Mixed reactions to ISO 8217 precision reference

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Interpretation of single test result under scrutiny

There has been mixed reactions from global fuel testing agencies as the latest ISO 8217 revision process nears its final stage.

In a recent circular, **Viswa Lab** questioned the reference in the ISO 8217 Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) to ISO 4259, which deals with precision and interpretation of test results.

According to Viswa Lab the '95% confidence' principle applied to a single test result is biased in favour of the supplier.

It pointed to stricter interpretation procedures adopted by the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** for sulphur test results.

The IMO's verification protocol for sulphur content does not allow for the '95% confidence' principle, but prescribes a multiple test result procedure if the first test result falls above the actual sulphur limit by the smallest fraction.

In its latest comments on the FDIS, Viswa Lab said Annex L of ISO 8217:2010 allows for the 95% confidence principle to make a "significant difference" regarding fuel quality on certain parameters.

"For instance, the catfines which are now pegged at 60 ppm can be as high as 60 + 0.59 R which is equal to 60 + 11.84 ppm which is 71.84 ppm. This practically brings the catfine level to the old 8217:2005 standard of 80 ppm," it commented.

"This is why Viswa Lab is insisting that the benefit of the variation on the higher side should not be made available to the supplier.

"The only reason for making this suggestion is to improve the quality of the bunker fuel supplied. After all, we believe, this is also the intention of ISO with each revision of its standard."

Last year, **DNV Petroleum Services (DNVPS)** highlighted what it saw as an "incomplete" reference to the application of ISO 4259 in the draft international standard (DIS).

It argued that ISO 4259 "should be applied in its entirety when examining precision issues related to marine fuel quality test results."

DNVPS told Bunkerworld this week that it was "pleased with the change of reference to ISO 4259" in ISO/FDIS 8217 compared with that of ISO/DIS 8217."

"The additional information in the FDIS is taken directly from ISO 4259 and includes procedural descriptions for fuel recipients and suppliers. In the event of a dispute, both parties should refer to the ISO 4259 guideline in its entirety," DNVPS told Bunkerworld.

The ISO/FDIS 8217 is now subject to a two-month balloting period and is expected to become the official standard in July.

Unni Einemo, 2nd April 2010 14:55 GMT
Comments? Email editor@bunkerworld.com.