shipped to other parts of the world and special efforts must be made to locate the container and retrieve the data. The data logger memory normally has a three months storage capacity resulting in a loss of data after this period.

- Data on transshipments, especially Partlow temperature charts and data on handling, storage and transport in the transfer ports are usually impossible to obtain after discharge. Shipping lines must therefore ensure that they retain copies of relevant data pertaining to their service.

6. RETURN OF LOGS AND VOYAGE DATA

The PPECB has the legal responsibility to ensure that all voyage information on all South African export perishable produce is made available to the PPECB. Failure of shipping lines, air lines, cold store and transport operators to supply all relevant temperature logs and other information may force the PPECB in prohibiting such a person or organization from participating in the export or carriage of a perishable product, from South Africa.