

June 26, 2024

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
c/o Debbie Beresford-Green – Vice President, Operations
1400 Merivale Road, Tower
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y9

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
% Trevor Janzen – Director of Operations, Southern Alberta Operations
1115 57th Avenue North East
Calgary, Alberta T2E 9B2

Via email

Dear Ms. Beresford-Green and Mr. Janzen,

Re: Violations of Health of Animals Regulations During Export of Horses from Canada to Japan for Slaughter

I am writing to request that you investigate and take enforcement action following the transport of live horses on May 6 and 20, as well as June 10 and 17, 2024, in a manner that appears to contravene the Health of Animals Regulations. These Regulations prohibit the transport of horses without food, water, and rest for over 28 hours. While these four shipments of horses landed in Japan within the 28 hours of loading at the feedlots from which they were transported in Alberta, evidence from individuals who observed and documented their unloading and transport in Japan shows that for each shipment it took between 4.33 and 6.5 hours after landing before all horses were at the quarantine facility where they could eat, drink, and rest. As a result, it appears that all four shipments may have gone over the 28 hour limit.

Furthermore, based on these revelations that horses landing at Kitakyushu and Kansai airports are not given food, water, and an opportunity to rest for between 4.33 and 6.5 hours after landing, it appears that a significant percentage of shipments from Edmonton to these airports exceed the 28 hour legal limit and all shipments from Winnipeg violate the limit. As a result, we are requesting that all horse export for slaughter be immediately halted until the CFIA is assured that all shipments will comply with the Regulations.

The shipments

All details regarding the shipments observed are set out in the enclosed report. Our findings are also summarized below.

Shipment 1 - May 6, 2024

On May 5, 2024 approximately 96 horses were loaded onto trucks and sent to the Edmonton International Airport for export on Korean Air Cargo flight number 9214 to Kitakyushu. Records obtained by an Access to Information request show that the horses, most aged approximately two years, were loaded at the feedlot beginning at approximately 4:30 pm MT. The horses' ability to eat, drink, and rest ended at some point before that time.

After arriving at the airport at approximately 8:34 pm MT, the horses were unloaded from the trucks and loaded approximately three per wooden crate. They eventually left Edmonton at approximately 3:48 am MT. As is usual practice, the flight had a layover in Alaska before crossing the ocean to Japan, where the plane landed at approximately 7:24 am local time on May 7 (4:24 pm MT on May 6). At this time, the horses had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 23 hours and 55 minutes.

Our contacts in Japan – individuals with the group Life Investigation Agency – documented the plane's landing and the unloading of horses from the aircraft. By 9:11 am in Japan, the horses had been removed from the plane. Many of the horses were still at the airport nearly four hours after landing, still without access to food and water, and with no ability to rest.

The Shin-Moji quarantine facility is an approximately 30-minute drive from the Kitakyushu airport. As documented by the eye witnesses, the last horses did not arrive at the quarantine facility until 11:45 am JST. It is unknown how long unloading took once the trucks were inside the facility but at a minimum, this evidence suggests that this shipment took at least 28.25 hours.

Shipment 2 - May 20, 2024

On May 19, 2024, horses were shipped from an unknown feedlot in Alberta to the Edmonton International Airport, where they were flown to Kansai International Airport on KAL 9214. An eyewitness documented the horses arriving at the airport at approximately 9:35 pm MT. Based on records related to past shipments, it is likely that loading at the feedlot likely began between approximately 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm MT. The flight left Edmonton at 5:54 am MT and landed in Anchorage at 6:53 am AKDT. After an hour and 20 minute layover, the plane left for Kansai, where it landed at 9:05 am JST on May 21, 2024 (6:05 pm MT).

The Kobe Karumo quarantine facility near Kansai airport is an approximately one hour drive. Horses did not begin arriving at the quarantine facility until 12:13 pm JST – more than three hours after landing. The eyewitness observed and documented the final truckload of horses arriving at the facility at 2:23 pm JST on May 21 (11:23 pm MT) –

five hours and 20 minutes after landing. This shipment appears to have taken a total duration of 28-30 hours.¹

Shipment 3 – June 10, 2024

On June 9, 2024 horses were shipped from a feedlot in Alberta to the Edmonton International Airport, where they were flown to Kansai International Airport on KAL 8214. The flight left at approximately 4:50 am MT on June 10 for Kansai (with a stopover in Alaska), landing in Japan at approximately 8:13 am JST on June 11 (5:13 pm MT). Based on previous flights, the final feed and water for the horses likely took place between 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm MT on June 9, 2024.

It was not until 1:09 pm JST (10:09 pm MT) that all horses appeared to have arrived at the quarantine facility an hour's drive from the airport. This means that after landing in Japan the animals were in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately an additional four hours and 56 minutes. The shipment appears to have taken a total duration of between 25.5-29.5 hours.

Shipment 4 – June 17, 2024

On June 16, 2024, horses were shipped from a feedlot in Alberta to the Edmonton International Airport, where they were flown to Kansai International Airport on KAL 8214. Eyewitnesses observed and documented the horses arriving at the airport at approximately 10:16 pm MT. The flight departed at 6:06 am MT, landing at Kansai Airport at approximately 9:53 am (after a two hour and 20 minute stopover in Anchorage). Based on past shipments arriving at the airport at or around 10 pm, the horses' last feed and water likely took place between approximately 5:45 pm - 8:15 pm MT.

This time, the final truckload of horses was observed entering the quarantine facility at 4:38 pm JST on June 28 (1:38 am MT). From the time the plane landed in Japan, the horses were in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately an additional six hours and 38 minutes. The shipment appears to have taken a total duration of approximately 29.38-31.88 hours.

The Health of Animals Act and Regulations

¹ Note that we are awaiting records requested under the access to information regime for the final three shipments that Animal Justice and Life Investigation Agency tracked. Once we have those records we will confirm the final duration for the final three flights and share this information with you. Because the CFIA already has these records we request that you begin your investigation into these shipments forthwith.

Travel is an especially difficult and stressful process for these draft horses²—animals who are not trained or conditioned for transportation, and whose biology makes them ill-suited for transportation, causing them to be prone to dehydration, injury, and fatigue. Forcing them to endure a journey of over 28 hours without food, water, and rest would have almost certainly contributed to additional and unnecessary suffering. In its Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines, the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) itself notes that transport can predispose horses to colic and respiratory diseases due to stress caused by changes in surroundings, physical constraint, and deprivation of feed and water.

In addition to violating s 152.2(1)(c) of the Regulations, we ask you to investigate handling practices to which these horses are subject in Japan. On all three occasions when horses were shipped to Kansai Airport, the eyewitness observer saw and documented them being sprayed directly with what appeared to be disinfectant. The disinfectant was sprayed on the trucks, which were open on the sides, as they entered the quarantine facility, causing horses to be sprayed all over their bodies and leaving them to inhale the harsh chemicals. The eyewitness was documenting the shipments from several metres away and the wafting disinfectant was strong enough to cause him to experience pain and burning of his eyes and throat.

Spraying horses with disinfectant appears to be illegal in Canada pursuant to s 146.1 of the Health of Animals Regulations, which prohibits transporting an animal if they are likely to suffer, sustain an injury, or die by being exposed to anything toxic or noxious. Animals are at risk to the same physical and chemical hazards as humans when exposed to disinfectants.³ This includes, but is not limited to, irritation to the eyes, skin, mucous membranes, or respiratory tract; chemical burns from corrosive chemicals; respiratory distress; and allergic reactions. As such, disinfectants should not be applied directly to animals unless labeled for such use. In fact, most disinfectants should not be used at all when animals are present, and all disinfectants are toxic if ingested. They should be rinsed away before animals are introduced to the area. These problems were compounded by the fact that the horses, who had been without water for approximately 28 or more hours, were observed desperately licking the liquid disinfectant off the netting on the trucks.

Evidence

The information above is summarized in the video evidence released by Animal Justice and Life Investigation Agency today.⁴ We would be pleased to provide you with original

² See, e.g. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2020.00202/full>; <https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/full/10.4141/cjas-2015-031>; <https://thehorse.com/1106496/expert-transport-is-an-equine-welfare-issue/>.

³ Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine, “Disinfection 101: Key Principles of Cleaning and Disinfection for Animal Settings”, (2023) online (PDF):

<https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Disinfection/Assets/Disinfection101.pdf> at 36-39.

⁴ <https://animaljustice.ca/exposes/flying-above-the-law-inside-canadian-horses-long-journey-to-japan>

video evidence and screen shots confirming the observations summarized above and/or to provide an affidavit from the eye witness in Japan who observed and documented the shipments following their arrival in Japan. Please let us know which form of evidence would be most useful for your purposes as you investigate these apparent legal violations.

Control action needed to prevent continuing violations

In addition to investigating and taking enforcement action in relation to the above-noted four shipments documented by Animal Justice and Life Investigation Agency, we request that the CFIA take control actions to halt all exports of horses from Canada for slaughter until exporters can prove to the CFIA that the shipments will reliably meet the 28 hour legal limit for transporting horses without food, water, and rest.

Taking the durations documented by Life Investigation Agency, and adding them to known transport times set out in government records for shipments over the past 7 months from Canada to Kitakyushu and Kansai airports, it appears that 100% of flights from Winnipeg went over the 28 hour legal limit, as did 60% of flights from Edmonton. This data is set out below.

Shipments Departing from Winnipeg

Departure Date	CFIA Official Duration (hours)	Arrival Airport in Japan	Estimated Time from Airport to Quarantine (hours)	Estimated Actual Trip Duration (hours)
November 27, 2023	26.00	Kitakyushu	4.35	30.35
January 22, 2024	29.68	Kansai	4.93-6.5	34.61-36.18
February 19, 2024	26.75	Kansai	4.93-6.5	31.68-33.25
March 11, 2024	25.87	Kitakyushu	4.35	30.22

Shipments Departing from Edmonton

Departure Date	CFIA Official Duration (hours)	Arrival at Airport in Japan	Estimated Time from Airport to Quarantine (hours)	Estimated Actual Trip Duration (hours)
November 20, 2023	21.37	Kansai	4.93-6.5	26.30-27.87
December 4, 2023	24.80	Kansai	4.93-6.5	29.73-31.3
December 11, 2023	25.42	Kitakyushu	4.35	29.77
January 10, 2024	20.87	Kansai	4.93-6.5	25.80-27.37
January 16, 2024	23.68	Kitakyushu	4.35	28.03

January 30, 2024	21.63	Kitakyushu	4.35	25.98
February 5, 2024	25.30	Kansai	4.93-6.5	30.23-31.8
February 12, 2024	22.93	Kitakyushu	4.35	27.28
February 26, 2024	27.05	Kitakyushu	4.35	31.40
March 18, 2024	24.68	Kitakyushu	4.35	29.03

Pursuant to the CFIA’s “Standard Regulatory Response Process”,⁵ the level of harm at issue is at the high end of the spectrum—all flights from Winnipeg and most from Edmonton appear to be exceeding the legal limit, meaning that left unaddressed legal violations are very likely to continue. The consequences for horses are severe—they are at significant risk of suffering in the form of extreme thirst, hunger, and fatigue; illness; injury; and fear and distress when shipped in excess of 28 hours.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this serious matter.

Yours truly,



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⁵ Available online: <https://inspection.canada.ca/en/inspection-and-enforcement/guidance-food-inspection-activities/regulatory-response/standard-regulatory-response-process#a5>