

Horse & Rider MONTHLY

JULY 2022

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Horse Life



TRAIN / HEALTH

5 Trailer Tips You Need to Know

★ Are you doing everything you can to maintain your horse trailer? Follow our advice to keep your trailer in tip top shape.



Purchase a hitch cover to use when your trailer is not in use and refill the air in your tires to keep them from going flat while sitting.

PHOTO BY JILLIAN SINCLAIR

NOT ONLY ARE HORSE TRAILERS a major investment, but they are what we rely on to safely transport our beloved horses from place to place. Needless to say, they're worth putting a little time and effort into. Follow these tips to keep your trailer in the best shape possible so it will last for miles.

Keep It Covered

The best way to keep your trailer in good condition is by keeping it as out of the elements as possible. It's not always an option to keep your trailer in an enclosed shed or garage, but there are ways you can keep parts of the trailer covered. If tires sit out in the sun, they can dry rot and they will become weaker and go flat easier. Invest in tire covers and use them when the trailer is going to be sitting for a long period of time. You can also buy a hitch cover to help keep sun, rain, and snow out of your brake light wires, safety chains, and other hitch mechanisms.

Seal it Up

It's easy for water to leak in through windows, doors, and other unsealed areas that you might not even notice. When you park your trailer, double-check that all doors, windows, and vents are securely closed. Regularly check these areas to make sure they aren't leaking and replace the rubber seals when they start to become dry and loose.

Clean it Out

Don't forget to clean the manure and shavings out of your trailer after using it. If you let the urine sit for too long it will eventually start to erode the trailer floor and

mats. To keep your floor in the best shape possible, clean it out and hose it out after each use. You can also use extra bedding when there is a horse in the trailer to help absorb urine before it gets to the floor. If you can't hose out the trailer after every use, try and do it at least every few months or between every 3-5 rides.

This is also the perfect time for your trailer to start to rust because water and moisture will build up if the trailer sits still for too long. Moving your trailer every few months will also help keep your brakes and bearings from becoming dry and getting stuck.

Keep it Moving

One of the worst things you can do to your trailer is let it sit for long periods of time. When tires sit for a long time, the weight of the trailer puts pressure on the same section of the tire which will eventually cause damage.

When your trailer is sitting for a period, make sure to check the tire pressure and refill as needed to keep the tires from going flat.

Bring in Professionals

It's always a good idea to have a professional look over your trailer every 6 months or so, depending on how much you use it. They know exactly what to look for and have the tools needed to jack up your trailer to check hard-to-reach places. Bringing your trailer to a trailer mechanic for a checkup will also help prevent any future problems because they will regularly replace and maintain all the necessary parts of the trailer. ★



HEALTH

Travel
Safely

Biosecurity Measures

★ Learn the steps you need to take if your horse is exposed to an infectious disease while traveling or at your own barn.



Don't forget to disinfect all equipment that the sick horse comes into contact like stall doors and grooming supplies

IF THERE WERE AN OUTBREAK of an infectious equine disease in your locality, would you know how to keep your horses safe? Or what to do if they were exposed—or became ill? We asked H&R's contributing veterinarian, Dr. Barb Crabbe, for a step-by-step checklist to cover the various scenarios. Here's what she told us.

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TRAVEL PAPERS: NUISANCE OR NECESSITY?

Learn how equine-travel documents protect your horse and get answers to commonly asked questions for equine-travel requirements.

Health papers serve a much bigger purpose than granting you permission to travel with your horse. They help prevent and eradicate equine diseases, along with tracking and controlling outbreaks.

PHOTO BY MICHAELA JAYCOX



Equine travel has shown staggering growth in recent years, both domestically and internationally. Officials are working hard to develop systems to minimize risks that come with it.

PHOTO BY CHRIS/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

I was digging through a box of papers the other day and came across a report I'd written in sixth grade: "EIA: Is Test and Slaughter the Answer?" I still remember writing the report, pondering the dilemma, and looking for solutions. I somehow grasped the importance of controlling the spread of a terrible, fatal disease in horses. That was 1972.

Fast-forward to today. I've been a practicing veterinarian for 30 years. And in that 30 years, I've never seen a positive Coggins test, the blood test that detects a horse's antibodies to equine infectious anemia (EIA).

How can that be? Because, in fact, testing and "lifetime quarantine" did prove to be the answer. Does that mean EIA has been eradicated completely? No. But that does mean it's been pretty well controlled—largely because of mandatory testing required for horses transported across state lines.

Considering the low risk of your horse contracting EIA, you might find yourself

frustrated by the requirements for Coggins testing and a veterinary inspection to travel to horse shows, equine events, and trail-riding destinations. It might seem like a waste of time and money to pursue an already-expensive hobby. After all, there's nothing to prevent your horse from getting sick after the inspection and before you hit the road. And half the time, no one checks your papers anyway.

You might not realize that those health papers serve a bigger purpose than simply "granting you permission" to travel with your horse. In fact, they're one of the most important tools officials have for eradicating equine diseases, preventing new diseases from gaining a foothold in the country, and tracking and controlling outbreaks.

Here, I'll answer common questions about equine-travel requirements—not only what they are but also why they matter. In the end, you'll begin to understand the essential role those require-

ments play in protecting not only your own horse but also horses everywhere.

Q: What is a Coggins test, and why is it required for travel? I've had my horse tested every year since I've owned him, and it always comes back negative.

A: The Coggins test looks for antibodies in your horse's bloodstream against EIA, a potentially fatal viral disease that's passed from horse to horse by bloodsucking insects. This virus can cause an acute form of the disease with severe signs—including high fever, weakness, depression, and even death—or a chronic form with milder signs that come and go for years. There's no available treatment, and an infected horse harbors the virus for life. To complicate matters, an infected horse can become an inapparent carrier—meaning that he harbors the virus in his bloodstream, but never shows clinical signs. It's this invisible carrier state that makes this

disease so difficult to control; hence, the testing requirements.

The incidence of EIA peaked in the 1960s and 70s; 10,371 cases were reported in 1975. The Coggins test was introduced in 1972. The incidence dramatically decreased in the ensuing decades through a program of test and slaughter in some cases or test and mandatory lifetime quarantine of infected horses in others. At its lowest point in 2009, only 37 horses harboring the EIA virus were detected nationwide.

Q: If Coggins testing has been so successful for controlling this disease, why do we still have to do the test? It must be almost gone by now.

A: The 2019 measles outbreak in children is a good example of why this type of thinking is so fatally flawed. When parents stopped vaccinating their children, this fatal childhood disease reared its ugly head. At this writing, 15 states have reported cases of measles. It's easy to forget how terrible these diseases really are when they're rarely seen, and it's easy to become complacent about controlling them.

EIA has been well controlled because of testing. That doesn't mean it's disappeared completely. In 2017, the USDA reported that 1,299,683 Coggins tests were performed in the United States with only 80 positive results. If we stop testing altogether, there's still a small reservoir of horses out there that will allow EIA to rise in prevalence once again—eventually becoming just as widespread as it was in the 1970s.

This risk was demonstrated during the 2018 EIA outbreak in Colorado and nearby states. A single horse was taken across state lines without a Coggins test.

This horse turned out to be a carrier. Due to widespread movement of horses in the area, more than 240 horses were exposed to the index case, and more than 100 of those horses traveled to other states—potentially exposing an enormous number of horses. All of this risk could've been avoided had the original horse been tested prior to transport.

Q: How does it do any good to get a health certificate for my horse 30 days before I travel with him? He could easily get sick after my vet issues the certificate but before I hit the road.

A: It's true that getting a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (or CVI, commonly called a health certificate) prior to travel really doesn't prevent you from hitting the road with a sick horse. But that's not really the point of the inspection. In fact, the most important reason for the CVI requirement is to help control infectious-disease outbreaks by providing a way for officials to trace animal movement.

Traceability depends on three factors: identification, location, and time. An official veterinary inspection helps locate individual horses by placing them at a known location at a specific point in time. With this as a starting point, officials can identify horses potentially exposed to a disease as quickly as possible. Once horses are identified, they can be quarantined to help prevent spread of the disease.

The 2011 equine herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1) outbreak that started at the National Cutting Horse Association Western National Championships in Ogden, Utah, is one of the most frightening examples of just how fast and far a disease outbreak can spread. During that

outbreak, more than 2,000 horses were exposed to the virus at more than 240 facilities in 19 states and one Canadian province. Identifying and tracking potentially exposed horses quickly was critical, not only to control the outbreak at the time but also to study the patterns of spread and to develop strategies for future outbreaks.

If your horse gets sick, stay home, even if you do have papers. It's unwise to travel with your horse if he's spiked a fever or has developed other signs of a potentially transmissible disease, such as a snotty nose, a cough, or diarrhea.

Q: What about an equine passport? I live in a state where I can get a veterinary inspection for my horse at the beginning of the show season that allows me to travel back and forth between several states for six months. How is this helpful?

A: State-to-state requirements do vary. Some require inspection within 10 days of travel, while others allow horses unlimited travel to nearby states for a period of six months. But now you know that the purpose of these inspections is more about monitoring animal movement than preventing sick horses from traveling.

For the purposes of traceability, six-month equine passports are still reported to officials as soon as they're issued, which can help shorten the time it takes to identify a horse exposed to an outbreak and help limit spread. Owners are also required to submit records at the end of the six-month period, which allows officials to examine animal movement to help understand future outbreaks. If you're the holder of a six-month passport, don't overlook this important step. Follow up with reporting on your horse's movement.

Q: I used to travel all over with my horse and nobody ever asked for paperwork. Why do the rules seem to be getting so much stricter? →

"The Coggins test looks for antibodies in your horse's bloodstream against EIA, a potentially fatal viral disease that's passed from horse to horse by bloodsucking insects."

A: One reason is that the scope of equine travel has shown staggering growth in recent years. International travel is the most important factor when it comes to the global spread of infectious disease. In 1997, 517 international equine events were recorded. This number increased to more than 3,400 by 2016. Widespread outbreaks are becoming all too common among these equine travelers.

Even if your horse isn't an international traveler, global increase in horse movement still puts him at increased risk for exposure to disease. Officials are working hard to develop systems to minimize these risks.

Another risk factor: The United States horse population is one of the most naïve populations in the world when it comes to many foreign diseases. An example is equine piroplasmiasis, a tick-borne disease that causes a wide range of non-specific signs, including fever, lethargy, weakness, or even death. Although this disease is common in some parts of the world, it's still considered a foreign animal disease in the U.S.; there are strict testing requirements before entry into the country is allowed. Similar to EIA, piroplasmiasis is carried in the blood of horses that often show no signs at all; testing is the only way to identify an infected horse.

Piroplasmiasis has an interesting history in the U.S. In the early 1960s, it was identified in Florida. In 1962, a statewide eradication effort was initiated; in 1988, the U.S. was declared piroplasmiasis-free. The disease is currently believed to be present in a small area of Texas and has been seen sporadically elsewhere but still

hasn't spread widely throughout the country.

Q: Will piroplasmiasis testing eventually be required for all domestic travel just like Coggins testing is?

A: Possibly. Piroplasmiasis testing is currently required for any horse coming into the U.S. from any other country except for Canada and Iceland, whether it's for permanent import or a short-term stay. Piroplasmiasis-positive horses that come to the U.S. for international competition may be granted a waiver to compete and are required to be kept in isolated facilities that are overseen by the USDA. Domestically, some states and venues already require piroplasmiasis testing; it remains to be seen whether this requirement will become more common as officials work to prevent a foreign disease from becoming endemic in the U.S.

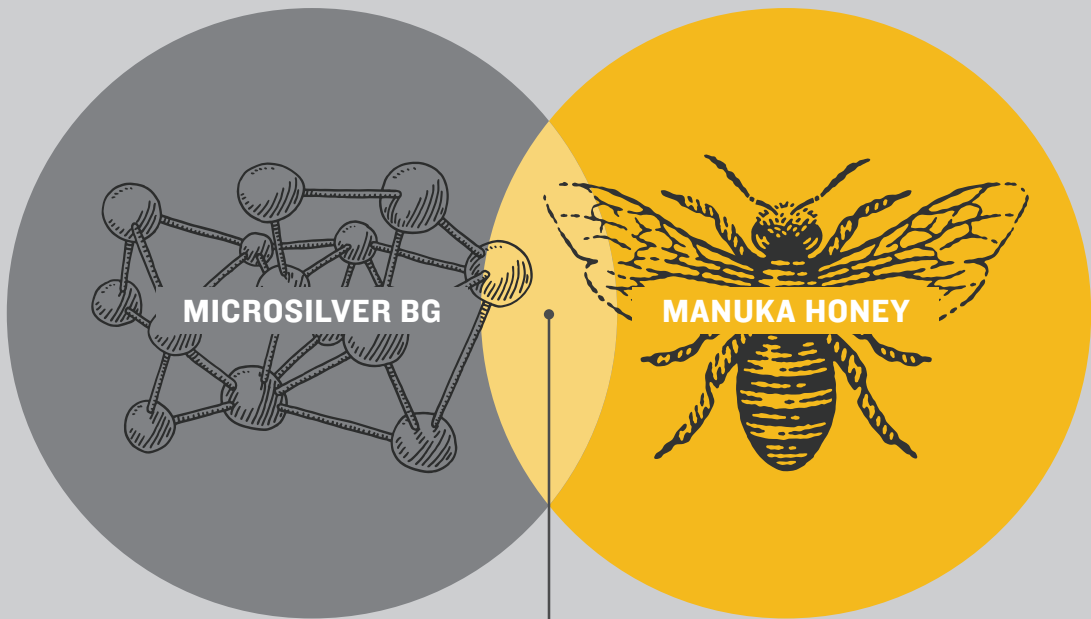
Q: Are tests and veterinary inspections required for equine travel just a nuisance—or are they a necessity?

A: We've seen that testing and inspection requirements play a role in eradicating diseases, as illustrated by: (1) the Coggins test's role in controlling EIA; (2) controlling disease outbreaks through veterinary inspections that aid with traceability; and (3) preventing the introduction and spread of new diseases, such as piroplasmiasis, through testing. All of these requirements may seem like a nuisance, but they really do play an important role in protecting not only your own horse's health but also to help prevent and control spread of disease to horses everywhere. ★



An official veterinary inspection helps locate individual horses by placing them at a known location at a specific point in time.

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THE LONG HAUL TO A NEW HOME

A cross-country move—with a horse—is a lot to take on. Whether you've accepted the job of your dreams or are moving closer to family, these 12 tips will help you plan and execute a successful relocation of your horse.

PHOTO BY SOUTH_AGENCY/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Nearly a decade ago, Megan Carter and her then-12-year-old Arabian gelding, Amigo, prepared for a long trek from Juneau, Alaska, to the Eastern Seaboard. The climate and culture of upstate New York was a stark contrast of her native Alaska, but provided a once-in-a-lifetime career opportunity. But after 10 years, it was time for Carter and Amigo to return home.

"I answered the call of the eagles and decided it was time to follow my heart and return home to be with my family and friends," she says.

In less than six weeks, Carter orchestrated a 4,000-mile relocation for herself and the now 22-year-old Amigo. Her eight-day trip crossed 12 states, the Continental Divide, and the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, and traveled through international waters. Travel by land culminated in Bellingham, Washington. There are no roads connecting Juneau to the rest of Alaska—or even the rest of North America. That meant the final three days of the journey were aboard a ferry boat.

It wasn't the pair's first cross-country experience, but a lot had changed in horse relocation since they'd left Alaska. Carter relied on her tried-and-true strategies from her first adventure and learned a few more. Here she offers 12 tips to make your cross-country—and even cross-water—excursion more comfortable for you and horse.

Pre-Move Planning

● Tip #1: Find the Right Home

Selecting a barn, sight unseen, from hundreds or thousands of miles away can be stressful. If you're moving to a familiar place, enlist the help of family and friends. Your horse-owning kin can offer sound advice on which boarding stables may be a good fit. In the case they're not horsey folks, they may at least be able to help by visiting potential barns and reporting observations.

In Juneau, stalls are scarce. The barn where Carter's mother boards was full, but the equine community there is tight. Her family and friends put the word out that Carter was looking to move home and a couple that no longer had horses offered up a stall in their barn.

On the flip side, if you've purchased or rented a property where you'll have your horses on-site, know in advance whether the property is move-in ready or needs work. If there's not an existing barn or run-in shelter, is there adequate fencing? If the property needs work, can you rally a working party to meet you upon arrival?

● Tip #2: Map It

Begin planning a route as soon as you learn about your relocation. With so many map apps literally at your finger-

tips, it's easy to find directions from one place to the next. But charting a path with a trailer in tow must account for many variables, including changing weather and road conditions.

"We were racing against time," Carter shares about her move home. "I was worried about crossing the Rockies before the snow set in. We just squeaked through. After we got through the mountains in Montana and Idaho, it snowed on the high passes."

Once you know the general track you'll be driving, you can determine how many miles or hours per day of travel are realistic. Carter staggered her trip, driving nearly 8 hours the first day, 12 hours the following two days, 10 hours the fourth day, and four hours on the last day. This left the longest recovery day just prior to boarding the ship and sailing home.

● Tip #3: Consider Layovers

Overnight accommodations had to be part of Carter's master plan. As she plotted her driving route, she simultaneously researched barns with one-night stall rentals. She used Google to search the term "horse layovers" and used helpful websites to find facilities based on these layovers. →

Careful planning, everything from choosing your horse's new home to accurately planning a safe route to travel, will make your horse's move less stressful for you both.



PHOTO BY MALLORY BEINBORN MAY

"I took notes, made phone calls, and booked reservations online," she shares. "A week before departure, I followed up with each location to confirm the arrangements. Once I was on the road, I called ahead with estimated times of arrival."

● **Tip #4: Get Paperwork in Order**

Just as when you travel to a show or trail ride across state lines, you'll need to investigate the veterinary records required along the way, at each "horse hotel," and at your final destination.

"I was required to contact the Alaska State Veterinarian to obtain a permit to bring Amigo into the state on the ferry," she explains. Without it, her entire trip would've been in vain.

The ferry had its own requirements, including the permit, negative Coggins test, a health certificate, and a rabies vaccination. Most relocations won't include a ferry, but if at any point someone else will be in charge of transporting your horse, find out about any requirements you'll need to meet.

Investigate any additional vaccinations needed at your final destination, whether you'll be at a commercial boarding facility or a barn on your own property.

● **Tip #5: Pack First-Aid Supplies**

Be prepared and carry supplies for any and all emergencies. An equine thermometer, anti-bacterial ointment, and Vetrap are a few of the basics. Your veterinarian can offer additional recommendations based on your horse's needs.

Carter was glad she included Banamine (a non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug dispensed by veterinarians) in her kit. On the second day of the trip, Amigo spiked a fever and was noticeably uncomfortable. At the pair's first stop in Minnesota, she administered the pain reliever and watched Amigo closely throughout the night. He'd recovered by morning and was ready to continue on the journey. Carter did replenish her

supply of Banamine just in case she needed it again.

"It's helpful to have on hand in an emergency," Carter advises.

● **Tip #6: Schedule a Pre-Trip Inspection**

Hire a reputable mechanic to examine your truck and trailer. Perform any regular maintenance or needed repairs before hitting the road. If you haul regularly, you're probably ready to go. If your rig has been sitting idle for any period of time, make sure everything is in working order.

"I hadn't used my trailer in four years," Carter shares. "And I'd purchased a new truck, so I had a hitch installed and made sure the trailer was safe."

On the Road

● **Tip #7: Make Regular Pit Stops**

Schedule stops every few hours. Drivers and passengers alike need food and bathroom breaks and a few minutes to stretch. Traveling with additional animals, such as cats or dogs, can also necessitate stops.

● **Tip #8: Offer Fluids**

Dehydration can be a challenge, especially for horses that aren't used to traveling. They may not like the taste of unfamiliar water or may be reluctant to drink while in transit. If you know you have a finicky horse, fill a portable tank, and bring water with you. Depending on the distance this supply won't last the entire trip, but it's a good way to start.

"Amigo became dehydrated because he wouldn't drink early in the trip," Carter says. "So I mixed bottled spring water and apple cider, which was more to his liking." Consider adding flavoring to your horse's home water to accustom him to the taste, then continue flavoring it on the road for consistency.

● **Tip #9: Provide Hay**

Full hay bags keep horses occupied during an otherwise monotonous ride. Fill a few extra hay bags before leaving

ALL ABOARD

It's common for international-level show horses to travel by ferry or plane, but most horse owners move their horses by truck and trailer. Horse owners living in Alaska are familiar with the unique requirements for traveling by ferry as that's often the only viable option for getting to shows or other events.

The Alaska Marine Highways system provides specific guidelines for livestock traveling on the ferry. For example, shavings and straw are prohibited. No more than five bales of hay can be carried by a single truck/trailer combination. These essentials are flammable. Sand, dirt, cat litter, or wood pellets can be used.

Depending on the mode of transport, water may not be readily available.

"Even though the ferry has water spigots on deck, the reservation people will tell you they do not have water for 'livestock,'" notes Carter.

Carry a portable water tank so you have enough water for the trip.

"Amigo actually drank better on the ferry than he did anywhere else," says Carter. "Once horses get on the ferry, they tend to relax because they don't have to shift or brace their weight to keep up with the changing terrain of the road."

Transporting livestock on the ferry must be pre-approved and entails specific guidelines. The animals remain in the trailer and travel on the ferry's car deck. Owners/caretakers are granted access at scheduled intervals throughout the trip to check feed and water supply.

so that when you stop to check on the horses you can easily swap a full bag for an empty one without fussing with hay nets in a parking lot. Bringing enough hay from home is easier on your horse's system and avoids a swift switch in feed supply.

● **Tip #10: Provide Airflow**

Adequate ventilation is key to a com-



H&R FILE PHOTO

A well-stocked first-aid kit will help you feel prepared for any emergency you might encounter on the road or at one of your overnight stops during your travels.

fortable ride across the many miles. Open vents to promote airflow. Keep an eye on changing weather conditions as you travel. You might need to adjust the vents several times across the varying weather zones.

"What you think is cold is actually refreshing for your horse," Carter shares.

Settling In

● **Tip #11: Find Feed and Hay**

Ideally, you'll bring a supply of grain and several days' worth of hay along with you to provide a smooth transition to a new food source. In advance of your arrival, call the local feed store or a boarding facility to request recommendations for reputable hay suppliers. Don't be afraid to look around or pass on hay if you're not satisfied with the quality. (A full-service facility will source hay and feed for you.)

● **Tip #12: Find Your Tribe**

Once you arrive and have the necessities taken care of, ask around for recommendations of veterinarians, farriers, and other professionals needed for your horse's long-term care and to establish your new horse life. ★



PHOTO BY JENNIFER PAULSON

A well-fed horse is a happy traveler. Keeping forage in front of your horse helps him stay occupied. Fill a few extra hay bags before you leave so they're ready to go on the road.