Self- Certification of Equine Health – What’s Involved?

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In 2009, the Maryland Department of Agriculture mandated that Self-Certification forms for horses be used when bringing horses to and from county and state fair horse shows. This power point will help volunteers, 4-Hers, parents, and 4-H educators gain a greater understanding of what this form is and how it can be used in conjunction with other necessary paperwork.
What papers do I need to show at the county or state fair horse show?

1. Negative Coggins Test
   - Coggins Tests evaluate the horse’s blood for the presence of antibodies for Equine Infectious Anemia (Swamp Fever).
   - Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) is a blood borne virus that is often transmitted by flies and can be deadly in severe cases.
   - Must be done annually and a negative Coggins must be shown at all horse shows.
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2. **Certificate of Veterinary Inspection**
   - Form issued by a veterinarian ensuring your horse has a clean bill of health. It is also known as a health certificate.
   - Only exhibitors coming from a state that does not border MD must have a CVI to cross State lines.
What papers do I need to show at the county or state fair horse show?

3. Self Certification Equine Health Form

- Required for each equine entering a fair/show-type event where multiple livestock species are present. The form must be available for inspection if requested.

- This form acts as an easy checklist to check your animal for symptoms. Exhibitors may not bring an animal having apparent or known signs of a contagious or infectious disease to a show.

- Essentially, this form is a teaching tool to help you recognize symptoms of infectious diseases, so you can prevent an outbreak of diseases within the horse community.

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**Equine Exhibitor’s Self-Certification of Equine Health**

I, the undersigned, hereby certify the following:

1. I am the owner/authorized caretaker/transporter (circle as applicable) of the equine identified on the current valid, “Equine Infection Anxiet” (CEPP) decal/registration.

2. I understand that any equine showing any sign of or having recent exposure to, contagious or infectious disease are not permitted to enter the fair/show premises. These conditions include but are not limited to the following:
   - **SKIN:** Visible evidence of skin infections (bacterial or fungal) with purulent exudate or vesicles.
   - **HEART:** Discharge from the eyes or nose which is excessive in amount or scabby (yellow or white in color) as opposed to the normal clear nasal discharge commonly seen after exercise.
   - **RESPIRATORY:** Signs of respiratory disease, such as fever, coughing, labored breathing, increased respiratory rate and nasal discharge. Animals originating from premises where there is current respiratory disease and animals with any known exposure to infectious disease shall be ineligible to show for a minimum of 21 days after exposure. Infectious respiratory diseases shall include but not be limited to influenza, Aksanevirus, and Streptococci.
   - **GASTRIN:** Evidence of diarrhea which is watery and/or persistent in nature and more than normal for the given climate and animal environment.
   - **FEET:** Horses exhibiting any type of abnormalities are excluded from showing by the rules governing them for health.

3. I have read and understood the above provisions.

4. I know and certify the above animal is not showing for exhibit.

5. I agree not to present for exhibition any equine showing any signs of contagious or infectious disease, or having any known recent (21 days) exposure to any contagious or infectious disease.

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**Date of Inspection**

**Number inspected**

**Signature**

**Printed Name**

**Address**
Where can I get the self certification equine health form?

- Visit the Maryland Department of Agriculture Website at:
  - [http://www.mda.state.md.us/animal_health/fair_show/fair_show_info.php](http://www.mda.state.md.us/animal_health/fair_show/fair_show_info.php)
What health conditions do I have to observe and/or check for the Self Certification Form?

- TPR (Temperature, Pulse, and Respiration)
- Skin
- Head (eyes)
- Respiratory
- Intestinal
- Feet
- Freedom from Infectious Diseases
Vital Signs

- Really LOOK AT your horse everyday
- Know average vital signs:
  - Temperature – 99 - 101° F
  - Pulse (Heart Beat) – 30 to 40 BPM
  - Respiration Rate – 8 to 16 BPM
- Establish and record “norms” for your horse so that you have something to refer to as a baseline for his/her “normal” condition
Locations To Take Vital Signs

![Diagram of horse with labels A to F for vital sign locations.]

**Figure 1. Locations for monitoring vital signs.**

- A = Temperature
- B, C, or D = Heart Rate
- E or F = Respiration Rate
Skin

- The hair coat and skin is generally a good indicator of health.
- Skin should be free from any infections (bacterial or fungal).
- Coat condition may vary with the seasons, whether the horse is stalled or not, grooming practices, medical history, and any type of feed and supplements in the diet.
Skin Characteristics

**Ideal**
- Glossy Coat (Has Bloom)
- Color looks bright
- Hair lays flat
- Hair feels smooth

**Poor**
- Dull Coat
- Hair is brittle
- Hair falls out
- Hair is rough
- Presence of bacterial or fungal infection
Ringworm

• This is a common fungal infection of the skin that presents in circular patterns on the skin
• It is contagious when communal grooming tools are used
Head (Eyes)

- Eyes should be bright and clear
- Horses should have an alert expression and be responsive to normal stimuli
- There should be no opaque (yellow or white in color) discharge from the eyes
- No excessive “weeping” from the eyes
Eye Discharge Examples

Healthy Eye

Unhealthy Eyes

Eye Discharge Examples
Respiratory

• Nasal Discharge
  – Normal discharge is clear, thin, and not excessive
  – Abnormal discharge will be opaque and thick
    • This may be a symptom of some upper respiratory infection
  – This may be the first symptom you notice with the onset of an infectious disease
Respiratory

- Respiration / Breathing
  - Average - 8 to 16 breaths per minute
  - Nostrils flare and contract with each breath
  - To measure breaths per minute, count this flare for 30 seconds and multiply by 2.
  - If your horse is having trouble breathing (with a high respiration rate, coughing, or labored breathing) he may have an infection!
Intestinal Issues

Changes in your horse’s stool can be an indication of a problem

**Normal Feces**
- Small, compacted balls that are fairly solid

**Irregular Feces (Diarrhea)**
- Watery feces that are VERY loose
Feet

- Horses should receive routine hoof care every 6-8 weeks
- There should be no unsoundness within the hoof
- Horses having trouble moving should not come to a show
  - Unsoundnesses may be an indicator of:
    - Infectious disease
    - A result of improper hoof care
    - Sign of joint, muscle, or bone problems
The Healthy Hoof

- Slick, slightly waxy appearance
- Coronary band should feel moist and resilient
- Frog pliable and intact
- Sole should be firm
- White line should be free of discoloration
- Hoof should be free of odor
The Unhealthy Hoof

Foundered Hoof

Club Foot

Abscess
While improper hoof care may not be a symptom of an infectious disease, it is crucial to understand hoof care and recognize when there is a problem.
Common Equine Infectious Diseases

- Rhinopneumonitis - Equine Herpes Virus (EHV)
- Influenza - Myxovirus
- Strangles - *Streptococcus equi* bacteria
Rhinopneumonitis

**EHV Type 1**
- Affects horses of all ages
- Symptoms:
  - Fever (102 – 107 degrees F)
  - Abortion in mares 3-9 months pregnant
  - Congestion and discharge from the nostrils
  - Mild incoordination to severe paralysis

**EHV Type 4**
- Affects young horses
- Symptoms:
  - Fever up to 106 degrees F
  - Upper respiratory infection
  - Golden colored nasal discharge
“Strangles” Symptoms

- Fever of 104 degrees
- Thin watery discharge that becomes thick and yellow as the disease progresses (how the disease is spread)
- Hot, swollen, painful lymph nodes under the throat latch
- Depression
- Loss of appetite
- HIGHLY contagious
Equine Influenza

Symptoms
• Fever - 102-105 degrees for up to 5 days
• Dry cough
• Nasal discharge
• Rapid spread of symptoms throughout herds

Interesting Facts!
• The aerosol form of the virus can survive for 24-36 hours outside of the body, contributing to the high contagiousness of the disease.
• There are 2 distinct viruses that cause the flu. H7N7 (type 1) and H3N8 (type 2)
• This disease has been recognized in horses by humans for over 500 years!
How Do Diseases Spread?

• Most of these diseases are spread through the nasal discharge that accompanies the disease. This occurs by:
  – Direct horse to horse contact
  – Transfer into communal feeding and water troughs
  – Even on your clothes or skin!

• This means you have to be very careful when handling a sick horse
  – Make sure you wash your hands before handling another horse
  – Clean water and feed bins regularly
  – Quarantine sick horse immediately
It’s Up To You!

- It is your responsibility as a horse owner to:
  - Monitor your horse’s health carefully so you can see the symptoms early on before the disease spreads
  - Know the symptoms of disease so you can recognize them in your horse
  - Leave your horse at home if it is sick, and keep it away from others that might get sick too!
It’s Up To You!

• Before going to the county/state fair horse show you should:
  – Use the self certification form to check your horse’s health
  – Sign and date the form and bring it with any other necessary paperwork to the show
  – Be prepared to leave your horse at home if they are showing any signs of illness