



# Transport of Live Animals by Air

April 2020

The airline industry is currently facing unprecedented challenges with the COVID-19 situation resulting in logistic constraints affecting different types of commodities, particularly when it involves live animals. The Live Animals Regulations (LAR) includes provisions for the welfare of live animals whilst in the custody of carriers and where applicable throughout the entire transportation cycle.

The purpose of this information is to provide industry stakeholders as well as breeders, shippers and owners with a detailed explanation of the variables to be considered when transporting live animals.

However, to understand the challenges encountered today with the COVID-19 situation one must first appreciate the prevailing conditions which relate to operational issues in light of disease spreading concerns.

When accepting live animal shipments, as stated in the LAR, carriers have the responsibility to ensure conformity of several factors, of which the most important are:

- suitable container and type of packaging used;
- type of aircraft used;
- the amount of required space in the cargo compartment;
- the environmental conditions in those compartments-ventilation rates and airflow direction, heating or cooling provisions;
- the environmental conditions at intermediate stops and the climatic effects on ground during loading, unloading and ground transport;
- the best possible loading location within the cargo compartments;
- the presence of other loads which may affect the animals;
- the necessity of in-flight attendance;
- the availability of ground storage facilities;
- the availability of knowledgeable and appropriately trained ground staff;
- adequate protection from the elements and severe weather conditions relative to the species.

With the COVID-19 situation, some of these requirements might be placed in jeopardy due, amongst other things, to operational and qualified staff management issues which could result in not being able to ensure animal safety and welfare throughout the transport. Other issues of a different nature may also arise:

- Authorities' curfew or confinement requirements may limit the manpower available in the cargo warehouse at origin, in transit, or at destination to perform the appropriate handling of the shipment;
- Challenges of dedicated storage facilities and capabilities;
- Issues of priorities on emergency medical supplies to be shipped worldwide;
- Schedule issues with delayed or possibly cancelled flights;



- Lack of road feeder services where they may be part of the transport;
- Difficulty of crew/pilot positioning in case of layover flights with hotel capabilities closed;
- Possible commodity conflicting temperature requirements;
- In transit temperature-controlled environments may not be guaranteed.

It is important to note that many countries have placed additional restrictions as to what carriers may transport and more importantly carriers are being made aware that facilities and qualified staff around the network are being impacted by local curfews, social distancing, isolation and in some cases sickness. The result being that carriers are temporarily assessing what can be transported in accordance with the quality and comfort standards required.

In addition to the above mentioned, please find hereafter the Live Animals and Perishables Board (LAPB) members' comment to this situation:

*"COVID19 is causing many operational concerns for airlines and this includes the safe transport of live animals. Changes in airline staffing, flight schedules, lessened availability of regulatory and inspection staff etc., are affecting the movement of live animals by air.*

*Prior to accepting live animal shipments, carriers are urged to perform a full supply chain risk assessment to ensure appropriate conditions and adequate facilities exist throughout the journey to ensure the transport of the live animal shipment is performed in the best and highest quality conditions and to always ensure the animal is safe and secure such that its welfare conditions can be guaranteed to the extent possible."*

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