



Equine Identification Requirements for Out-of-state Travel

The Educated Horseman: Management Series



The U.S. Department of Agriculture instituted its animal disease traceability program to try to improve the ability to trace all livestock in the event of a disease outbreak. Under the federal regulations instituted in 2013, horses moving out of state must be accompanied by an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection – and the rules also apply to mules and donkeys crossing state lines.

What is an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection? It is a document of official identification. This document includes a description of the animal sufficient to identify it. Descriptions should include the animal's name, age, breed, color, gender, markings, unique and permanent forms of identification (brands, tattoos, scars, cowlicks, blemishes or biometric measurements), electronic identification information (microchip number) and digital photographs that are detailed enough to identify the animal. In the case of animals being transported for slaughter, a USDA back tag is required, too.

But don't worry if all that sounds cumbersome. You really are not required to have another piece of paper to travel out of state with your horse. The required document basically is your animal's health certificate.

Until this regulation was formulated every state could have different requirements regarding paperwork



required for interstate travel. The USDA now has made it a national requirement for all horses, mules and donkeys to have a current interstate certificate of veterinary inspection (also known as a health certificate). For example, to enter Louisiana, you must have a health certificate, which includes each animal's temperature and was issued within 30 days of travel, as well as a negative

equine infectious anemia test (or Coggins test) that was issued within one year of travel.

There are some exceptions to the requirements of this federal regulation, however. Those include:

- Horses that are used as mode of transport (horse-back, horse and buggy, etc.) for travel to another location with plans to return directly to the original location.
- Horses moved from a farm or stable for veterinary treatment that are returned to the same location without change in ownership.
- Horses moved directly from a location in one state through another state to a second location in the original state.
- Animals being moved between shipping and receiving states or tribes with another form of identification agreed upon by animal health officials in the shipping and receiving states or tribes.

Because the USDA has created exceptions to the regulation, it is best to contact officials in your destination state prior to traveling for information about current import requirements.

Visit our website: www.LSUAgCenter.com

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References

APHIS-USDA. 2013. Final Rule: Traceability for livestock moved interstate: summary of general requirements by species. www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability.

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