As an INTERNATIONAL PET AND ANIMAL TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION (IPATA) member, our first priority is the animal’s welfare then a close second is the owner’s welfare. The IPATA mission statement reads: “The International Pet and Animal Transportation Association is a non-profit trade association of independent members who are dedicated to the safe and humane transport of pets and other animals.”

This year our Asia regional meeting was held in Saigon at the Renaissance hotel, where animal transport specialists met to discuss how we can constantly improve our industry and exchange knowledge for the betterment of our furry friends’ travel experience.

The first day of the conference keynote fellow industry experts—airline representatives, freight forwarders, pet shippers, relocation consultants and veterinarians—gave presentations to inform us on the most up-to-date industry information. All these experts are vital links in the logistical chain that gets Fido or Felix from point A to point B, often with one or more comfort stops on the way.

As part of the meeting, IPATA always invites a local guest animal shelter or welfare organization to give a small talk and introduction. It’s also custom for each IPATA member to bring a gift from their home country and together we hold a silent auction to raise funds for that local group. Koto Shimoyama from Animal Rescue + Care (ARC) gave an informative presentation explaining to IPATA members what is evolved in running a shelter and the challenges of educating people on animal welfare and social responsibility here in our local Saigon community.

The second part of the conference was a day of workshops giving one-to-one training primarily for new attendees or members who want a refresher course. Such topics at workshops include “Booking procedure with the Airlines”, “How to correctly measure a pet for their traveling crate”, “Brachycephalic (Snub nosed) breeds-special care and attention” and “Basic medical first aid specific to animals in case of an emergency.” This last one is very important because it’s not uncommon to transport, at the owner’s request, an older animal or a breed such as a pug that may encounter health problems. In the unlikely case of an emergency, all IPATA animal transportation specialists have special training to deal with any situation we might encounter.

During a move quite often the owner becomes more stressed than the pet, which in turn makes their pet also feel unnecessarily nervous and anxious too. It’s our job as pet shippers to handle difficult, time sensitive travel schedules making the move as smooth, calm and comfortable as possible for everyone in order to reunite your pet with its family as safe, quick and comfortable as humanly possible.