

2022, TURNING POINT FOR EU-EQUINE INDUSTRY AND SPORT



A briefing by the European Horse network



2022 could be a turning point for the European Horse Industry, struggling to manage the Impact of the Covid crisis, Brexit and the implementation of the new European Animal Health legislation. The industry is concerned by the antimicrobial debate and the reform of the transport regulation.

While adapting to the sanitary and legislative constraints, the equine Industry represents a unique asset for NextGenerationEU, the future European Agriculture policy and Green Deal.

- In 2019, around 87,817 equines¹ were transported alive between EU Member States and from the EU to third countries.
- It is estimated that around 58% of live equines transported between the EU Member States (MS) were not intended for slaughter².
- 26,000 international movements of Thoroughbreds annually between France, Ireland and UK alone before Brexit.
- The cost and administrative burden of transporting a horse between the EU and Great Britain has risen enormously.
- No fewer than 38 of the World's Top 100 Thoroughbred Races are run in Europe - more than Asia (which has 23) Australasia (26) and the Americas (13): these races require international competition to maintain their status.
- Movements of horses to and from Britain has severely reduced, negatively affecting European racing, sporting and breeding activities.



¹ This figure includes horses, asses, mules and hinnies and refers to all movements registered on the TRACES system.

² However, due to the scale and breadth of the equine sector, and its fragmented structure, these figures cannot be guaranteed

● THE MOVEMENT OF HORSES GREATLY IMPACTED BY COVID AND BREXIT

Impact on the horseracing industry

The movement of Thoroughbreds is central to this industry and it starts at the very beginning – at their conception. Artificial Insemination is most strictly banned. So the movement of mares to visit stallions is therefore essential.

The next time a Thoroughbred may typically move is to be sold at a public bloodstock auction, and then, during the horse's racing career, the better it is, the more likely it will be that it will travel internationally to contest the best races.

Again, this process is critical to the improvement of the breed.

With Brexit, movement between Great Britain and EU countries requires additional authorization of drivers and inspection and certification of transport vehicles, blood tests, the involvement of official veterinarians for health certification and inspection, pre-notification of the movement, both outbound and of re-import, Customs paperwork (four sets for a return trip, which nearly all Thoroughbred movements are) and the payment (albeit temporary) of Value Added Tax and Import Duties (depending on the type of import or equine). The burden – in terms of cost, time and hassle – of moving a horse has risen starkly.

The Spanish Jockey Club reports that the cost of sending a couple of mares in a horsebox from Madrid to Newmarket has risen from €700 to €3,200. A survey of British transporters revealed that, once you take veterinary fees, agency fees, Customs handling etc. into account, the cost roughly doubled.

The overall impact means the weakening of the European Horseracing industry with less opportunities to test the horses and therefore the potential quality of the races.



Impact on equestrian events

In general terms, the additional costs and bureaucracy of crossing the borders to GB is becoming restrictive:

- Important paperwork is needed for the border vets to validate. Delays are long, the price is high and authorisations are often rejected.
- If we take 3 horses out to Europe now it would cost nearly £3,000 just in paperwork and vet bills. Before Brexit it was less than a £1,000
- Sales are very much compromised not only for costs but the whole logistical process
- Extra checks for the lorries and the drivers and the grooms.



The reform of the Animal Transport Regulation

The EHN considers that MEPs should encourage the European Commission to ensure the proper and consistent adhesion, throughout the EU, to existing Regulation (EU) No 1/2005 requirements as common EU standards and enforcement is key. As well, MEPs should encourage the European Commission to take into consideration scientific evidence but also other research sources such as reports and on the ground experiences. Our main areas of concern on the amendments for

the ANIT Committee reports released in July 2021, are proposals for the requirement of veterinary presence at loading, the ban for transportation of live animals to/from third countries, restrictions on transport by RO/RO vessels and the registered/non registered categorisation.

EHN asks EU decision makers to:

- Accelerate the work of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee to avoid areas of avoidable friction between EU and UK and involve experts from the equine industry,
- Call upon the Revenue authorities in Member States in agreeing sensible derogations from the requirement to make payments in relation to Value Added Tax in the case of temporary movements of horses,
- Call upon the ANIT Committee to adopt sensible and evidence-led amendments.

● ONE HEALTH CONCEPT AND THE WELFARE OF EQUINES

Animal welfare

In terms of animal welfare, the EHN considers that the current animal welfare legislation in the EU is not fit for purpose and there is a lack of compliance of current rules. In particular, the review of the three main pieces of legislation affecting equines (transport, welfare at farm and slaughter) opens the possibility to improve existing rules by including the latest scientific evidence and

make them fit for purpose. As well, the development of a scientific opinion on

animal welfare during transport by the EFSA and the report and recommendations launched by the ANIT Committee, must be taken into account when drafting this new legislation.

The EU Platform on Animal Welfare (launched in 2018 and which mandate has been extended until June 2025) is an important tool to ensure an improvement of equine welfare in the EU: The Voluntary Initiative on responsible ownership and care of Equidae produced clear, practical guidelines and other relevant materials which will be ultimately used to support individual owners, professionals and legislators in improving equine welfare in EU and beyond. The recently launched Reference Center for Ruminants and Equines



provides an excellent opportunity to gather all existing knowledge, tools and information to assist the compliance of the EU animal welfare rules, in particular regarding the checks and audits performed both by the EU and the Member States.

- The particularities of equines must be taken into account when drafting the new legislation containing provisions that affects the welfare of equines.
- The review of the legislation must include the latest scientific evidence to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- The Voluntary Initiative on Equidae work should continue and the developed guidelines should be disseminated and promoted to support equine welfare in the EU and beyond.
- The Reference Center for Ruminants and Equines should be used as an effective tool that ensures better compliance with the rules affecting equine welfare.

Animal health and antimicrobials debate

The new Regulation on Veterinary Medicines (Regulation 2019/6) which is planned to come into force in January 2022 will introduce important measures to ensure responsible and prudent use, e.g. banning regular and group preventive treatments, promoting responsible prescribing by a veterinarian, and introducing the monitoring of use per species. These measures envisage a further reduction to the amount of antimicrobials used in animals, in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The parliamentary debate on Delegated regulation (EU) 2021/1760 establishing the criteria for the designation of antimicrobials to be reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans proves that the correct balance between protecting human and animal health is difficult to find. The “One Health” approach, taking into account human health, animal and environment, is needed to solve public health issues such as antimicrobial resistance.

In order to take balanced decisions, the EHN calls for policy makers to work in collaboration with the European equine industry on the following elements:

- Science based decision making. Policy makers should follow scientific evidence. For Delegated regulation (EU) 2021/1760, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) scientific advice takes into account experts opinions from both the WHO (World Health Organisation) and the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health).
- Proportionality. Decisions will have implications on the health of both food producing and companion animals as well as human health. Unbalanced decisions are counter-productive and increase potential risks.
- Responsible use. The animal health sector has shown that it takes prudent use seriously, having reduced antibiotic sales by 34% between 2011 and 2018. Regardless of the husbandry system, biosecurity measures, or other agricultural practices, animals can become sick and require treatments, sometimes with antimicrobials. Horses, due to their sporting use, need access to treatments for their health and welfare.

Horses, due to their sporting use, need access to treatments for their health and welfare.

- Taking into account animal health and welfare. Decision makers should ensure the ability to treat susceptible infections with serious implications for animal health and animal welfare, and potentially for public health. Protection of human health often relies on proper prevention and treatment of disease in animals (zoonotic pathogens can be bacterial, viral, or fungal, and they represent 70% of all human diseases).



EHN Chairman
Mark Wentin
M +32 475 68 56 30
wentin@hippo.be



info@europeanhorsenetwork.eu
www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu