



A HISTORY OF LIVE HORSE SHIPMENTS FOR SLAUGHTER

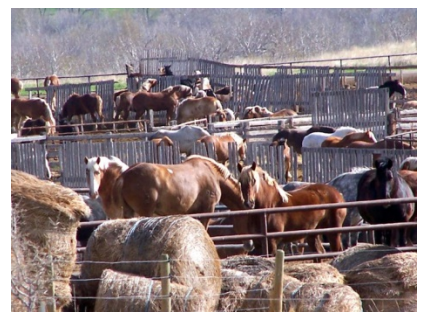
First, a brief history. Back in the 1990s the live draft horse shipments to Japan were primarily made from the U.S. specifically in Washington State. It had become a big business to the Schorno Agri-Business of Yelm Washington who shipped out of Seattle-Tacoma airport using various carriers such as FedEx, Northwest Orient (now defunct) and others. This business was started by Larry Schorno who not only shipped the draft horses but animals of every kind to foreign destinations.

The Schorno group is said to be the originator of the wooden crates that the live draft horses ship in today as this May 05, 1991 article tells us: *“When carriers complained that metal container pens used to hold animals during the flight added 12 tons of dead weight, were expensive to clean and often had to be flown back empty, Mr. Schorno's crews devised disposable wooden pens that were much lighter and cheap enough to be thrown away after each use.”* Source JOC.com

This business was moved from Washington to Alberta Canada in 2003 when Schorno Agri-Business bought the [Summerview Feedlot](#) located between Brocket and Pincher Creek Alberta. The feedlot was then converted from a cattle feedlot to a Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) approved quarantine station and feedlot for horses destined for Japan.

Approval was given by the Alberta's Natural Resources Conservation Board to allow up to [FOUR THOUSAND AND FIVE HUNDRED](#) horses to be warehoused there.

During the years that followed advocates became aware of this feedlot, monitored it closely and let people know about its existence.





In 2014 the Summerview feedlot was sold to the Livingstone Hutterite Colony who declared that they would not use it for horses only for cattle.

This business continued on for several years without very many people knowing of its existence. The CHDC was alerted to its existence by an advocate who provided photographic evidence of the crates of horses at Calgary Airport who were being live shipped.

For several years, CHDC has campaigned to raise awareness about the live exports of draft horses, affectionately called “Gentle Giants”, to Japan for slaughter. Repeated investigations have shown the dire conditions for these horses who are unfortunate enough to be shipped overseas by air cargo, then are slaughtered on another continent where Canada has no oversight and where our laws have no jurisdiction.

The CHDC has contacted various agencies, demanding to know why the CFIA has, continually, shirked its responsibility and allowed this trade to continue on.

The agencies that we have written to are the Transport Canada, International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Calgary Airport Authority and the Animal Transport Association, Attorney General Peter McKay, Edward Fast, the Minister of International Trade, as well as the CFIA itself.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) sets out the international standards for Live Animals Regulations (LARs). The CHDC purchased the LARs for review and reference. IATA regulations for horses stipulate that they must be shipped individually and that they must have sufficient head clearance (their heads must not come in contact with the top of the crate).

IATA does allow exceptions, however, not for draft horses (from the LARs):

5. EXCEPTIONS

Under special circumstances there may be exceptions to the general container requirements for the shipment of certain types of ponies and horses. Such exceptions must be approved in advance by the competent authorities of both the exporting and importing countries and must be carried out under their supervision. Examples of the exceptions currently applied by certain carriers and agreed by certain competent authorities are:

- **A modified three horse container used without partitions for the transportation of 4 small polo horses or up to 5 Icelandic horses.** For such shipments, it is essential that sufficient space is given to all the animals so that they can move in order to balance and maintain a good foothold.

- Use of a four horse container, with partitions, when one animal is carried transversely to the direction of flight.
- Weaned pony foals and pony yearlings of all breeds, and mini horses may be shipped individually or in small groups of not more than 4 animals.

IATA states right in their regulations that polo ponies who are nowhere near as large as a 2000lb draft horse and Icelandic “horses” who are actually ponies, can be in a container without partitions.

This exception does not include 2000+lb draft horses.

IATA did not respond to our concerns even though their own rules of equine transport are being routinely broken with every shipment. This renowned organization sets out the international standards with their Live Animals Regulations (LARs). IATA regulations for horses stipulate that they must be shipped individually and that they must have sufficient head clearance (their heads must not come in contact with the top of the crate) yet the CFIA continues to allow these horses to be grouped together, usually three at a time, in wooden crates with inadequate space and headroom without food and water.

We have even shown video of four draft horses being loaded into one crate. We have seen reports of up to five horses being shipped loose in these crates. These flimsy, wooden crates are not IATA approved for equines being shipped by air.

(The IATA regulations have been updated since this was written. IATA now has an [exemption for draft horses](#) travelling by air. In this exemption, note that this applies to *certain* carriers which we interpret to mean that industry asked to be exempt to allow them to continue cramming up to four draft horses per crate.)

In response to ongoing concerns about the inhumane and potentially illegal methods used to ship horses by air cargo to Japan for slaughter, the CHDC sought legal assistance. In October of 2012 our lawyer, Nicholas Weigelt of MW Law Offices of Vancouver, BC wrote a [letter of complaint to Transport Canada](#), but no reply was ever received.

He also sent a letter to the Complaints and Appeals Office in the federal government and received a response directly from Dr. Ian Alexander, Chief Veterinary Officer for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. While we are pleased that the CFIA sat up and took notice, it is clear that [Dr. Alexander's response](#) in January 2013 is nothing more than a whitewash and contains some of the same wording as the letter from Mr. Littlewood!

Also, in October 2012, the CHDC issued one of the first press releases pertaining to live export of horses:



“October 18, 2012, Calgary, AB – Footage taken of Alberta horses being shipped live to Japan for slaughter shows that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is violating their own standards set forth in the Health of Animals Regulations. The Regulations prohibit the transportation of all animals under conditions that would expose the animals to undue injury or suffering.

The 2012 footage shows horses in a feedlot being loaded with electric prods into transport trucks, transported to the Calgary International Airport and being crated in wooden crates so small they cannot stand in their natural position, in violation of Section 142 of the Health of Animals Regulations (“No person shall transport or cause to be transported animals in a railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel unless each animal is able to stand in its natural position without coming into contact with a deck or roof.”).

Some horses were even being crated together, even though it is in violation of Section 141.8 of the Health of Animals Regulations, which states that horses over 14 hands high must be segregated for air transport.

Canadian draft horses from various producers are routinely live shipped to Japan for slaughter from the Calgary and Winnipeg International Airports. On arrival in Japan, horses are transported to a feedlot; once they reach desired weight they are slaughtered for horse sashimi, which is considered to be a delicacy in Japan. The meat must be eaten within three days because it is highly perishable; according to the 2008 Alberta Horse Welfare Report, each Canadian horse is worth approximately \$20,000.

Footage shows large horses overcrowded (not segregated) into wooden transport crates, often unable to stand in their natural position for a long journey to Japan, in clear violation of two of the CFIA's own regulations", says Sinikka Crosland, executive director with the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition. These transport conditions not only are inhumane but also are likely to lead to injuries and potential deaths during transport.

Once again we see the CFIA turn a blind eye and choose to protect industry profits rather than do their job", says Crosland. "The CFIA's mandate is both to protect human health and monitor animal welfare. We have recently seen them fail to protect the public from contaminated meat and now we have clear evidence of them failing to follow their own regulations when it comes to live transport of horses for meat."

You can view the footage of Alberta horses being shipped live to Japan [here](#).

The CHDC then proceeded to file official complaints to the CFIA and Transport Canada with respect to the transport of slaughter-bound horses via air cargo through our legal counsel MW Law Offices of Vancouver, BC, on November 8, 2012.

In his complaint to the CFIA and the Superintendent of Aviation Enforcement at Transport Canada, our counsel, Nicholas Weigelt, details the violations of the Health of Animals Act pertaining to horses being unable to stand in a natural position and lack of segregation of horses over 14 hands high.



With no action from the CFIA in April 2015 we, once again, wrote to the CFIA and received the following reply from Paul K. Littlewood:

Regional Director - Chief Inspector, Alberta South Region, Western Area Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency / Government of Canada

“Thank you for your email regarding horses being exported to Japan for slaughter. I appreciate the time you have taken to write with your questions and sincerely apologize for the delay in addressing your concerns.

Animal welfare is an important issue for the Government of Canada and I want to assure you that the CFIA takes all allegations of animal welfare violations seriously and follows-up to verify compliance with the Health of Animals Regulations and the Meat Inspection Regulations.

Laws and standards are in place in Canada to protect the welfare of animals. The federal government shares the responsibility for these laws and standards with the provincial/ territorial governments and the private sector, which includes the various industries and producer organizations involved with animal agriculture. Canada's federal and provincial/territorial governments, the agriculture industry and producers all participate in the ongoing task of updating and improving the legislative requirements and guidelines for animal welfare.

You are correct that CFIA regulations contain a requirement that horses over 14 hands high are to be segregated. However it may be determined that it is better that draught horses are not segregated in order to meet the intent of other sections of the Regulations, which require the animal to be transported in a manner that avoids injury or undue suffering and provides sufficient floor space.

Allowing the horses to travel together is often desirable and meets the intent of these other sections. This commonly occurs with draught horses which already know each other and would therefore experience less stress during transport if able to interact socially. Since these horses are social animals that prefer to travel with other horses, CFIA staff routinely assess the stature (height and size) and demeanour of animals intended to be transported together to determine if they are compatible. The CFIA verifies that animals which are incompatible by nature, regardless of their height, are segregated.

While all sections of the Regulations are to be adhered to for the welfare of horses when transported, one section does not take precedence over the other. Each shipment of live animals is unique and the standard that is applied requires considerable professional judgement on the part of the CFIA staff, taking into consideration animal and environmental factors based on previous experiences. CFIA staff who conduct inspections on-site at the Calgary airport are confident that the horses have adequate headroom during each flight. This judgement also takes into account the expectations of the importing country with respect to the treatment of animals during transport and their animal health and welfare upon arrival. The CFIA staff must also verify that the transporter has also provided proper ventilation and adequate construction of the aircraft and crates that are strewn with sand or shavings and fitted with safe and secure footholds for the horses.

The CFIA is not aware of any injury or undue suffering due to lack of segregation of horses over 14 hands in height. The shipping conditions for these horses provide sufficient headroom to allow them to assume a natural position during transport.

The CFIA has been mandated to ensure all horse shipments have been inspected by a CFIA veterinarian prior to export by air and to enforce the Regulations by verifying that all animals, including horses, are properly

certified, fit to travel and transported in a humane manner that does not cause injury or undue suffering. With regards to horses being shipped to Japan, all slaughter horses are inspected by CFIA inspection staff prior to export by air, to verify compliance with the Regulations, as required by section 19 of the Health of Animal Act. Under the Health of Animals Regulations humane transportation provisions, the CFIA staff are mandated to verify that the requirements for floor space and headroom, segregation, feed and water, which have been in place since the 1970s, are adhered to.

In order to verify the health and welfare of the horses, a CFIA staff is present at numerous stages during this process. This includes testing of the animals prior to shipment as well as overseeing the loading of the animals into trailers at the farm, into the crates at the airport and the loading of the crated horses onto the aircraft. During the flight an attendant, supplied by the exporter, that has experience in dealing with and handling horses is present.

At the airport, there is no fixed time that the crated horses may be on the tarmac. The horses are loaded into crates prior to the flight to allow sufficient time for the Load Master to plan the loading to ensure proper weight distribution in the aircraft. Prior to the flight the horses remain outside the aircraft in the crates to avoid undue suffering from overheating, as they are accustomed to being outdoors. During adverse weather conditions the crated horses are kept indoors until loading. CFIA is unaware of any incidents where the crated horses have been exposed to flying debris from jet blast and in the winter, spray back from de-icing liquid.

Flights to Japan are generally 16-18 hours in duration, including a stop-over for refuelling. The regulations establish the requirements for provision of food, water, and rest at specific intervals. For horses, the time without food and water is not to exceed 36 hours. These horses are fed and watered prior to being loaded at the farm and spend less than 24 hours in transit. This is well within the 36 hours provided for in the regulations. Air transport of horses to Japan has been occurring in excess of 15 years.

The CFIA has no authority to monitor or enforce compliance with our regulations at destinations in another jurisdiction. Currently there are no regulatory requirements for importing countries to report back to CFIA, regarding the condition of the horses upon arrival in the country of destination. CFIA is not aware of any horses that died due to negligence. CFIA is aware that some horses have died during transport. This was thoroughly examined by local inspection staff and the Air Transport Working Group to improve the protocols and reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence.

CFIA staff work diligently to enforce the Health of Animals Act and regulations, as mandated, to ensure that all animals, including horses, are properly certified, fit to travel and transported humanely in a way that does not cause injury or undue suffering. CFIA will continue to monitor all future shipments of horses through pre-embarkation inspections and feedback from the transport companies after arrival in Japan. Any injury or death reported to CFIA will continue to be investigated by local inspection staff and the Air Transport Working Group. If it is determined that the injury or death occurred due to negligence, appropriate corrective action will be taken and protocols will be improved to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence.

Once again, thank you for raising your concerns and giving us the opportunity to assure you that animal welfare is a priority in the CFIA and to describe our actions to reinforce this position.

Sincerely,

Paul K. Littlewood
Regional Director - Chief Inspector, Alberta South Region, Western Area Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency / Government of Canada
Paul.Littlewood@inspection.gc.ca / Tel: 587-230-2490

The CHDC was astonished at one part of Mr. Littlewood's response where he said: *"Allowing the horses to travel together is often desirable and meets the intent of these other sections. This commonly occurs with draught horses which already know each other and would therefore experience less stress during transport if able to interact socially. Since these horses are social animals that prefer to travel with other horses, CFIA staff routinely assess the stature (height and size) and demeanour of animals intended to be transported together to determine if they are compatible. The CFIA verifies that animals which are incompatible by nature, regardless of their height, are segregated."*

We have seen many videos of horses being loaded onto the trailers at the feedlots and have not noticed concerned staff of any sort ensuring that horses who "like" each other are kept together.

Incidentally, Mr. Littlewood's wording regarding the loading of "friendly" horses in his letter mirrors the wording that Dr. Alexander had used. Virtually to the letter.

Sadly, there is more to this story. The problems begin long before the journey to Japan is taken. Thousands of these horses are warehoused in primitive conditions on feedlots in Alberta prior to transport to the CFIA quarantine lot.

Please go [here](#) to view a video on the conditions on these feedlots. This [video](#) shows the journey from the Summerview quarantine feedlot to Calgary airport which, we understand, is no longer in use. The draft horses are now being loaded from a feedlot close to the Prime Feedlot which is near Granum Alberta.

Once loaded into the crates the horses are driven to the ramp area at Calgary Airport. The usual carrier is Atlas Air Cargo of Purchase NY. Various other cargo companies have had these contracts over the years.

This never before seen [video](#) shows conditions that the horses might endure before being loaded on the planes. The CHDC sent this video along with a [letter to the Calgary Airport Authority](#). We received a [reply](#) from the Airport Authority telling us to that this was a CFIA matter.

Equine care is further compromised as soon as the horses are in the crates and are taken to the tarmac to be loaded onto the aircraft for transport. From the time they are removed from the quarantine station, travel to the Calgary airport, are loaded in crates, endure inevitable flight delays and eventually arrive in Japan, the horses' transit time can easily exceed the CFIA allowed legal 36 hour limit.

Dr. Alexander claims that these horses spend less than 24 hours in transport. This estimation is simply not logical, given the fact that a 16-18 hour flight time is not the only detail to be taken into consideration. Needless to say, these horses are not fed or watered or rested during this entire period of time.

Protests Held Again Inhumane Export

As negative publicity builds against live export, two protests were held by horse advocates and CHDC supporters: groups from Lethbridge and Calgary held a peaceful protest on November 23, 2013 on the lawn of the Edward H. LaBorde Viewing area at Calgary Airport.



On April 16, 2015 there was a another protest held at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Calgary Airport Authority (YYC) There was good coverage from media including the [Calgary Herald](#) as well as the [CTV](#).



Horses Perished

In addition, the CHDC became aware that several horses had perished while enroute to Japan. CHDC lawyer, Nicholas Weigelt, wrote to the CFIA's Dr. Ian Alexander who did not answer Nic Weigelt's question directly, but provides more hyperbole and subterfuge and states that the "*CFIA has an Air Transport Working group that routinely meets to help achieve safe travel for all species by air.*" It is unknown and likely to remain undisclosed as to how often horses perish in these shipments. The CHDC then requested a series of documents covering this period to determine the number of horses who died and what the CFIA response was to these incidents. These [two articles](#) reveal the [horse deaths](#).

Access-To-Information Requests Reveal Illegal Nature of Shipments

In response to our Access of Information requests, we received pages and pages of reports and e-mails dealing with equine transport issues that CHDC brought to the attention of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in 2012. The responses reveal that three horses died as a result of a landing accident and six horses perished in flight on August 1, 2012, "*due to a combination of a substantial delay, the large size of the horses, and significant stress levels in the animals*". Further, "[*horses usually go down during take-off and landing*](#)" (incidence of this is allegedly dependent on the individual pilot); one horse died on a trip from Calgary and was [upside down](#) in his crate.

How did the CFIA deal with the truth of the [six in-flight equine deaths](#)? We've discovered conflicting information, either representative of blatant fabrication or such hopeless disorganization that one has to seriously question the agency's ability to communicate effectively and to make sound decisions. We're not sure which possibility is worse, lying or ineptitude?

Here we'll let the reader examine the evidence and decide upon the meaning of what we've uncovered. Please click on the following links: Six equine fatalities and [ATI letter](#) and letter from [Paul Littlewood](#), former Regional Director-Chief Inspector, Alberta South Region, Western Area Operations, Canadian Food Inspection Agency to a CHDC supporter.

On one hand, we are told that the six equine fatalities occurred due to a combination of three factors, including the large size of the horses. On the other hand, the public is fed this line: "*The CFIA is not aware of any injury or undue suffering due to lack of segregation of horses over 14 hands in height.*" Note the dates. The fatalities occurred on August 1, 2012, and the deviation from the truth found its roots over three months later.

Should it be any surprise that the flimsy wooden crates currently used for equine transport purposes have been known to break? We suspected that this might be the case, and now we know it to be true. The CFIA admits that rearing horses have broken overhead wooden lattices covered in netting. Incidentally, while it is common knowledge that duct tape is useful for many purposes, apparently one more use was discovered for it in 2012 – to repair broken crates housing large horses for export. At the time, this practice was sanctioned by a [well-meaning CFIA official](#). Similarly, [the use of duct tape to hold crates together](#) is permissible and the carrier (eg: Atlas Air Cargo) can do as they like as long as the problem is fixed.

Upon receiving a tip from an advocate giving us an exact date, the CHDC submitted an ATI giving the CFIA the specific date when a horse had died at the Calgary airport.

On Page 9 of the ATI it is clearly stated that there were FOUR horses in a crate where two horses had gone down in the crate. Sadly, one horse perished. See photo below.



Also of note is that the horses were loaded into the crates at 10:00PM and were still in them at the airport at 06:00AM the following morning. 8 hours with no food or water provided. The last crate was loaded onto the aircraft at 11:50AM. At this point the horses had been in the crates a total of 13 hours. This does not include the time the horses spent at the feedlot loading.

Of course, due to privacy concerns, much of the document is redacted, however, there are poor photographs of the horse who died in the crate. The ATI said that the horse was a Percheron, however, he/she is obviously a Belgian, the horse of choice for this trade with Percherons being second.

Noted on Page 13 that one horse did go down on the flight to Japan but was able to get back up, however, there are no details as to how many were in that particular horse's crate as the fewer horses in a crate, the easier it would be for a horse to regain his/her footing.

Canadian law prohibits equines from being deprived of food and water for longer than 36 hours during the process of transport. Such a lengthy period of time without sustenance is grossly inhumane in itself and, clearly, due to flight delays, the 36-hour regulation can easily be breached. Further unacceptable practices include the horses' exposure to de-icing sprays on the tarmac, as well as engine noise levels that can only be described as deafening, while the animals are confined in their crates awaiting loading. These are the words of a credible eye witness on January 13, 2015, after seeing horses standing in crates, completely exposed: *"....[the horses stood] for about 5 hours in a plume of diesel exhaust from large ground equipment and for several hours as well in plumes of jet fuel exhaust and de-icing glycol chemical overspray."*

DID YOU KNOW



that Canada regularly live ships draft horses, who are known as the “Gentle Giants”, to Japan to be slaughtered for human consumption there?

Canada’s Health of Animals Regulation, Part XII, regulation 141.8 states “Every equine over 14 hands in height (56” at the withers or base of the neck) shall be segregated from all other animals during transport by air.”

Regulation 142 (a) states that “each animal is able to stand in its natural position without coming into contact with a deck or roof”.

These large horses are well over the defined height yet can be jammed loose 3 or more in small crates for the very long journey to Japan which can be well over the allowable 36 hours..

The Canadian Health of Animals regulations are judicial laws, not subject to interpretation or whimsy.

For more information:

www.defendhorsescanada.org

on YouTube www.youtube.com/user/defendhorsescanada



ATI findings confirm what we already knew – that stress levels can be very high when horses are in close confinement and subject to the rigors (and terrors) of air travel.

The live horse export business is not only cruel; as currently conducted for the purpose of export for slaughter, it is illegal.

Canada stands in breach of two sections of our own Health of Animals Regulations, as depicted in recent undercover footage, video below, showing a taller horse unable to stand in his/her natural position and thus illustrating a violation of Section 142 of the *Health of Animals Regulations* (“No person shall transport or cause to be transported animals in a railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel unless each animal is able to stand in its natural position without coming into contact with a deck or roof”).

Horses are typically crated together (with three or four horses in a crate), even though this violates Section 141.8 of the *Health of Animals Regulations*, which prohibits horses over 14 hands from travelling without being partitioned from each other. An [ATI document](#) makes reference to the fact that loading a fourth horse into a crate is upsetting to the other horses.



On examining a [CFIA document dated 2012-12-10](#) we discover how laws can so fluidly be swept under the carpet and twisted according to the whims of agency officials. First, formwork detailing a shipment of horses is revealed, with this note at the bottom under “Description of non-compliance” – *“Every equine over 14 hands in height shall be segregated from all other animals during transport by air”*. This is followed by commentary regarding an exception for draught horses, because of their calm nature! (Interestingly enough, an internal [e-mail](#) within the agency refers to the horses as “not very tame, and some even border on wild.” It appears that the story changes depending on the CFIA official supplying the commentary. Wild or calm – which is it?)

Further, on [2012-11-16](#), clearly without regard to separate subsections concerning equine, an unidentified official has provided an addendum to Section 141.4 of the *Health of Animals Regulations*. He/she takes the liberty of adding (to a subsection not including equine), “If horses appear incompatible by nature at loading or at any further time (observed by vets or inspectors)... [they] shall be segregated during transport.”

This is a clear deviation from the wording of existing legislation. It appears to be an attempt to legitimize the act of cramming numerous horses into crates, and serves to open the floodgates for further violations.

Additional scrutiny of the ATI documents reveals the following:

- A March 13, 2012 memorandum within the agency states: *“Although they are not legal requirements, the Transportation Code, the Horse Code and the IATA Live Animals Regulations help to interpret some of the outcome-based provisions of the [Health of Animals Regulations](#).”* Even with this clear admission of the power wielded by existing legislation, attempts to twist those laws are evident. The term “outcome-based” appears to trivialize the Regulations, indicating that agency interpretation of the outcome is what counts.
- [This statement](#) shows that someone was actually considering the welfare of horses: *“Loading four 1730-pound horses in a 66.5 square foot crate does not meet the OIE and IATA international standards or Canada’s agreed national standards. Unless it can be shown through research that these horses are not exposed to suffering during transport, it would appear that this is overcrowding and not compliant with the Health of Animals Regulations.”* It is noteworthy that an official within the CFIA attempted to bring camera surveillance into aircraft conveying live horses. This was refused due to safety concerns involving the use of lithium batteries in the cameras (purportedly a fire hazard). Note these statements toward the end of the document, however: *“I do not feel that _____ will be helpful...[Siding with exporters is what I thought](#).”* Further, a [request to conduct a study regarding equine welfare associated with air transport](#) was turned down. Why have these legitimate efforts to measure the suffering of horses aboard aircraft been shunned? Was the CFIA official’s assumption correct, that it is the exporters who are actually calling the shots?
- Instead of adhering to legislation, the government then proceeds to weave its tangled web. The [following commentary](#) attempts to grant other codes of practice more clout than the law: *“In regards to the export of Horses to Japan the Canadian Food Inspection Agency follows the guidelines contained within the CFIA Transportation of Animals Manual of Procedures. We use the loading density charts contained within the manual to determine the maximum allowable weight of the horse given the square footage provided during transport. These same charts are contained within the Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals.”* Why not start by following the law first then draw from these other resources?
- In 2012, [exporters were to be advised](#) that effective Dec 1, 2012 crates would not be loaded with more than 3 horses. In an e-mail dated Aug 6, 2013 [an attempt was made](#) to qualify the drafts for the same exemption as the Icelandics, and the three horse rule was reiterated in the reply. Yet they continue to ship 4 horses to a crate—as long as they are friends.
- [This statement](#) from a CFIA document may well sum up the situation: *“With respect to the segregation of horses transported by air, professional judgement and previous experience indicate that some horses travel safely and comfortably without segregation.”* Again, what has happened to legislation?
- Here’s one answer. This could be why great pains have been taken to re-word legislation without the actual use of legal means to achieve that end: *“2012-10-26 12:52 PM Air Transport of Horses – [Overview of our call today](#) – Segregation: Raised by CHDC – Regs. require that horses over 14 hands must be segregated during air transport from all other animals. Don’t know why this was put in place but it is a reg. When Western Area came to us a few years ago, said don’t have enough resources to enforce therefore WAY down on the priority list, therefore no point in spending time and resources enforcing that. In the meantime, our Reg. Amendment would remove that provision.”*



After reviewing the ATI documentation, the CHDC sent a follow-up letter to Dr. Bruce Archibald (with copies to Hon. Edward Fast, Minister of International Trade; Hon. Peter Gordon MacKay, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):

“Dear Dr. Archibald:

Further to the June 25, 2015 letter from our organization (addressed to Hon. Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade, and copied to yourself), I would like to request from you a response to our concerns about the live export of horses to Japan for slaughter.

Details can be found [here](#).

In short, we have reviewed e-mails and reports obtained through Access to Information and are shocked by the fact that the CFIA continues to violate the Health of Animals Regulations, permitting horses to be shipped illegally out of Calgary and Winnipeg airports and white-washing serious incidents that have occurred. Regarding the segregation law, an internal CFIA [e-mail](#) mentions, “...don’t have enough resources to enforce therefore WAY down on the priority list, therefore no point in spending time and resources enforcing that.”

This is completely unacceptable. It is unconscionable that the CFIA should permit live animals to be shipped under such haphazard stewardship and propensity to violate existing protective legislation. Must government be reminded of its responsibility to adhere to laws and that changing the wording of legislation requires a process, i.e. amending acts must be created?

As you know, Canada also must respect [IATA regulations](#). But those regulations permit the shipping of Icelandic and polo ponies together in crates, not large draft horses well over 14 hands high, who must be transported singly if all regulations are to be properly met.

Furthermore, given the catastrophic nature of six large horses dying during a flight, [three horses perishing](#) during a landing accident and, on a separate occasion, a dead horse being [found upside down](#) in his crate, human safety begs consideration when horses are flown overseas for the sake of profit.”



CHDC Issues Press Release Regarding Violations with Live Horse Shipments to Japan

Ongoing Regulation Violations and CFIA Whitewash Confirmed by Access to Information Documents on Air Transport of Horses for Slaughter

“ORANGEVILLE, ON, June 25, 2015 /CNW/ – The Canadian Horse Defence Coalition (CHDC) has discovered gruelling evidence of multiple horse deaths connected to air transport to Japan, and attempts by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to cover up the truth.

Access to Information (ATI) documents reveal that three horses died as a result of a landing accident and six horses perished in flight on August 1, 2012, “due to a combination of a substantial delay, the large size of the horses, and significant stress levels in the animals”. However, a placating form letter dated November 2012, and later sent to inquiring members of the public, indicates that “the CFIA is not aware of any injury or undue suffering due to lack of segregation of horses over 14 hands in height.”

Further ATI findings include: “...horses usually go down during take off and landing”, and one horse evidently died on a trip from Calgary and was found [upside down](#) in his crate. Of ongoing concern has been breakage of the wooden crates, especially with stressed horses rearing up and falling against the crates’ wood strips covered in netting. Past instructions from the CFIA to exporters have included repairing the broken shipping containers with duct tape.

The CHDC also notes that, in spite of lengthy debate within the agency concerning overloading the crates with four heavy horses, the practice is still continuing. In fact, The Health of Animals Regulations stipulate that horses over 14 hands high (56" high at the base of the neck) must be segregated for air transport, and they must be able to stand in a natural position, without coming into contact with a deck or roof. Both laws are being broken on an ongoing basis, with the CFIA fully aware of this and, on horse shipment formwork, noting the segregation regulation under “Description of Non-Compliance”. Further, for their own purposes, the agency has added wording to the Health of Animals Regulations that has not gone through official legal channels.

Attempts have been made by at least one agency official to install cameras in aircraft and to initiate a study regarding equine welfare associated with air transport. Both proposals were turned down. ATI findings indicate that the reason could have been “siding with exporters”.

CHDC Executive Director, Sinikka Crosland, states: “In 2014, over 7,000 large draft horses shipped from Canada to Japan under these circumstances. It is clear that international trade and profit take precedence over animal welfare, possibly even human safety, and that the CFIA is turning a blind eye, circumventing laws and misleading the public. We have strong evidence of the agency failing to follow its own regulations concerning the live transport of horses for meat, and even lying to the public to cover deviations from the law.”

The CHDC calls upon the Minister of International Trade, Hon. Edward Fast, and Bruce Archibald, President of the CFIA, to demand that the practice of sending horses overseas by air cargo for slaughter be stopped on humane and legal grounds.”

ATI documents and video evidence can be found at this [link](#):

CHDC Launches [“Ambassador” Petition to Atlas Air](#)

The petition is directed to Staff Vice President Richard Broekman, Peter Beckett, Senior Director of Charter Sales and Marketing, and Jordan Frohlinger, Senior Manager Commercial Development, Sales and Marketing.

“Every year, approximately 7000 horses are transported by air from Calgary and Winnipeg (Canada) to Japan. These shipments are often conducted weekly, with up to three to four large horses crammed together in wooden crates with little room to move around, let alone lie down to rest. No food or water is provided during the gruelling journey to another continent. Canadian legislation permits horses to be transported without food and water for up to 36 hours. Sometimes, due to flight delays, the 36-hour period is breached. During one year alone, six horses died during transport, three perished as a result of a landing accident, and one horse was found upside down and dead in his crate.”

In 2016 the CHDC were provided with a list of [consignors who were](#), and, still are, live shipping horses to Japan.

Those who we know are still in business are [Schorno Agri-Business](#), [Willjill Farms](#), [Flewelling](#), and [Carolyle Farms](#).

CAROLYLE FARMS

For quality quarter horses and sport horses. 20 years experience producing horses for trail, show, barrel racing, reining, western pleasure, dressage and hunter/jumper. Swan River, MB 204-525-2263.

There are a number of suppliers to these consignors.



Photo taken January 4, 2021 – Flewelling feedlot, Lacombe AB

2021 Update

Since this essay was first written the CHDC and many advocates continued plugging along to raise awareness of this terrible trade.

An appeal was launched to counter the loss of our lawsuit against the CFIA. You can read about that [here](#).

Then, in the Fall of 2020, a saint arrived to help us to expose this trade to a huge audience and shed a much-needed spotlight on this.

World-renowned musical artist and actor, [Jann Arden](#), joined the CHDC as our Patron. Jann has spread the word to thousands of her followers with her #horseshit campaign as well as setting up a web site www.horseshit.ca where supporters can purchase various items to support our efforts for the horses.

The same old faces are still pushing this trade, Schorno, Flewelling etc. but public support will help to end this.

Whether the actions of the CFIA, other levels of government and legislative groups are the result of ineptitude, or a determined effort to fabricate, ignore laws and cater to industry, the horses are the victims of their misguided closed-door decisions.

It is time to take the CFIA to task. It is time to end the cruel and illegal live horse export industry!