Import information notes are technical documents containing import requirements, and are for use by veterinary staff.

Please be aware that import conditions may be updated due to changes in policy or legislation. Please ensure that you check the current version of the Import Information Note online.

Please note that any links to legislation provided in this document are for information purposes only and may not be the most recent version. Please see the EU legislation paragraph below for further information regarding how to find consolidated versions of the legislation.

**Import Information Note (IIN) — Imports of horses and other equidae from third countries (IIN EQ/2)**

**1. Scope**

Imports of horses and other equidae from third countries.

Information concerning the importation of equine semen, ova and embryos is contained in Importer Information Note EOCG/TC/2.

Equidae are defined in Council Directive 2009/156/EC as “wild or domesticated animals of the equine (including zebras) or asinine species or the offspring of crossings of those species.” These include horses, ponies, asses, mules, donkeys and zebras.

“Registered equidae” means any equidae registered as defined in Council Directive 90/427/EEC on the zootechnical and genealogical conditions governing intra-Community trade in equidae identified by means of an identification document issued by:

(i) the breeding authority or any other competent authority of the country where the animal originated which manages the studbook or register for that breed of animal; or

(ii) any international association or organisation which manages horses for competition or racing”.

2. Conditions applicable to imports from Norway / Switzerland / Liechtenstein

Please see IIN EQ/1 covering movement of equidae from EU Member States for the import conditions applicable for equidae imported from Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

3. Conditions applicable to imports of equidae from third countries

Council Directive 2009/156/EC lays down the animal health conditions governing the movement and import from third countries of equidae. In addition, Commission Decision 2004/211/EC (as amended) establishes a list of third countries from which imports of equidae are authorised.

Horses imported from third countries are not required to have a passport. The importer must apply for a passport within 30 days of importing a horse. If the horse is re-exported to a third country within 30 days it is not obligatory to obtain a passport.

The importation of horses and other equidae into the EU from approved third countries is subject to compliance with harmonised EU rules. These are laid down in a number of Commission Decisions as follows:

- **Commission Decision 92/260/EEC** (as amended) on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for the temporary admission of registered horses;
- **Commission Decision 93/195/EEC** (as amended) on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for the re-entry of registered horses for racing, competition and cultural events after temporary export;
- **Commission Decision 93/196/EEC** (as amended) on animal health conditions and veterinary certification for imports of equidae for slaughter;
- **Commission Decision 93/197/EEC** (as amended) on animal health conditions and veterinary certification on imports of registered equidae and equidae for breeding and production; and
- **Commission Decision 2004/211/EC** (as amended) on the authorised imports of live equidae and semen, ova and embryos of the equine species

All equidae must comply with the animal health requirements laid down in the relevant Commission Decision and be accompanied by an original health certificate, signed by an Official Veterinarian of the veterinary authority in the country of export, which conforms with the appropriate model laid down in that Commission Decision. In all cases, the health certificate must:

- be issued on the day of loading or, in the case of registered horses, on the last working day before embarkation;
- be in English and the official languages of the country of export and the Member State in which the import inspection is carried out;
- consist of a single sheet or linked sheets following the principles of certification;
- be made out for a single consignee; and
- be valid for a period of 10 days.

4. Transit of equidae through non approved countries
Third countries are approved to send horses to the EU if, amongst other things, they have a satisfactory equine disease status. The accompanying health certificate is issued following clinical examination and obtaining satisfactory test results. In order to ensure that certification guarantees are not compromised, horses should not be placed at risk of contracting disease on route.

Veterinary inspectors at Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) have been told that, when considering the origin of an imported horse, they should make themselves aware of any intermediate stops.

Where concern that stops (scheduled or non-scheduled, open or closed-door refuelling etc.) have been made in countries that are not approved for exports to the EU, they should assume that the import guarantees have been invalidated. Where such a decision is made the options available to the veterinary inspector include return to the country of origin, restricting under quarantine conditions whilst further investigations are carried out or destruction.

If it is impossible to avoid using a route involving such stops then the circumstances should be put in advance to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Centre for International Trade - Imports, who will consider whether it would be safe to authorise the route. A qualitative risk assessment will be done based on the available animal health information at the time before coming to a decision.

5. Temporary Import of Registered Horses

Commission Decision 92/260/EEC (as amended) only applies to registered horses which are normally resident in a third country but which are being imported temporarily into the EU. Such horses are permitted to remain in the EU for no more than 90 days. The necessary health certificate must include a signed declaration from the owner or representative of the owner that the horse will not be resident within the EU for more than 90 days. Where circumstances change and there is a desire to keep such horses within the UK either for more than 90 days or on a permanent basis then an application for extension or permanent status, outlining the circumstances, must be put to the APHA Centre for International Trade - Imports before the expiry of the 90 day period.

Each case will be considered on its merits, but it should be made clear here that there should be no expectation that such applications for extension/permanent status will be granted. Animals which over stay this limit are non-compliant and enforcement action may be taken.

6. Re-entry of Registered Horses after Temporary Export

Commission Decision 93/195/EC (as amended) only applies to the re-importation into the EU of registered horses which are usually resident in the EU and which have been temporarily exported to a third country for a period of less than 30, 60 or 90 days depending on which condition applies, in order to take part in racing, competition or other cultural events.
The necessary health certificate must include a signed declaration from the owner or representative of the owner that the horse has not been outside the EU for more than the specified limit nor been in a third country which is not in the same group during that time; that the horse has been resident on holdings under veterinary supervision and has not come into contact with equidae of a lower health status except during competitions.

For further information regarding the re-entry of registered horses for racing, competition and cultural events after temporary export, please see Article 1 of Commission Decision 93/195/EEC.

7. Import of Equidae for Slaughter

Commission Decision 93/196/EEC (as amended) only applies to equidae being imported for immediate slaughter. All such animals must be clearly and indelibly marked by a hot branded "S" of not less than 3 cm size on the hoof of the left front leg. The necessary health certificate must include a signed declaration from the owner or representative of the owner that the animals have been resident in the country of export since birth or for at least 90 days.

8. Permanent Import of Registered Horses and Equidae for Breeding and Production

Commission Decision 93/197/EEC (as amended) applies to the permanent importation of registered horses and equidae for breeding and production. The necessary health certificate must include a signed declaration from the owner or representative of the owner that the animals have been resident in the country of export since birth or for at least 90 days.

Blood samples for pre-import testing of equidae from countries listed under Certificate Model B of Commission Decision 93/197/EEC (as amended) with the exception of horses from Australia and New Zealand, must be sent to laboratories approved by Defra. For imports from Eastern Europe, one of the following approved laboratories must be used:

- National Veterinary Institute,
  Sidlistni 136/24
  03 Praha 6
  Czech Republic

- Central Veterinary Laboratory (LCV-B)
  Orszagos Allategeszegyvi Intezet
  Budapest, tabornok u.2.
  Hungary

Alternatively for tests carried out in the UK two different laboratories must be used according to the test to be done

For Vesicular Stomatitis at:
Institute for Animal Health  
Pirbright Laboratory  
Ash Road  
Pirbright  
Woking  
GU24 0NF  
United Kingdom

**For equine infectious anaemia, dourine, glanders and (for entire males over 180 days only) equine viral arteritis, at:**

APHA Weybridge,  
New Haw  
Addlestone  
Weybridge  
Surrey KT15 3LS  
United Kingdom

In all cases, the laboratory test results must be attached to the health certificate accompanying the imported animal(s). The requirement for laboratory results to accompany the health certificate also applies to imports from Turkey (Group E).

9. Veterinary checks

Consignments may only be imported through an approved Border Inspection Post (BIP). Consignments must be pre-notified to the relevant BIP, by completion of Part I of the Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED) or by electronic means as agreed with the BIP.

The person responsible for the consignment must give notice of the proposed entry of the consignment at least one working day before the expected arrival on European Union territory. The notification shall be made to the inspection staff at the BIP using the document drawn up in accordance with the model Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED) set out in the Annex to Commission Regulation (EC) No 282/2004, as amended.

The Official Veterinary Surgeon (OVS) will carry out veterinary checks (for which a charge will be levied) in accordance with EU legislation. On completion of these checks they will complete the CVED. The CVED should accompany the consignment to the first point of destination. The OVS will retain the original certification.

Consignments checked in another Member State must be accompanied by a CVED issued from the point of entry into the Union.

- [Further guidance on veterinary checks on live animals](#)
- [Border Inspection Posts](#)
10. Cleansing and Disinfection of Vehicles

After the transport of any hoofed animals, the means of transport and associated equipment must be cleansed and disinfected before it is used again to transport animals. It also specifies that, even if this has been done, the means of transport must be cleansed and disinfected again to reduce the risk of transmission of diseases before the animals are transported.

- The Transport of Animals (Cleansing and Disinfection) (No. 3) (S.I. 2003 No.1724) (England) Order 2003
- The Transport of Animals (Cleansing and Disinfection) (Wales) (No. 3) Order 2003
- The Transport of Animals (Cleansing and Disinfection) (Scotland) Regulations 2005

Following the journey the vehicle must be cleansed and disinfected within 24 hours. It requires any person transporting such animals to remove dead animals, litter and excreta from the means of transport as soon as possible.

11. Welfare of Animals during Transport

Importers are reminded that they must comply with rules on the welfare of animals during transport. For information on the rules see GOV.UK.

- Welfare of animals during transport

12. Deaths of Animals in Transit

If an imported animal dies in transit to, or at a port or airport in Great Britain, the person in charge of the animal must report the death to the local Regional Operations Director/Field Team Leader/Director of Operations (Scotland). The carcase of the animal can only be disposed of in accordance with any directions given by a veterinary inspector.

13. Rabies risks

Importers and owners of imported animals are warned of rabies risks and are asked to pay special attention to the health of any imported animal during its first six months in Great Britain. Symptoms of the disease in horses and other equidae are as follows:-

- Itching of site of infected wound, the irritation often causing rubbing and biting of the parts, often tearing the flesh.
- Animal becomes alert, ears erect, and moving backwards as if listening intently in all directions.
- Efforts made to break halter and attack manger with teeth, which may become broken (may also attack handler and is capable of inflicting massive wounds). Refuses food and may swallow wood, straw and manure. Genital excitement is common.
- Paralysis first appears in the throat, unable to drink water. Paralysis of the legs soon follows.

If importers see these symptoms, details should be reported immediately to the local APHA office. Rabies is, in any case, compulsorily notifiable to the authorities by law.

14. Post-Import Checks

Equidae imported into Great Britain from third countries may be subject to post-import veterinary and documentary checks. The nature of the checks will depend on the disease risk associated with the imported equidae but may include the collection of samples. Movement restrictions of the equidae and other animals (animals which may have been either in direct or indirect contact with the imported equidae) that may pose a disease risk to Great Britain may be imposed by Official Veterinarians. The veterinary authorities in Great Britain will make a judgement on any further action, including removing any restrictions, which may have been imposed.

15. Safeguard measures

Situations where emergency safeguard action has been taken at very short notice, to prohibit or restrict the importation of certain animals/products from certain countries following an outbreak of serious disease in those countries may not be covered. Details of safeguard measures can be found in our Topical Issues page on the website.

- Topical issues
  Alternatively you can keep up to date with amendments to legislation by checking the European Commission’s website.

- European Commission’s website

16. European Union legislation

Consolidated texts, which integrate the basic instruments of Union legislation with their amendments and corrections in a single, non-official document, are available. Each consolidated text contains a list of all legal documents taken into account for its construction.

You can search for consolidated texts by using the simple search option on the European Commission website. Once you have selected the relevant legislation, click the ‘linked documents’ tab, and then scroll down to ‘all consolidated versions’ and select the most recent version.
• **Simple search**

Please note that the consolidated text may not contain the latest amendment to the legislation, as it takes several weeks for this to be updated.

Texts provided in this section are intended for information only. Please note that these texts have no legal value. For legal purposes please refer to the texts published in the 'Official Journal of the European Union'.

• **Official Journal of the European Union**

17. **Other important advice and guidance**

Importers should note that the information given relates only to animal health and public health conditions of import. It does not give guidance on other conditions that may need to be met.

18. **Contact for further information on import requirements**

For further information regarding import requirements, contact the APHA Imports team:

Centre for International Trade - Carlisle  
Eden Bridge House  
Lowther Street  
Carlisle  
CA3 8DX  
Email: Imports@apha.gsi.gov.uk  
Telephone: 03000 200 301  
Fax: 0208 0260 498