

"Operation 'Pig Lift'" Newspaper Article, August 1952

Operation 'Pig Lift'

200 Pigs Flown from Des Moines, 100 from San Francisco
By Northwest Airlines — Destination Korea

In the first airlift of its kind ever attempted, 200 live pigs were flown from Des Moines, Iowa to Korea in a chartered Northwest Airlines four-engine transport. 159 purebred Berkshires were included in the shipment with the remaining number Durocs and Hampshires.

Purpose of the 'pig lift' is to supplement Korea's depleted stock in an effort to help that country recover from the ravages of war. The animals were selected to improve the quality of Korean stock in cross breeding. They will be sent to government breeding farms upon arrival in Korea.

The first flight composed entirely of pigs, 159 Berkshires, 20 Hampshires and 20 Durocs left Des Moines, Iowa on June 20th. It took considerable work on the part of everyone concerned to make the necessary arrangements, to get the hogs at the right place at the right time and with the proper certificates of vaccination and etc. Then after the breeders had assembled at the airport, the plane was quite late in arriving and to add to the occasion, it rained practically all day.

Howard Johnson, fieldman was on hand to represent the Berkshire News and is to be complimented for working out details which arose that enabled the entire shipment to go as scheduled. The 'pig lift' received great publicity, as newsreel men, reporters and TV and radio were on hand. You probably read about it in your local paper.

The following sent pigs in the first flight; (from Iowa unless otherwise stated): Walter Proske, Montpelier; C.W. Orr, West Liberty; Stanley Swift, Gilman; Kermit Hougen, Radcliffe; Hartman Coffin, Zearing;; Cletus Stalzer, Britt; LeRoy Faint, Aplington; Robert Faint, Havelock; Dale & Dennis Stover, Havelock; Don Martin, Dunkerton; Tom Conover, Holstein; Wm. W. Woods, Mechanicsville; Eugene Fitz, Melbourne; Robert Zeisneis, Colo.; Al Culver, Athens, Ill. and Robert Altman, Pleasant Plains, Ill. The second flight was made from San Francisco on June 29th, all the pigs numbering 100 (20 boars and 80 gilts) were purebred Berkshires from California breeders. Also included in this shipment were 100 goats.

The following California breeders had pigs in the shipment; D.H. Bybee, Pomona; Arthur Cook, Santa Ana; Vernon Fairchild, Garden Grove; R.E. Goodman, Empire; Virgil Groves, Farmington; G.E. Livingston, Chino; and Mokelumne Farms, Acampo.

Berkshires have been used extensively for Korea for crossing with native Korean stock, and the progeny have proved to be quicker to mature and more economical feeders than the pure native stock, which largely came from Japan. It is proposed, by the importation of purebred Berks of best pedigree into Korea, to reestablish a fresh strain on the Republic of Korea breeding farms. The resultant purebred pigs will then be distributed within the country to cross with the native swine. It is expected that these shipments should produce approximately 3,000 pigs within 19 months of their arrival. The original

order called for 1,000 head of Berkshires to be imported, so it's likely that additional shipments will be made late this fall.

Funds for the pigs were contributed in large part by the Heifer Project Committee and Christian Rural Overseas Program, which specialize in the giving of livestock to the needy in many parts of the world. The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency paid the shipping charges.

The airlift, in addition to being cheaper than transportation by sea, reduced the risk of loss by disease which might be high in a month-long sea voyage. The flights took only about 40 hours and only one pig was lost.

Main Photo Caption:

The wide wings of the Northwest Airlines transport plane serve as a huge umbrella during a heavy rainstorm while the pigs were being loaded at Des Moines. The crowd includes photographers, newsreel men, reporters and TV and radio announcers who were on hand to watch the loading. (Lower left) It was quite a chore to lift the kicking, squealing pigs up into the giant airliner. Starting at the left in the plane is Al Culver, Walter Proske and Cletus Stalzer. In the truck starting at the left is Dennis Stover, Dale Stover, Bob Zeisneiss and Bob Faint. (Center) Dale and Dennis Stover ready to unload their consignment. (Right) Inside the plane, showing how the crates were strapped to the floor to eliminate shifting of weight. Kermit Hougen is shown pushing a stubborn pig toward his crate.

Inset Photo Caption:

Pictures of the California shipment aren't available at press time, but this group taken at the R.E. Goodman farm at Modesto, California, shows the quality of pigs that were included in the California "pig lift."