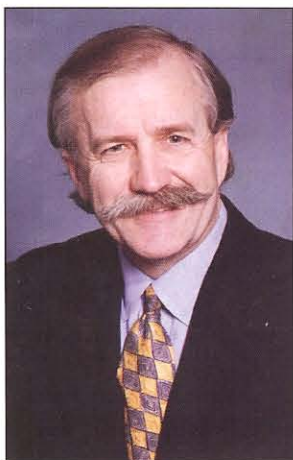


interstate transportation



By Mati Jarve
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WHETHER YOU ARE INVOLVED IN BREEDING, SHOWING OR SIMPLY OWN A horse, it is almost certain that there will come a time when you will cross state lines with your horse. When you do, it is important to know that every state requires certain health documents to accompany the horse. The two most widely required documents are the Veterinary Health Certificate and the Coggins Test. These certificates are required to protect the health of the horses in the state that you are entering by avoiding, or at least minimizing, the chances of spreading equine diseases.

The United States Department of Agriculture, along with the various state departments of agriculture mandate certain information on the health certificate, most typically the following:

- Name, breed and registration number of the horse
- Sex, age, color and identifying markings (including tattoos)
- Record of physical examination, confirming that the horse is free of any communicable, infectious or contagious diseases

The physical examination must be done by a licensed veterinarian. Any unusual findings must be noted and any required vaccinations must be administered. Most states will accept a health certificate as valid for 30 days. Thereafter, it may be considered out of date and void. It is also important to keep the paperwork with the horse. If the state authorities inspect your horse and the certificate is not immediately available, your horse may be subject to seizure and quarantine until the documentation is produced. In addition, you may be subject to a fine.

In addition to the health certificate, most states require a negative Coggins test confirming that the horse is not infected with Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA), also known as "swamp fever." In most states, the Coggins test must have been administered within 12 months of the time the horse is transported into that state. However, there are a substantial number of states that require a negative Coggins test within 6 months of importation. A few states are even more restrictive. EIA is a highly contagious disease transmitted between horses by insects which bite and carry the blood from an infected horse to other horses. Although there are various levels of infection, the acute stage may cause an elevation in temperature, weight loss, anemia and even death. A horse may also not appear to have any symptoms, yet still tests positive for EIA antibodies. This horse can still pass on the disease. According to most veterinarians, horses diagnosed EIA positive are usually not showing any sign of sickness or disease.

If you intend to travel interstate, you should contact the Department of Agriculture in each of the states you will be traveling through to find out their specific requirements. In the past, there have been severe restrictions and limitations, including quarantine, of incoming horses when there have been outbreaks of various communicable, infectious or contagious diseases in various states.

There have been a few states that have enacted regulations to allow recognition of an "Equine Interstate Passport Card." Although these cards obviate the need to carry the actual paper Health Certificate and Coggins test, it does not do away with need to have the examination and test done. Unless you have one of these passports and travel only in the states that recognize them, it is the better practice to carry the actual documents with your horse at all times.

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