

PANORAMA

Thematic portfolio



Facilitation of international movement of competition horses



PERSPECTIVES

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AROUND THE WORLD

PERSPECTIVES

Practical challenges to the international movement of sport horses

In recent years, there has been considerable progress in enabling sport horses to move more easily between countries. However, some practical difficulties remain, including the facilities available at border crossings, infrastructure for quarantine and isolation, and the planning and logistics involved in international movements.

KEYWORDS

#animal movement, #competition horse, #International Equestrian Federation (FEI), #International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA), #International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC), #public-private partnership.

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Considerable progress has been made in recent years in facilitating the international movements of sport horses. Activities undertaken jointly at the global and regional levels by the International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) have played, and will continue to play, an important role in achieving this goal. However, some practical difficulties remain.

Conditions at border crossings, especially when transporting horses overland, are often not optimal for safeguarding the welfare of the horses. Border inspection posts are rarely adequately equipped for the safe unloading of horses, and their watering and shade, and waiting times can be significant. In addition, official veterinarians often have limited time at border inspection posts. To minimise waiting times at borders, stakeholders in the equine industry are encouraged to liaise closely with staff at these inspection posts to ensure that an official veterinarian will be present when the horse(s) arrives.

Sport horses are international athletes and must consistently undergo high-level training programmes to maintain their level of fitness. Isolation or quarantine stations are not always adequately equipped to allow physical training. Horses that are isolated (before export or post-arrival) can have their performance level significantly affected and even their health jeopardised in facilities that do not allow any such training.

| All international movements of sport horses should be carefully planned

Lastly, all international movements of sport horses should be carefully planned. Those involved in the equine industry, in particular attending veterinarians, should always liaise with the relevant Competent Authorities, shipping agents and laboratories so that everyone is fully informed of the relevant requirements, timeframes and practical tasks, such as obtaining the results of the necessary pre-shipment tests, to prepare for a successful movement.

Strengthened communication, collaboration and mutual awareness between the horse industry, Veterinary Authorities, veterinary laboratories, and Customs Administrations are necessary to overcome these practical challenges. Stakeholders are therefore urged to engage in public-private partnerships at the national level.

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