

HORSE INTERNATIONAL Q AND A

WITH MARTIN ATOCK,
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF PEDEN BLOODSTOCK

Peden Bloodstock specialises in horse transportation and logistics. They operated their first horse flight in 1947 and are considered to be the industry's leaders. The heart of Peden is flying horses; but the business has developed into support for Organising Committees of FEI competitions, and events across the world. Managing Director, Martin Atock who joined the company in 1988 for the Seoul Olympic Games took time out of his busy schedule to respond to our 'Questions and Answers'. He formerly held the Chair of the AATA Worldwide Equine Committee and in 1998 was awarded the Robert Campbell Award for outstanding service to equine shipping.

Q Peden has been the Official Equestrian Shipping Agent for the last seven Olympic Games, the Paralympics Games since Athens 2004 and many other Championships including the World Equestrian Games, Asian Games and European Championships. You are now preparing for the World Equestrian Games Normandy 2014. How does the preparation differ between this and the Olympics?

A Well the biggest differences are the horse numbers. The Olympic Games will historically have two hundred and twenty five horses and the Paralympic Games will have seventy eight horses. At a World Equestrian Games, numbers are not restricted in the same way and we anticipate approximately eleven hundred horses competing at Normandy 2014. (In Lexington 2010 there were seven hundred and twenty eight horses). With an increase in horses comes an increase in riders, equipment, and the size of their support teams which means increased need for faultless logistics. This year, because the WEG are in Europe and approximately 85% of the world's elite horses are already based here, we do not have quite so many horses to be flown in. We have already flown many long listed horses into Europe on behalf of National Federations as they continue their Games preparations.

Q When do you start your planning for a big championship such as Normandy 2014?

A This is wholly dependent on the region, the culture and the organising committee. Some events have taken seven years to prepare for! When we went into Aachen 2006, we had the benefit of a well-established and well-oiled



Martin Atock.

venue, which made our lives much simpler! Although London was, for the majority, a non-flying Olympics it brought complex logistical challenges in that it was a new build site located in the very centre of a buzzing capital city.

Q As transport and logistical experts, what is your role for the forthcoming Games?

A Put simply, we work to safeguard the health and welfare of the horses, ensuring safe passage of the equipment and associated team of people in their journey to and from the Games and throughout their stay in Normandy. Optimising Health and Welfare is a primary requirement that does not alter wherever we are in the world. Wherever there is a competition across the globe, there might be a language barrier, a cultural barrier or a knowledge barrier; but the health and the welfare needs of the horse during transport do not change and our job

is to ensure horses always travel first class. We liaise with Local Authorities/Border Control Agents/Organising Committees and various other stakeholders; and through negotiation and education we ensure that the horses' needs always come first. Our role as experts in 'back of

Q What measures do you have to take for bio-security and is it an issue with elite equines?

A All horses making journeys through or across continents must be issued with health certificates before travel. Such health requirements will depend on the health status of the country of origin and of the country of destination; and may include: pre-export supervision, pre-export residency periods completed in specified countries, pre-export quarantine, pre-export testing (blood samples, nasal swabs etc.) and vaccinations. Bio-security at the home stables is of paramount importance to the pre-travel health status of these frequent fliers. Furthermore, bio-security at the competition venue is essential to protect both the international horses arriving from all over the world for competition but also the local horses resident in the area around the competition venue who may inadvertently be exposed to an incoming disease threat. As a matter of course we advise that hand wash

“If they are stressed before or during the flight they are predisposed to illness and poor recovery.”

house facilities; stable management, contingency planning, parking, security, disease control and bio-security means we have a significant role to play for the WEG 2014 in addition to shipping horses and teams into and out Normandy.

gels are appropriately positioned at the entrance to the stables, we also suggest disinfection foot mats at these entry/exit points. Depending on the risk handlers may even be requested to shower or change clothes when moving in/out of the

stable area. On an individual level the health and recovery of the travelling equine athlete also depends heavily on good preparations and minimising stress. As a healthy, stress free human being you may be able to travel across the globe and not catch a cold or virus. If you are stressed and sit next to a traveller who has the flu brewing you are far more likely to become ill. Horses are the same; provided appropriate preparation and organisation is implemented prior to and during international travel, horses will arrive happy and healthy; if they are stressed before or during the flight they are predisposed to illness and poor recovery. All elite equine athletes in our care will be well prepared and correctly handled before embarkation; and cared for throughout their journeys by experienced horsemen and women.

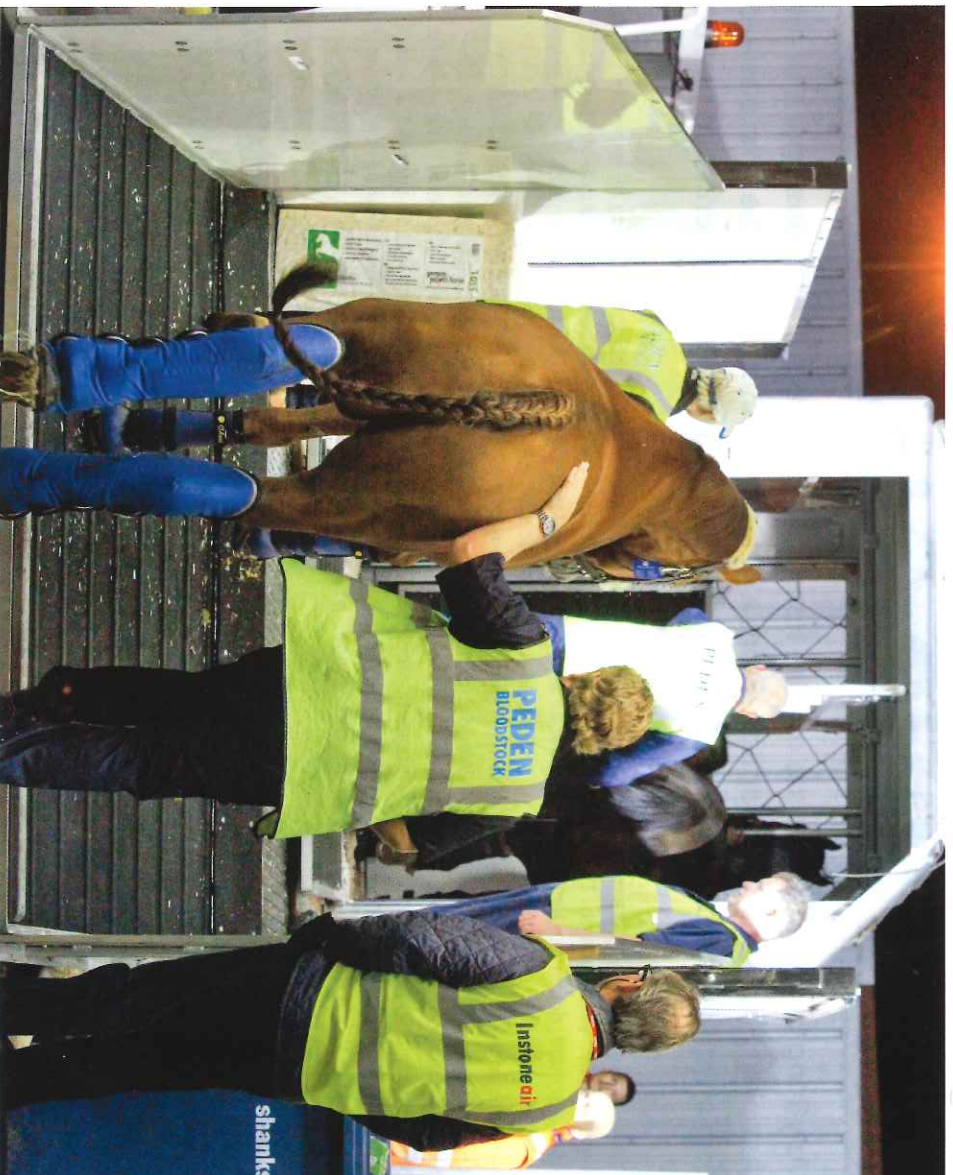
Q If one of our readers was planning to move a horse from one continent to another; how much time and planning must be anticipated?

A This depends significantly on the geography of the movement. Where do you want to fly from and to? To fly from Europe to Australia requires pre-export quarantine and post-arrival quarantine. If you were flying from Europe to America, subject to health checks and the appropriate blood tests, you should be able to fly your horse in about ten days. It can be more complicated if you are flying to or from the Middle or Far East.

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Q How do you bypass quarantine regulations for horses flying to restricted areas for short periods of time for competition or races?

A You don't! It took three years of preparation for the Sydney Games in 2000. We negotiated that certain centres such as Aachen for Europe could be used as pre-flight quarantine stations. The normal restrictions applied. We doubled the area and created a situation which was under quarantine conditions but riders and horses could still train. Aachen was



Horses being loaded for air transport to the World Equestrian Games in Kentucky 2010.

very suitable due to its facilities for jumping, dressage and gallop access. The European horses flew out to Sydney under simple health conditions and competed under simplified quarantine conditions. For the WEG 2010 some National Federations were not so lucky, horses that flew into Miami from South America were subject to 'lock

three hundred and thirty kilos of equipment per horse and many National Federations will bring in their own feed and hay.

Q What has been your most bizarre request to be shipped... animal or equipment?

A We used to fly all sorts of zoological animals; rhinos, elephants, giraffes etc. but now we just focus on horses.

Q Are you involved in the logistics of moving the event horses from Haras du Pin to Caen for the show jumping phase?

A The event horses will be based at Haras du Pin and have superb facilities. For the final phase the horses will be transported by sixty lorries in three convoys of twenty lorries. This will happen on the Sunday morning – the day of the final phase. We will co-ordinate this transfer which was successfully rehearsed at the test event last year.

Q What types of air planes are used to ship horses?

A We use many types of cargo plane. When we charter a plane we essentially hire the air crew, pilots and the air frame. We then accommodate the air stables, seat pallets for flying groomers etc.

Q What type of transport do you think suits horses best?

A Flying horses with Peden is rather like travelling first class. With the correct preparation and planning there is a very minimal amount of waiting at an airport. Taxiing, flight take offs and landings are carefully planned (in advance) to be slow in ascent and descent. Once the horses are flying at altitude the stress levels are minimal in comparison to road or sea travel. The

air stables the horses travel in are very similar in size to that of a horse box. It is important to ensure that the horse has enough space to urinate, put his head down low enough to discharge any mucus and debris from his lungs and is fed and watered regularly. We recommend different sized air stable stalls depending on size, breed and discipline of the horse. An air stable can take three horses, but generally these would only accommodate smaller thoroughbreds/ endurance horses whilst the bigger jumping, dressage and vaulting horses would need bigger stalls. With our highly experienced and dedicated professional flying groomers all these requirements are anticipated to ensure all of our horses fly comfortably and arrive in peak competition fitness able to compete to the very best of their ability. ■