



An update on horse passports

Many of you have heard about horse passports and you may be worried about getting one for your horse, pony or donkey. Hopefully this newsletter may answer some of your questions.

Why do I need one?

At the end of 1999 the European commission decided that *'all horses intended for human consumption should be identified and accompanied by a passport when presented at a slaughterhouse'*. The government therefore proposed the 'Horse Passports Order 2003' and DEFRA plans that all horses and ponies will have individual registration numbers and passports by the end of this year. Under European legislation the horse is classified as a food producing animal and the aim was to prevent horses from entering the food chain if they had been treated within the previous six months with medication not approved for animals intended for human consumption. Even if your horse is not destined for the human food chain, legally **YOU WILL STILL NEED A PASSPORT.**

When do I need one?

By the end of 2003 all horses, ponies and donkeys over six months old will need to have a passport. If a horse is moved off the holding of birth before it reaches six months of age it will need a passport then.

Where can I get it?

A large number of organisations have been authorised by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to issue horse passports. Some organisations deal with all breeds such as the British Horse Society (BHS), whilst others are specific breed societies dealing only with their particular breed (e.g. the Arab horse society). A full list of the authorised societies is available on the DEFRA web site – www.defra.gov.uk.



What identification do I need to get a passport?

A silhouette drawing identical to the one on the vaccination card must identify the horse. The vaccination card will be used as the initial form of identification that the authorised organisations will use to make the passport from, as long as it is signed by either a veterinary surgeon or someone authorised by the society issuing the passport. Although a microchip is useful and can be added to the passport, it is only the silhouette drawing that is legally required.

On receipt of the passport, owners will have to sign a declaration indicating whether or not the horse is ultimately intended for human consumption. If the horse will be used for human consumption the dates of administration of medicines will have to be recorded. If the owner declares that the horse is not intended for human consumption there will be no requirement to record the date of administration of any medicines. Once the declaration has been made it will not be possible to change it, even if the horse changes hands. However, it will be possible to reverse a declaration that a horse is ultimately destined for human consumption.

The horse should be accompanied by its passport in various circumstances

e.g. when moving in or out of GB

to other premises for competition purposes or for veterinary treatment.

to the premises of a new keeper

to a slaughterhouse

How do I go about getting it?

Look up on the DEFRA web site the appropriate horse/pony/donkey society for your animal and email or phone them to find their exact requirement for obtaining a passport from them. For example, if you send an A4 SAE to the BHS they will send you information on what they require. Passports will cost from £22 for members and £27 for non-members. The prices vary depending on the society, from £10 to £75.

Does it need renewing?

No, once the passport is issued, it lasts for the animal's lifetime.

My horse already has a passport – do I need a new one?

Yes, the passport will need to be updated to include the new pages for you to declare whether or not your horse is ultimately intended for human consumption and, if so, for the date to be recorded whenever certain medicines are administered. Contact the organisation that issued them originally and discuss with them how to arrange the changes.

Will there be any exemptions?

The herds of Dartmoor, Exmoor and New Forest ponies will be exempt from having a passport. However, the appropriate local authorities will need to keep a register of all the ponies including individual identification and a full passport will be required for any pony leaving the area.

What is a UELN?

A UELN or Unique Equine Life Number is basically the passport number individual to your particular animal. The exact format is not yet finalised.

Who will check up? will check up?

The Food Standards Agency will be responsible for slaughterhouse checks and Local Authorities will be responsible for enforcing the legislation. Failure to comply with the requirements will be an offence under the Animal Health Act 1981 and liable to fines or imprisonment.

In the future....

There is a suggestion that the pooled information from all the breed societies may be useful for disease control, veterinary surveillance and even improving breeding of British horses, especially for sport horses.

Useful names, numbers and addresses

DEFRA	www.defra.gov.uk
	Sue Mealey – 02079048164 or sue.mealey@defra.gsi.gov.uk
British Horse Society	Kay Driver – 01926 707700

**If you have any questions regarding the above please contact
any of the vets at the surgery to discuss it further.**

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