

JFK's new animal terminal will make you wish you were a dog

By [Danielle Furfaro](#)

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John J. Cuticelli and Dr. Lauren Nevendorf check out his 7-year-old cockerpoo, Tucker, at The ARK.
Kristy Leibowitz

Visiting Kennedy Airport may feel like one big cattle drive for humans — but at least animals will soon be able to travel through the airport in the lap of luxury.

The transport hub is slated later this month to open a new and improved terminal just for animals — a 178,000-square-foot facility called the ARK that will help process everything from dogs and cats to thoroughbred horses and baby chicks.

“The ARK has been built to facilitate the safe and humane transportation of animals from around the world,” said John Cuticelli, whose company built the \$65 million facility.

Cuticelli took The Post on an exclusive tour of the privately owned ARK, a maze of special rooms and bays reserved for handling all sorts of animals being brought into the US.

Some rooms feature anti-microbial coverings on the walls and special filtration systems to make sure no two animals are breathing the same air.

The ARK sits on 14.5 acres of land in a cargo area that is situated for easy access to aircraft.

Cuticelli expects about 5,000 horses, 10,000 small pets like dogs and cats and hundreds of thousands of birds to come through the facility each year.

The ARK will replace Vetport, an outdated facility that opened in 1951 and hasn't been as kind to animals as it could, said Cuticelli.



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“Right now, animals can wait four or five hours on the tarmac or in the cargo facility because there is no other way to process them,” he said. “The ARK will be focused on the safe and humane transportation of animals.”

Cuticelli, who owns investment and real estate company Racebook Capital, answered a call three years ago from the Port Authority to develop the facility.

“I visited animal care facilities all over the world to see what everyone was doing. I wanted to be one of the only people in the world who understands the discipline completely,” he said.

Everyone who works at or even enters the facility must be screened and approved by the USDA, the TSA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Department of Customs.

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