



Thomas C. SCHOOLER

Animal-Port-Houston

“Developments and Requirements for Housing and Crating/Environmental Enrichment”

International requirements have not kept pace with developments in housing and crating. There are some countries that are recently disallowing certain species of lumber being used in crating. We've learned in shipping certain animals over all these years that they chew on crating . . . crating treated with chemicals. We lost several rhinos, for instance, before someone correctly observed that the cause of those rhino deaths was poisoning. The treated crates were not only used as housing prior to shipping, but were being used after arrival. All the attention and care and expense and prayers and research . . . yet the solution was simple. The lesson learned by the transporter was: check what your crate is made of, how it was treated, see what coatings were applied, what materials were used to clean the crate prior to loading and, lastly, that the animal might have been sprayed or treated with a topical insecticide that reacts with temperature changes or stress. We learn lessons at great expense to the animals.

There are some animals which, of course, don't chew . . . they scratch to destroy the crate. When choosing housing and crating for either domestic or exotic animals, you must know what the escape habits are for that species. You should ask "how would this animal escape if given time?" Many of us transport mice and other rodents. Fortunately, we are moving away from composition/ cardboard boxes. The reasons for change have been obvious for many years, but finally we are moving toward hard plastic boxes with nearly indestructible vents and inspection windows. These boxes are made in several sizes and can withstand warehousemen, wet floors, short falls and collisions with forklifts. Those hard plastic boxes from the same sources can stack without slipping, but do topple if stacked too high.

But, plastic has its shortfalls as well. The underside of plastic boxes degrade after repeated use and cleaning. Being brittle, it can be fractured barely enough for a small mouse to squeeze through. Again, the urge to escape. Recently several boxes were placed on the front counter in our office, in anticipation of customs clearance and subsequent delivery. When I passed and glanced at the boxes, I noticed some tiny black pellets between two boxes. I proceeded several steps and realized what those pellets were. The bottom of the box was checked and a tiny crack had a tiny bit of bedding hanging out. Since then I am visited daily in my gleaming glass and chrome office by a tiny mouse that could set speed records the equine committee would envy. So here we are, two steps forward and one step backward in the innovation of new housing/crating.

Crating and housing should not be unsafe, or inhumane, or uncomfortable, or illegal. IATA has the best guidelines written to date, to assist the carpenter and cage maker. With our assistance, IATA can continue to update and improve those guidelines and the consistency they offer the world. But, we should never blindly accept current guidelines as the final word. We can - all of us, through our collective experiences, communication and concern - use common sense and reasoning to assure the safe, secure and humane movement of all live animals.

KNOW YOUR SPECIES
BE ALERT
ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR PROTOCOL

OBEY THE LAWS
REFER TO THE IATA GUIDELINES
COMMUNICATE

Thomas C. Schooler graduated from the University of Texas in Austin with a degree in architecture. He currently is involved with the Greater Houston Partnership - World Trade Division / Houston Air Cargo Association / United States Animal Health Association, / Independent Pet and Animal Transportation Association International (IPATA) Former President / AZA American Zoo & Aquarium Association / AALAS Laboratory Animal Science / LASA International LabScientific Association. Board Member / American Brahman Breeders Association (ABBA) / Burton Cotton Gin Museum, Board - Projects Development / Greater Houston Coffee Association. He is past Secretary/Treasurer for AATA, has served on the Board of Directors for many years and previously was the Chairman of the Wildlife & Exotics Committee. He is currently President of the Foundation America/Viet-Nam and is the owner and president of Burton Pub, Theater & Crafts Complex. He is on the Board of Directors for the World Trade Center/Houston which is currently under development.

Tom is President of Indian Creek Enterprises, Inc. (d.b.a.) Animal Port Houston which is a legally registered Texas Corporation, with primary offices in Houston, Texas. International and domestic services consist of certification and documentation, handling and holding of live animals originating, transiting and delivered. Animal-Port-Houston, located in Intercontinental Airport Houston, provides international trucking, marine vessels and aircraft for the movement of livestock, horses, zoo species, marine species, circuses, research species and personal pets. Animal-Port-Houston collaborates with Federal and States agencies, Inspection and Agriculture authorities.

Thomas SCHOOLER
Animal-Port-Houston
President
P. O. Box 60564
Houston, TX 77205 USA
Office: + 1 281-821-2244
Fax: + 1 281-821-1128
tom@pettransport.com
www.pettransport.com
