

Passports

It is a legal obligation that every horse in the UK has a passport to permanently identify them. The fine for being found to not have a passport for a horse under your care is £5000.

There are many misunderstandings about the passport system in the UK; it is the intention that this information sheet helps to resolve some of these questions.

Does my horse need to be microchipped to receive a passport?

As of the 1st July 2009, a new passport can only be issued if the horse is microchipped. This applies to older horses as much as to foals, therefore if you are applying for a passport for the first time for your horse you will require to have them microchipped at the same time.

Why do I need a passport?

Horse passports act as a record of drugs administered to your horse, as the horse is now regarded as a food producing animal in the EU. Certain drugs cannot be administered to horses that are intended to enter the human food chain (including commonly used drugs such as bute). If you cannot produce a passport for examination when the vet attends to examine your horse the vet may be limited in which drugs he or she can administer.

What if I buy a horse and do not receive a passport?

A passport proves a horse's identity, if one is not produced at the time of purchase, this is not only illegal but should alert the buyer that all may not be as it seems with the horse! The vendor can be prosecuted by Trading standards for not producing a passport at the time of sale.

My mare is due to foal, how quickly do I need to get the foal passported?

This must be done before the foal is six months old, or by the 31st December of the year the foal is born, whichever is later.

I am putting my horse out on loan, who keeps the passport?

Technically the day to day keeper of the horse should have the passport in their possession in order for it to be inspected on demand. Many people are concerned that by giving their passport away they are relinquishing ownership of the horse however it is a legal requirement that the passport can be shown to an inspector within 3 hours of a request for inspection. These rules also apply if a horse is kept at livery, the person who is in charge of the horse's day to day care should be in possession of the passport. The passport must accompany the horse at all times if it is travelling or attending shows.

What if I lose my passport?

Ask a vet to scan your horse's neck for a microchip, if there is one present the number will assist the passport issuing authority in identifying the horse involved. Contact the original passport issuing authority to arrange a duplicate passport to be issued. There are many issuing authorities including breed societies, British Horse Society and PetID.

Do I have to sign my horse out of the food chain in order for a vet to treat him?

No, however it is essential that you make your wishes known to the treating vet **before** they administer any medication. If you decide that you would like your horse to enter the human food chain eventually it can still be treated but certain drugs cannot be used. The horse must be signed INTO the food chain in this situation and all drugs given must be recorded. Most pet and general purpose horses are signed out of the food chain to allow flexibility in treatment options and peace of

mind. Once a horse is signed OUT of the food chain it can never be signed back in, so consider your options carefully before making a decision. If you are unsure whether your horse has been signed in or out of the foodchain, or would like to clarify the position for your horse, please ask a vet to look at your passport when they are next at your yard.

What happens to the passport when my horse dies/ is euthanased?

Upon the death of a horse, the passport should be returned to the issuing body for cancellation.

Useful links:

www.gov.uk - Horse passports