Boeing to Convert Five MD-11s to Freighters for Lufthansa Cargo

Fleet standardization and common operational features to benefit carrier

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] is helping Lufthansa Cargo improve its operational efficiency by converting five MD-11 passenger airplanes into freighters and updating them with features such as the flight deck and cargo-handling system so that they are consistent across Lufthansa Cargo's fleet.

The conversions are part of the carrier's fleet-standardization plan. The MD-11s will replace 747-200s in the Lufthansa Cargo fleet and increase to 19 the number of MD-11s the carrier operates.

"We will strengthen Lufthansa Cargo's competitive position in the long term in a generally difficult market," said Jean-Peter Jansen, chairman of the Lufthansa Cargo Executive Board. "By rejuvenating the fleet, we can produce more efficiently, and react even more flexibly to fluctuations in the market and demand."

Passenger to freighter modification involves primarily the removal of the passenger furnishings, installation of a side cargo door and installation of a cargo handling system. The work typically takes about four months.

Boeing Commercial Aviation Services will provide detailed engineering design work and oversight of the Lufthansa Cargo conversions, with SASCO, a subsidiary of Singapore Technologies Aerospace, providing touch labor on the airplanes.

Modification work will begin in June 2004. The first two airplanes will be redelivered to Lufthansa Cargo in mid-December of that year. Two more airplanes will be completed in January 2005, with the final to be complete in February 2005.

"We are excited to work with Lufthansa Cargo as a key operator that recognizes the value of the MD-11 as an efficient, productive freighter," said Mike Stewart, vice president of Freighter Conversions for Boeing Commercial Aviation Services.

A converted MD-11 has a capacity of 205,400-pound (93.2 tones) structural payload at a range of 3,486 nautical miles (6,456 kilometers) and is capable of 630,500-pounds (286,000 kg) maximum takeoff weight. The main and lower deck cargo compartments hold a total of 36 96- by 125-in pallets or containers.

In total, Boeing has converted more than 40 MD-11 passenger airplanes to freighters.

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