



**ANIMAL
JUSTICE**

Flight to Fatality:

Exposing Deaths & Injuries in
Horses Exported for Slaughter

Prepared by Animal Justice
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Introduction

Thousands of large, gentle draft horses are exported from Canada to Japan each year where the animals are fattened, slaughtered, and eaten as a raw delicacy. While the number shipped each year has varied since the practice began approximately 20 years ago, government data shows that 2,513 horses were exported for slaughter in 2023, while in 2022, the number was 2,579.¹

Shocking new data from the government of Japan, obtained by Japanese animal protection group Life Investigation Agency (LIA) and shared with Animal Justice, shows that horses exported from Canada to Japan for slaughter are frequently injured and even killed due to the perilous nature of the journey. According to the data summarized below, at least 21 horses shipped from Canada to Japan for slaughter between June 2023 and May 2024 alone died during transport or in the hours and days following. Many more suffered painful injuries and health complications (e.g., fever, prolonged diarrhea) which appear to have been caused by the transport process.

After arriving in Japan, horses exported for slaughter are dying of dehydration, stress, pneumonia, and other medical conditions. Japanese government data even shows that some mares have died shortly after arrival due to miscarriage. The data also shows a troubling pattern of inadequate veterinary care and monitoring during transport and after the horses' arrival in Japan.

¹ See: <https://canadianhorsedefencecoalition.org/stats/>

Airport	Departure Date	Estimated Duration of Travel	Deaths	Cause of Death	Injuries & Illness	Type of Injury or Illness
YEG	2023/07/31	29.60 hrs	2	1x Dehydration 1x Heat Stroke	1	1x Fever & conjunctivitis 4x Fever
YEG	2023/8/21	28.00 hrs	1	1x Heat Stroke	3	3x Salmonella
YEG	2023/8/28	27.92 hrs	0		1	1x External wounds
YEG	2023/9/25	26.87 hrs	0		1	1x Fall
YEG	2023/10/2	30.00 hrs	0			
YEG	2023/10/16	28.35 hrs	1	1x Salmonella	1	1x Fever & diarrhea
YEG	2023/10/30	26.47 hrs	0		1	1x Fall
YEG	2023/11/20	26.30 hrs	0			
YEG	2023/12/04	29.73 hrs	1	1x Stress		
YEG	2023/12/11	29.77 hrs	2	1x Dehydration 1x Pneumonia	2	1x Fall 1x Diarrhea
YEG	2024/01/08	unknown	3	3x Physical compression	1	1x Fall
YEG	2024/01/10	25.80 hrs	0		2	1x Swollen limbs 1x Swollen eye
YEG	2024/01/16	28.03 hrs	3	1x Multifunctional failure after fall 2x Miscarriage	3	>3x Fall
YEG	2024/01/30	25.98 hrs	0			
YEG	2024/02/05	30.23 hrs	0		2	2x Difficulty standing
YEG	2024/02/12	27.28 hrs	2	1x Suffocation 1x Pleuropneumonia	2	1x Swollen limb 1x Salmonella
YEG	2024/02/26	31.40 hrs	0		4	1x Lameness 3x Salmonella
YEG	2024/03/04	unknown	0		2	1x Eye injury 1x Injured foot
YEG	2024/03/18	29.03 hrs	2	1x Phlegmone 1x Bleeding colitis		
YEG	2024/03/25	unknown	0			
YEG	2024/04/15	27.77 hrs	2	1x Pneumonia 1x Respiratory failure & Colitis	2	1x Lymph node swelling 1x Fever & Lameness
YEG	2024/05/06	28.25 hrs	0		4	2x Fall 1x Fever/lameness 1x Fever/swelling
YEG	2024/05/13	28.80 hrs	1	1x Intestinal obstruction	9	5x Diarrhea 4x Fever (& pain)
YEG	2024/05/20	27.38 hrs	0			
YEG	2024/06/10	unknown	0			
YEG	2024/06/17	unknown	0			
YWG	2023/6/26	30.65hrs	0		2	2x Swollen limb
YWG	2023/11/27	30.35 hrs	0		4	1x Fall 1x Diarrhea 2x Nasal discharge
YWG	2024/01/22	34.61 hrs	1	1x Stress	2	>2x Diarrhea
YWG	2024/02/20	31.68 hrs	0		1	1x Leg injury
YWG	2024/03/11	30.22 hrs	0			
		Avg: 28.86 hrs	Total: 21		Total: 50+	
		65.4% exceeded legal limit	Avg: 0.61		Avg: 2.45	

In many instances, the new data directly contradicts Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) records, suggesting that serious problems are not being reported to the Agency. Canadian records indicate that the Agency is aware of no horse deaths related to air shipments to Japan since 2015.² During the study of Bill C-355, the *Prohibition of the Export of Horses by Air for Slaughter Act*, CFIA representatives testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee that the Agency is not aware of any other instances of significant injuries in horses exported for slaughter since 2015, and emphasized that exporters are required to report mortalities and significant injuries.³

To understand the implications of the new data from Japan, Animal Justice shared it with two equine veterinarians. These experts agreed that the data shows that an unacceptable and alarming number of these horses appear to be suffering injury, illness, and death due to feed and water deprivation, crowding, and the long duration of shipping without rest breaks.

Though this report focuses on Japanese records showing horse deaths, injuries, and illness, it is important to note that even horses who survive the journey without apparent physical complications will often suffer significant fear, exhaustion, and stress due to lengthy transport under loud, unfamiliar, and dangerous conditions without food, water, and rest. All horses exported from Canada for slaughter overseas are at risk of significant psychological distress.

Animal Welfare Risks from Live Horse Export for Slaughter

For years, veterinary and animal welfare experts have been raising concerns about physical and psychological animal welfare risks associated with (a) the length of time that horses exported for slaughter are in transport without food, water, and

² See e.g.

<https://inspection.canada.ca/en/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/humane-transport/horses/exports-horse-japan>

³ See February 29, 2024 testimony of Dr. Mary Jane Ireland before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/AGRI/meeting-94/evidence> (p4)

rest, and (b) the conditions in which they are transported.⁴ In contrast to horses exported for sport, breeding, or other purposes, horses exported for slaughter are crammed together in wooden crates, are not trained or habituated for travel, and are shipped in loads that generally contain 99 or more animals, leaving them in crowded conditions with little to no oversight and care during the long journey overseas.

Under the federal *Health of Animals Regulations*,⁵ it is unlawful to transport horses without food, water, or rest for longer than 28 hours—which is already considered too lengthy by many animal welfare experts. A June 2024 investigation conducted by Animal Justice and Life Investigation Agency showed that most shipments from Canada to Kansai and Kitakyushu airports in Japan appear to exceed this maximum time limit, unlawfully putting horses at even greater risk of distress, extreme hunger and thirst, injury, and illness.⁶

Scientific evidence suggests that horses exported from Canada for slaughter overseas are at risk of:

- Hunger and distress, given that horses naturally graze for eight or more hours per day.
- Dehydration, which can occur on long haul flights after just 10-15 hours.⁷ Horses transported for over 24 hours are likely to be markedly to very severely dehydrated.
- Extreme fatigue, which horses demonstrate after 28 hours of transport.⁸ For horses exported overseas, this risk is compounded by the small wooden crates in which they are transported, which prevent them from moving freely and make it difficult for horses to take steps to adequately compensate for changes in inertia forces to maintain balance.⁹
- Extreme stress, leading to a suppressed immune system. This can cause a range of illnesses, including pleuropneumonia or “shipping fever”. In fact, recent scientific

⁴ See, e.g. February 21 2024 brief submitted to the AGRI Standing Committee by 34 veterinarians and animal welfare experts: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/AGRI/Brief/BR12933246/br-external/Jointly1-e.pdf>

⁵ Health of Animals Regulations, CRC, c 296, s 152.2 (1991).

⁶ A link to Animal Justice’s report (“Flying Above the Law: Inside Canadian Horses’ Long Journey to Japan”) and video summarizing the findings of this investigation are available online: <https://animaljustice.ca/exposes/flying-above-the-law-inside-canadian-horses-long-journey-to-japan>

⁷ M. Stewart et al, “The effects of air transport on the behaviour and heart rate of horses”, *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 80(2), Feb (2003) at pages 143-6.

⁸ See, e.g. T.H. Friend, “A review of recent research on the transportation of horses”, *Journal of Animal Science* 79:32-40 (2001).

⁹ B. Nivellet et al, “Horse transport to three South American horse slaughterhouses: A descriptive study”, *Animals* 10(4), 602 (2020).

research shows that even short road trips of under three hours can affect horses' endocrine and immune function.¹⁰

- Falling and other injuries caused by confinement in wooden crates with other large, unfamiliar, and frightened horses, as well as loss of balance during turbulence, take-off and landing.
- Difficulty breathing, burning, and irritation caused by chemical disinfectant sprayed directly on the recently disembarked horses. This practice, which would be illegal in Canada, was documented several times at the Kansai airport quarantine facility.¹¹ Horses desperate for water were even shown licking the chemical off of the netting on the trucks.

Evidence shows widespread suffering and distress in horses exported for slaughter

CFIA records only reflect incidents of death and serious injury during transport up until planes land in Japan. They do not reflect injuries observed after horses are removed from the aircraft or deaths that occur after landing. However, even the CFIA's records of death and injury during transport are not fully accurate and fail to account for some horse deaths and injuries that have occurred on the aircraft, as reflected in Government of Japan records. These records are summarized below.

1. June 26, 2023

Shipment details: 99 horses (Winnipeg to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 30.65 hours

Injuries/illness: 2 severe leg injuries

By the time the aircraft landed, the horses had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 26.3 hours. After arriving at Kitakyushu, it would

¹⁰ <https://www.horsetalk.co.nz/2023/10/23/road-trips-horses-endocrine-immune-function/>

¹¹ See: <https://animaljustice.ca/exposes/flying-above-the-law-inside-canadian-horses-long-journey-to-japan>

have taken approximately 4.35 hours before the horses arrived at the Shin-Moji quarantine facility, where they would have had access to food and water and an opportunity to rest.¹² The animals were in transport for approximately 30.65 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

Documents reveal that two horses in this shipment sustained leg injuries during transportation that were so severe that the resulting swelling and lameness required medical intervention. One horse had swelling of all limbs and subsequently went on to have a fever, as well as difficulties with mobility and struggled to stand up on multiple occasions throughout the quarantine period. The other had swelling of the left forelimb, and exhibited a reduced appetite and fever. There are no further notes on the health statuses of these horses.

None of these injuries, which appear to have been caused during transport, are reflected in the CFIA's records.

2. July 31, 2023

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 29.35 hours

Deaths: 1 horse died due to severe dehydration and another died from heat stroke

Injuries/illness: 1 horse refused to enter the transport truck in Japan, and was sweating excessively in the 30 degree heat. Following arrival, numerous horses had a fever and one also had pink eye in both eyes.

By the time the plane landed, the animals had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 25 hours. After arriving at Kitakyushu, it would

¹² Note that calculations for flight duration at Kitakyushu and Kansai airports throughout this report are based on the findings of the above-noted investigation by Animal Justice and Life Investigation Agency. Once the planes land it takes approximately 4.35 hours at Kitakyushu before the horses arrive at quarantine, and at Kansai it takes between 4.93 and 6.63 hours. Prior to the release of this investigation, the CFIA did not account for travel duration after landing, relying instead on exporters' assurances that horses arrived at quarantine within two hours. These assurances appear to have been false. See:

<https://animaljustice.ca/exposes/inside-canadian-horses-journey-to-japan#:~:text=Flying%20Above%20the%20Law%3A%20Inside%20Canadian%20Horses'%20Long%20Journey%20to%20Japan,-By%20Animal%20Justice&text=Cana%20ships%20thousands%20of%20live,a%20delicacy%20for%20the%20wealthy.>

have taken approximately 4.35 hours before the horses arrived at the quarantine facility, where they would have had access to food and water and an opportunity to rest. The animals were in transport for approximately 29.35 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

During the offloading process in Japan, one horse refused to load into the quarantine transport vehicle, which delayed the unloading process. The temperature in Kitakyushu that day exceeded 30 degrees celsius, which is extremely hot for large draft horses. After an unspecified amount of time, the horse began sweating excessively. After being without water for 29+ hours during transportation, combined with physical exertion while in the heat, water was applied to his body to cool him down. There are no further notes on the health status of this horse.

On August 3, 2023 records show that one horse received bloodwork, and had a packed cell volume (PCV) reading of 66%. A PCV test identifies the volume of red blood cells that an individual has. For horses, a number below 30% is often an indicator of anemia or blood loss, and a reading of 50% or above often indicates severe dehydration. Individual water was then provided to the severely dehydrated horse. Over the next 14 hours, she developed heavy, laboured breathing and died. There are no notes showing that any medical treatments or intervention occurred for this animal. Without medical treatment and pain relief, she would have experienced severe, prolonged, and unnecessary suffering prior to death.

On August 10, 2023, with temperatures in Kitakyushu still above 30 degrees celsius, a horse died due to heat stroke after experiencing a fever for several days. Approximately four other horses also had a fever for several days, though there is no further detail about their condition in the records.

Another horse had a fever and displayed signs of bilateral conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye, which can involve redness of the eye, swelling, and/or discharge. Conjunctivitis in horses can occur due to viral or bacterial infections, or due to exposure to environmental irritants.

3. August 21, 2023

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 28.27hrs

Deaths: 1 horse died due to heat stroke

Injuries/illness: 3 horses with diarrhea and fever tested positive for salmonella

By the time the plane landed, the horses had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 23.92 hours. After arriving at Kitakyushu, it would have taken approximately 4.35 hours before the horses arrived at the quarantine facility, where they would have had access to food and water and an opportunity to rest. The animals were in transport for approximately 28.27 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

On August 24, one of the horses died due to heat stroke. It is important to recognize that horses, like humans, are one of the only mammals that rely on sweating as the primary mechanism for cooling their body temperature. If the air temperature outdoors is warmer than the horse's skin temperature, the sweat cannot evaporate and adequate cooling cannot occur. This can lead to overheating and potential death by heat stroke. There are no indications in the records that the horse received any medical intervention.

Three other horses were noted to have severe, acute diarrhea and fevers. Both tested positive for Salmonellosis, and needed to be further isolated from the group. There are no records of the horses receiving medical treatment for their condition.

The combination of hot outdoor temperatures, along with severe diarrhea from stress or salmonellosis, makes for a dangerous situation where a horse can become severely dehydrated to the point of death. A lack of adequate hydration has a profound impact on the well being of horses, more so than deficiencies in any other nutrient.¹³

¹³ See e.g. <https://www.aqha.com/-/heat-stress-in-horses>

4. September 25, 2023

Shipment details: 132 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 26.85hrs

Injuries/illness: 1 horse fell during flight. Another had discharge from their left eye

One horse was discovered to have fallen during landing, though this is not reflected in the CFIA's records. On October 4, 2023 one horse appears to have experienced discharge from their left eye, though the cause is unclear in the records.

5. October 2, 2023

Shipment details: 132 horses (Edmonton to Kansai)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 30-31.7hrs

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 25.07 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for between 30-31.7 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

6. October 16, 2023

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 28.35hrs

Deaths: 1 horse died due to salmonella infection

Injuries/illness: 1 horse with fever and diarrhea

By the time the aircraft landed, the horses had already been in transport for 24 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility in Kitakyushu, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 28.35 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

Government of Japan records show that on October 20, 2023, one horse began showing signs of fever and severe, acute diarrhea. Three days later, she was found dead at the quarantine facility after continuing to experience severe diarrhea as well as heavy, laboured breathing. Records state that this horse likely died from sepsis resulting from a salmonellosis infection.

The testing for Salmonella in this population of horses in quarantine is likely due to the fact that the bacterial species is often found in a healthy animal (carrier) without showing any clinical signs of illness, but it can cause clinical disease in a stressed animal. When horses are subjected to extreme stress, the bacteria can rapidly multiply and cause clinical signs like diarrhea. Salmonellosis is a common condition to see and treat in equine medicine. Despite this, there are no records indicating medication was administered to treat this horse's diarrhea and fever.

Unfortunately, this horse suffered for three days before succumbing to a septic condition which is known to be an incredibly painful and inhumane way to die.

On October 25, 2023, another horse began showing signs of a fever and diarrhea, though she tested negative for salmonella. The records do not show that any medication was administered to treat the diarrhea or fever of the second horse.

7. October 30, 2023

Shipment details: 115 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 26.47hrs

Injuries/illness: 1 horse fell during flight and could not get back up

When the plane took off after refueling in Alaska, one horse fell over and could not get back up. Horses have a high center of gravity, bearing close to 60% of their total body weight on their forelimbs. During land transportation, horses can often keep their center of gravity relatively balanced. During air transportation, however, the center of gravity easily becomes displaced from the gravitational pull of ascension

and descension. When horses lose their balance, they tend to fall forward and downward in response to the gravitational pull on their bodies. With insufficient room in the crates to right themselves, this leads to a very dangerous situation where horses risk being stuck in compromised and life threatening postures for hours on end.

Without assistance available on board the aircraft, this horse appears to have spent the remaining 10+ hours of travel in a compromised, injured state. The horse was still down in their crate when the plane landed in Japan, and was unable to stand during the offloading process. Workers had no method to remove the suffering animal, other than to 'tow' them from the vehicle while still alive. It is unclear how this animal was moved.

There are no further records on this animal's condition, injuries or medical treatment provided. The CFIA's records do not reference this incident.

8. November 27, 2023

Shipment details: 99 horses (Winnipeg to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 30.35hrs

Injuries/illness: 1 horse fell en route and could not get up. After arrival, 2 horses had thick severe nasal discharge and one had diarrhea for seven days.

When the plane landed in Alaska to refuel, one horse tumbled and fell. The horse was able to stand up. This incident is not reflected in the CFIA's records. The attendant reported to the Agency that the flight occurred "without incident".

By the time their plane landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 26 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 30.35 hours - over the legal limit.

Shortly after arriving at the quarantine facility, two horses had thick, severe nasal discharge. A third horse was also documented to have continuous diarrhea for seven days after arriving at quarantine. Government of Japan records do not refer to any medical treatments provided to these horses.

9. December 4, 2023

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kansai)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 29.73-31.43hrs

Deaths: 1 horse died due to stress from transportation

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 24.80 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for between 29.73 - 31.43 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

Government of Japan records show that on December 7, 2023 - two days after their arrival in Japan - one horse died as a result of 'stress from transportation.' There are no further records on the deterioration of this horse's condition, nor of any records of medical treatments provided to her.

10. December 11, 2023

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 29.77hrs

Deaths: 2 horses died - one due to severe dehydration and one due to pneumonia

Injuries/illness: 1 horse fell during landing and another had diarrhea

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 25.42 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in

transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 29.77 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

Upon landing in Japan, one horse lost balance from inertia and fell within their crate, though they appeared to be able to stand during offloading. This incident is not reflected in the CFIA's records.

Government of Japan Records also show that one horse died shortly after arrival at the quarantine facility from severe dehydration. Again, there are no records showing medical intervention took place for this animal. It has been well documented that the stress of prolonged shipments, lack of access to water, and extreme temperatures are a deadly combination for horses.

The next day one horse experienced diarrhea.

Over the next nine days of quarantine, another horse's condition worsened with notes of dehydration, diarrhea, high fever, and eventually death on December 21, 2023. Again, despite nine days of notes describing this horse's worsening condition, there is no mention of medical treatment or care for her. The cause of death was listed as pneumonia, though her symptoms do not appear to be commonly seen with pneumonia. Records suggest this horse may have also tested positive for salmonella infection.

11. January 8, 2024

Shipment details: 85 horses (Edmonton to Kagoshima)

Duration without food, water, and rest: unknown

Deaths: 3 horses died due to physical compression after falling in transport

Injuries/illness: 1 additional horse fell during the flight

By the time the aircraft landed in Kagoshima, the horses had been in transport for 22 hours. It is unknown how long it takes after landing at the Kagoshima airport

before horses arrive at the quarantine facility where they have access to food and water and an opportunity to rest.

During the flight, four horses lost their balance and fell within their crates. One female horse was severely injured from the fall, and died during the flight due to compression on her body. The CFIA records do not reference her death. Indeed, the Government of Japan records indicate that the attendant on the flight did not notice the dead horse or the other three collapsed horses, and reported that the horses were all in good health and there were no problems during transport.

Upon arrival in Japan, the three other fallen horses were found in compromised states still down within their crates. Two had injuries so severe that they died shortly after arrival. It is unclear when the two horses died. However, Japanese records indicate the animals did not enter the quarantine facility.

Japanese records note that all three fallen horses had shortness of breath while down in their crates, which can be an indicator of extreme pain. One horse's cause of death is listed as myositis (inflammation of the muscle) around the right glute, in addition to '*compression of the body due to a fall.*' It is unclear if the myositis was acute from the fall, or a previous condition. The cause of death for the third horse was listed as '*compression of the body due to a fall.*'

12. January 10, 2024

Shipment details: 106 horses (Edmonton to Kansai)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 25.8-27.5hrs

Injuries/illness: 1 horse fell during the flight and injured their legs. 1 horse with swollen eye.

One horse fell down during this flight, though this incident is not reflected in the CFIA's records. Japanese Government records indicate that as a result of the fall, the horse had swollen front legs. Another horse had a swollen right eye. It is unclear whether either horse received medical attention.

13. January 16, 2024

Shipment details: 98 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 28.03hrs

Deaths: 1 horse died due to multiple organ failure after falling on the plane. 2 horses died due to miscarriage.

Injuries/illness: 3-5 additional horses fell during the flight

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 23.68 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 28.03 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

Upon landing in Alaska to refuel, two horses lost their balance and fell within their crates. Two horses also fell during landing in Japan. Japanese records indicate that four horses were down in their crates after landing, and it is unclear whether two of these horses were the individuals who fell in Alaska (which would indicate that they were down for 10+ hours of transport) or if there were four fallen horses in addition to the two who fell in Alaska. These incidents are not reflected in the CFIA's records. In fact, those records indicate that the Agency was informed on January 17, 2024 that all horses "arrived safely and in good health."

Three of the horses found collapsed in Japan were able to walk but one was not. Despite being in clear medical distress, notes indicate that he was towed and lifted via 'forklift' onto the quarantine transportation vehicle. It is incredibly inhumane to move any distressed and compromised animal via forklift. This compromised and panicked animal was most likely a candidate for humane euthanasia. Not only was this horse still brought to the quarantine facility, he continued to be unable to stand for the following three days. The average draft horse weighs roughly 1,500-2,000 pounds. Being unable to rise and stand for three days can risk formation of severe myopathies and other debilitating health conditions.

On the third day of quarantine the horse succumbed to his weakened state and died. The cause of death is listed as '*death from the weakened state caused by*

multiple organ failures (deterioration of general condition due to muscle contusion, heart failure, liver dysfunction, and intestinal obstruction.'

On January 22, the Japanese records note that a mare experienced dystocia while giving birth. The mare suffered complications during the birthing process and suffered from a prolapsed uterus - an extremely painful, life threatening condition. Japanese government records note that an unsuccessful attempt was made to repair her uterus. There are no records to indicate that the mare was provided with any other form of emergency medical intervention, including pain control. The mare's state deteriorated and she died the same day. The cause of death is listed as *'hemorrhagic and painful shock from uterine prolapse.'* Records also state that the foal did not survive, though it is unclear whether the foal was stillborn or born alive.

Equine veterinary experts who reviewed the data noted that attempting to replace the uterus in a downed mare is problematic. Uterine prolapse is uncommon in horses, and they are prone to infection as a result. Attempting to repair the prolapse in a horse is likely to result in peritonitis and septicemia in this kind of environment. That the mare then died of hemorrhage and shock is another indicator of compromised animal welfare and avoidable suffering. There is no description in the records of any medications given for pain, nor any indication that she was transferred to a veterinary medical center. Scientific literature suggests that mares who survive uterine prolapse are those treated in a clinical setting such as a veterinary teaching hospital - in sterile conditions.

On January 28, another mare died after suffering a miscarriage. The records note that she died from a *'weakened state due to a difficult birth.'* The foal is also listed as not surviving. It is not clear what complications took place, but there are no records indicating this mare received medical care or treatments, or any form of humane euthanasia.

This shipment's record is the first obtained documentation of heavily pregnant mares being shipped overseas for slaughter, suggesting that breeding of horses destined for the export industry is occurring, whether intentionally or not. In this

case, at least two heavily pregnant horses appear to have gone unnoticed by exporters and by CFIA inspectors, and were forced to endure a lengthy and stressful journey overseas.

It is a severe welfare issue to deny a heavily pregnant mare food and water for 25+ hours, while forcing them to endure the stressors and hazards of international transportation. Furthermore, transport of late-pregnancy mares is known to cause an acute cortisol release due to stress, which can then induce premature labour. Loading, confining, or transporting a pregnant horse in the last 10% of their gestation period is also prohibited under s 139 of the *Health of Animals Regulations*.

14. January 22, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Winnipeg to Kansai)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 35.41hrs

Deaths: 1 horse died due to stress caused by transportation

Injuries/illness: Many horses experienced diarrhea during and after transport

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 29.68 hours - well over the 28 hour legal limit. Japanese records indicate that delivery of the horses to the quarantine facility was not complete until 6:40 pm local time - 5 hours and 44 minutes after the horses landed in Japan.¹⁴ By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for a grueling 35.41 hours.

Animal Justice, along with the Winnipeg Humane Society, the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition, and Manitoba Animal Save submitted a complaint to the CFIA in May 2024, requesting that the Agency take enforcement action because the 28 hour legal limit had been violated even before the horses were unloaded from the plane in Japan.¹⁵ The groups received no response. At the time, the export

¹⁴ This timing is also consistent with known unloading and transport time at the Kansai airport, which is between 4.93-6.63 hours.

¹⁵<https://animaljustice.ca/media-releases/animal-justice-files-legal-complaint-after-horse-air-shipment-exceeds-time-limit>

company indicated that the CFIA had not even told them that the flight had gone over the legal limit.¹⁶

Government of Japan records now show that upon completion of the offloading process at the quarantine facility, many of the horses were experiencing diarrhea. The combination of a horse going without water for 34+ hours while experiencing diarrhea, is a severe medical red flag. This dangerous combination can put horses at risk of severe dehydration. There are no further notes about the health status of the horses who experienced diarrhea.

On the morning of January 29, one horse was found in left lateral recumbency and unable to get up. The horse had no appetite and was breathing rapidly. There are no notes to show that he received emergency medical care or treatment, only a note that when checked on later in the day, he had died. The reason for death is listed as *'stress caused by transportation.'* It is not clear how long this horse was in distress and how long he suffered before dying.

15. February 5, 2024

Shipment details: 98 horses (Edmonton to Kansai)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 30.23hrs

Injuries/illness: 2 horses had difficulty standing

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 25.3 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility where they would have access to food and water, and an opportunity to rest, the horses had been in transport for approximately 30.23-31.93 hours - well over the 28 hour legal limit.

On February 8, one horse had difficulty standing. Government of Japan records suggest that by February 15, the horse could stand, though there are no indications that pain relief or medical treatment was provided. The records indicate that a second horse experienced "swelling from standing" during this time period as well.

¹⁶ See: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/05/02/horse-shipment-to-japan-target-of-complaint>

16. February 12, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 27.28 hours

Deaths: 1 horse died due to “accidental suffocation” and 1 died of shipping fever

Injuries/illness: Many horses experienced diarrhea during transport. 1 horse had a painful leg injury and 1 suffered fever and diarrhea due to salmonella infection.

Government of Japan records indicate that upon arrival at the quarantine facility, horses in this shipment had symptoms of diarrhea, nasal flaring, and trembling back legs. One horse also had significant swelling just above the hoof on his right hind leg. The horse was reluctant to apply weight to the leg but could walk and was admitted into quarantine. There are no further medical notes on this animal other than that he received Flunixin, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) on the eighth and ninth days of quarantine. This suggests the horse may have gone eight full days without any medical intervention or treatment for his injured leg.

On February 15, 2024 one horse was found dead. There are no records describing the medical history of the animal. The reason for death is listed as ‘*accidental suffocation.*’ It is not clear what may have caused the accidental suffocation for this horse. However, when horses die from pleuropneumonia (shipping fever), fluid builds up in their lungs causing suffocation so it may be that the suffocation of this horse was caused by this condition.¹⁷ Treatment of pleuropneumonia generally includes drainage of this fluid by a veterinarian.

The next day, another horse was found to have a fever of 39.5 degrees celsius. The horse’s fever steadily increased until February 19, when he was found dead. The cause of death is listed as ‘*suspected pleuropneumonia.*’ There are no other medical records for this animal. Equine veterinary experts who reviewed the data noted

¹⁷ See. e.g.

<https://www.merckvetmanual.com/respiratory-system/respiratory-diseases-of-horses/pleuropneumonia-in-horses>

that pleuropneumonia (shipping fever) is a painful and distressing condition, the most common risk factor for which is long-distance transport, particularly when a horse's head is restrained in an elevated position. Bacterial colonization of the lower respiratory tract generally occurs within 12-24 hours, with clinical signs of pleuropneumonia appearing within 1-7 days following transport.

This condition is the most severe form of pneumonia in horses and causes severe pain and discomfort alongside respiratory distress. When appropriate medical intervention and treatment occurs for horses with pleuropneumonia, there is a 90% survival rate. Young horses are more at risk as they often have recent viral infections (especially when living in crowded conditions) that, along with the stress of water and feed deprivation, may impair important pulmonary defense mechanisms and allow secondary bacterial invasion.

Another horse was found to have a fever and diarrhea for an unspecified amount of time. Testing was done and he tested positive for salmonellosis infection. The horse then developed a fever on the ninth day of quarantine and was provided with Sulpyrine on the ninth and tenth days of quarantine. There are no further medical notes for the health status of this animal.

17. February 20, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Winnipeg to Kansai)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 31.68-33.38 hours

Injuries/illness: 1 horse suffered from a fractured leg.

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 26.75 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility where they would have access to food and water, and an opportunity to rest, the horses had been in transport for approximately 31.68-33.38 hours - well over the 28 hour legal limit.

On March 1, 2024 one horse was found laying on their right side with blood apparent on their right front leg. The horse could not get up and Japanese records note that the animal may have had a fractured leg. Despite this finding, there are no notes of medical treatment for this horse. The health status of this horse is unclear though the records indicate that in the days that followed the horse was able to stand.

18. February 26, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 31.4hrs

Injuries/illness: 1 horse experienced lameness. Approx. 3 had salmonella infections.

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 27.05 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 31.4 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit. Based on flight tracking data it appears there was an approximately 4 hour delay in Alaska during refueling, though the reason for that delay is unclear. The delay is not reflected in the CFIA's records.

One horse experienced lameness on their right front leg and were given pain medication. Several horses had diarrhea and testing revealed that approximately three horses had salmonella infections.

19. March 4, 2024

Shipment details: 85 horses (Edmonton to Kagoshima)

Duration without food, water, and rest: unknown

Injuries/illness: 1 horse suffered severe eye injury during transport and another appeared to have a serious leg injury

By the time their plane landed in Kagoshima, the horses had been in transport for 21.58 hours. It is unknown how long it takes after landing at the Kagoshima airport before horses arrive at the quarantine facility where they have access to food and water and an opportunity to rest.

Upon arrival at the quarantine facility, Government of Japan records indicate that one horse had a severe injury to their left eye, which is described as '*compressed and crushed.*' Two days after arrival, the records note that the eyeball was depressed, or sunken, and that purulent discharge (pus) was now draining from the eye area. Notes continued to document purulent discharge coming from the left eye for the following ten days of quarantine.

A second horse arrived at the quarantine facility hesitant to apply weight to their left front leg. Tatami mats were installed for the animal at the quarantine facility but there are no further notes on the number of, nor the thickness of the mats used (traditional Japanese tatami mats are quite thin). On the second day of quarantine, the horse was completely non-weight bearing on the left front leg. On the eighth day of quarantine, notes indicate that a fistula had formed between the hoof wall and the frog (soft tissue) on the bottom of the horse's hoof. Purulent discharge was also observed as draining from the fistula. Throughout the eight days of quarantine, the horse was recorded as continuously shifting from non-weight bearing to slightly weight bearing on the leg. There are no notes of the horse receiving medical treatment for this injury. There are no further notes on the health status of this animal. Laminitis and other leg injuries are incredibly painful for horses.

The CFIA's records for this shipment state that the '*health of all horses was good*' despite two horses apparently arriving at quarantine with severe injuries.

20. March 11, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Winnipeg to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 30.22 hours

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 25.87 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 30.22 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

21. March 18, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 29.03 hours

Deaths: 1 horse died due to hemorrhagic colitis and 1 died of phlegmon of the right leg

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 24.68 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 29.03 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

On March 21, a horse was found dead, with her cause of death listed as '*hemorrhagic colitis*.' It is important to note that while there is no further documentation on this horse, hemorrhagic colitis is an incredibly painful condition for horses to succumb to.¹⁸ There are many conditions and parasites that can cause a horse to succumb to hemorrhagic colitis, including Colitis-X which is often closely associated with severe stress.¹⁹

On March 27, records indicate another horse was found dead, with her cause of death listed as '*phlegmon on the right front leg*.' Phlegmon is a medical condition involving acute inflammation of soft tissue. The only additional medical notes for

¹⁸ See, e.g. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7151827/>

¹⁹ See, e.g. <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/digestive-system/miscellaneous-intestinal-diseases-in-horses/colitis-x-in-horses>

this animal state that she had a fever from the fourth day of quarantine until her death, and that she received an NSAID called Flunixin for the fever on the seventh and eighth days of quarantine. It is unclear what may have caused the soft tissue injury, though it does appear from the records that this horse did not receive adequate medical intervention and treatment, nor a humane euthanasia.

22. April 15, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 27.77 hours

Deaths: 1 horse died due to “purulent pneumonia” and 1 died of respiratory failure

Injuries/illness: 1 horse experienced nasal flaring, loss of appetite, and purulent discharge from their jaw. Another showed signs of fever and sneezing as well as leg/h hoof injury.

Government of Japan records indicate that on the first day of quarantine, one horse had diarrhea. On the second day of quarantine, the same horse was recorded as open mouth breathing, in addition to nasal flaring. Open mouth breathing in addition to nasal flaring in horses is a key indicator of respiratory distress. Despite this, there are no records of medical treatment being provided to him. On the third day of quarantine, the horse’s condition worsened with records of a fever of 40.7 degrees Celsius. Dark blackened blood was also observed coming from his nostrils. Again, records do not indicate that any treatment was provided to this horse. On the morning of April 19, he was found to still have a significant fever and black, bloody nasal discharge. He died that day.

The cause of death is listed as *‘purulent pneumonia’*. Stress of long distance transportation likely played a role in this horse’s death. He appears to have suffered a long, and likely quite painful death, and was apparently in respiratory distress for multiple days.

On April 23, 2024 one horse was found dead. There are no medical history notes or medical treatment notes for him. The cause of death is listed as '*respiratory failure and colitis*.' It is unclear how long this horse may have suffered before dying. Both colitis and respiratory failure are incredibly painful, stressful conditions to experience.

Records indicate that on April 18, 2024 another horse exhibited nasal flaring. This can be a symptom of respiratory infections, stress, as well as other illnesses. In the days that followed, this horse continued to exhibit nasal flaring, as well as poor appetite. On the seventh to tenth days of quarantine, purulent discharge was noticed coming from the horse's right lower jaw. There are no notes in the records suggesting that medical treatment was provided to this horse, and no further notes on their health status.

Records indicate that on April 19, 2024, another horse showed clinical signs of a fever and sneezing. On the seventh day of quarantine, the horse became non-weight bearing on the right front leg and purulent discharge could be seen coming from the hoof. The horse was provided medical treatment with an NSAID called Flunixin for the ninth and tenth days of quarantine, as well as Sulpyrine for the ninth to eleventh days of quarantine. Sulpyrine has anti-inflammatory and antipyretic properties but is not often used in North America. Medical records note that even with treatment, the horse continued to be non weight bearing, draining purulent discharge from the hoof and sneezing. There are no further records for this animal past the eleventh day of quarantine.

23. May 6, 2024

Shipment details: 96 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 28.25 hours

Injuries/illness: 2 horses fell during the flight. 1 horse had a fever and signs of lameness, while another experienced fever and swelling.

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 23.90 hours. Life Investigation Agency documented the unloading and transport of these horses in Japan on May 7, 2024. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for 28.25 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

Japanese records indicate that one horse lost their balance and fell during the flight and another fell during landing in Japan. These incidents are not reflected in the CFIA's records. Those responsible for the shipment reported to the Agency that "[a]ll horses arrived safely in Japan."

Government of Japan records indicate that one horse had a fever and showed lameness on her left front leg. A dose of the NSAID Flunixin was given intravenously. There are no further notes of medical treatment or the health status of this horse.

On May 12-13, 2024 another horse experienced fever and swelling, though there are no medical treatment notes or further notes on the health status of this animal.

24. May 13, 2024

Shipment details: 99 horses (Edmonton to Kitakyushu)

Duration without food, water, and rest: 28.25 hours

Deaths: 1 horse died due to gastrointestinal obstruction

Injuries/illness: 5 horses with diarrhea. 4 horses required medical treatment for unknown illness/injury involving fever and/or pain.

By the time the aircraft landed in Japan, the horses had already been in transport for 24.45 hours. By the time they arrived at the quarantine facility, they had been in transport without food, water, and rest for approximately 28.80 hours - over the 28 hour legal limit.

Upon arrival at the quarantine facility, Japanese records indicate that five horses had diarrhea. All five horses tested negative for salmonellosis infection. There are no records of treatment or further diagnostics.

On May 15, 2024, one horse presented with a fever of 41 degrees Celsius. The next day, he was found dead. The reason for death is listed as '*suspected gastrointestinal obstruction.*' Gastrointestinal obstructions are known to cause sharp and severe pain in horses, with pain being the first clinical sign that is recognized when this condition manifests.²⁰ Regardless of what may have caused the impaction, this horse likely suffered a great deal of pain before his death.

During the quarantine period, four other horses were treated with the NSAID Flunixin and the anti-inflammatory drug '*Zarzuboka*' though no other records exist pertaining to the medical status of these four horses.

Report co-authored by Animal Justice and registered veterinary technologist Brittany Semeniuk. CFIA records were provided by the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition.

²⁰ See, e.g.

<https://www.merckvetmanual.com/horse-owners/digestive-disorders-of-horses/gastrointestinal-obstruction-blockages-in-horses>