



Medicines and Horse Passports

As the UK is a member of the EU, the EU considers horses to be food-producing animals which means we have to follow several guidelines and restrictions regarding administering certain medicines.

Section IX and what it means

All passports should have a Section IX in which an individual horse must be declared as either he/she IS or IS NOT intended for human consumption in the appropriate sub-section. The owner/keeper and the vet prescribing the medication should sign the passport if a restricted medicine is to be given and the passport is not already signed.

Once the passport has been signed as "NOT intended for human consumption" this can never be changed.

What if I don't want to sign my horse out of the food chain?

It is your decision, but it means that your horse will not be able to receive certain medications and may have to wait a substantial amount of "withdrawal" time (statutory 6 months in many cases) after administering other medications before he/she can legally be slaughtered for human consumption. In some circumstances other medications can be used, but there is not always a suitable alternative.

What if it's an emergency and I don't have my passport?

The vet will use medicines which are suitable for horses intended for human consumption or you may be asked to fill out a form detailing that you understand the horse now must never enter the food chain.

What if my passport doesn't have a Section IX?

Older passports do not always have a Section IX. These should be returned to the Passport Issuing Organisation and will be updated.

Does anyone actually check?

Yes. Every horse which passes through a UK abattoir is tested for meat residues. Large fines (up to £5000) are payable for positive results.

What medicines cannot be given to horses entering the food chain?

- Phenylbutazone ("Bute", "Equipalazone" and "Butagran")
- Suxibuzone ("Danilon")
- Metronidazole
- Chloramphenicol
- Pergolide ("Prascend")
- Other medicines such as some anaesthetic drugs are also banned from use in food producing animals