

Ankra plans for record CLS deliveries amid surging P2F demand

• Charles Kauffman and Jeff Lee • Cargo Facts September 23, 2020

U.S.-based Ancra International has ramped up its production of cargo-loading systems (CLS) as conversion activity intensifies, and expects to make a record number of deliveries in 2021.

The company told Cargo Facts that, based on guidance provided by the various conversion houses, it recently upped its manufacturing output earlier this summer and is on course to deliver “well above 100” sets of systems in 2021. For 2020, the number of deliveries was close to sixty as of the end of August and is expected to be in the upper nineties, according to Ancra.



The inside of an Alaska Airlines 737-700BDSF, equipped with an Ancra cargo loading system.

The last time Ancra had exceeded a yearly output of 100 was in 2017, when it delivered 106 sets. With a production lead time of around nine months, the total for 2021 could see a further upward revision should demand require it.

So far in 2020, Boeing and Aeronautical Engineers Inc. (AEI) have each announced additional conversion lines for 737s, while EFW plans to grow its A321 conversion capacity to twenty-three units a year across several lines by 2023.

Ankra, the sole provider of CLSs for most current freighter conversion programs, obtained the supplemental type certificate (STC) from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the maindeck system on EFW’s newly certified A321P2F at the end of July and for the lower deck in August. The corresponding validation from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is also on hand.

On the widebody front, Ancra delivered the tenth CLS for EFW’s A330P2F program in August, to be installed on the seventh A330-300F converted by EFW. The other three were installed on converted A330-200Fs operated by EgyptAir.

EFW’s A330 conversions are unique in that they adopt a new powered CLS to assist with loading ULDs at the slightly nose-down attitude of passenger A330s.

Despite the efficiency and safety benefits this powered CLS brings, Ancra said it is “significantly more expensive” than other manual systems and is unlikely to find its way onto other conversion models.

Ankra also provides the CLS for the upcoming Textron Cessna SkyCourier, the freighter version of which took its first flight in August.