

Commission Regulation (EC) No 504/2008

Identification of Equidae

Guidelines to Veterinary practitioners

This document is issued for guidance only and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.

Consult DAFF website www.agriculture.ie for up-to-date version of document

Commencement date

All equidae born in, or, imported into the EU must be identified in accordance with this Regulation, which comes into effect on 1st July 2009 across the EU (Article 1).

Issuing bodies

To access an up-to-date list of the organisations, approved by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Article 4) for the purposes of issuing identity documents for horses (referred to below as “issuing bodies”), click on <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/farmingsectors/horses/equineidentificationdocumentspassports/Equine%20passport%20approved%20orgs.doc>

These issuing bodies are required to record a defined set of data (including the microchip number) in respect of each animal for which they issue a passport.

Identification system

From 1st July 2009 the identification system for equidae will comprise of a passport, a micro-chip and a details recorded on a database by the issuing bodies (Article 3).

Without prejudice to the rules laid down by the issuing body the information required in points 3(b) to 3(h) of Part A of Section I and in points 12 to 18 in the outline diagram in Part B of Section I of the passport need not be completed, however the Department strongly recommends that issuing bodies insist this information is entered in the passport in all cases as a secondary means of identification linking the animal to its passport. This information can be invaluable in circumstances such as a micro-chip ceasing to function or perhaps in situations where a scanner may not be available to read the micro-chip

Micro-chips

Micro-chips implanted in equines must comply with ISO standard 11784 (Article 2). Issuing bodies have been informed that micro-chips intended for horses cannot be used, manufactured, or coded with the Irish 372 Country Code without the express permission of this Department. Issuing bodies opting to use the manufacturer code in their micro-chips must inform DAFF of the number series they will use. Micro-chips can only be implanted in horses by a veterinary practitioner. Micro-chips supplied by one of the issuing bodies (not necessarily the issuing body that issues the passport) are permitted to be implanted in equines identified in Ireland. Veterinary practitioners are required to take all appropriate measures to ensure an equine has not been micro-chipped previously (Articles 9 & 10).

It is accepted that occasionally micro-chips may cease to function. **When a veterinary practitioner is presented with a horse where it appears that the microchip is not functioning s/he should immediately return to the passport and verify that the horse presented does in fact match the passport presented in every other way, as regards markings, colour, description etc.**

Where s/he is satisfied that the horse presented does otherwise match the passport, but concludes that the micro-chip has ceased to function, s/he should then proceed to implant a new micro-chip. S/he should record the number of the new micro-chip on the passport. S/he should sign, date and stamp the passport adjacent to where the new microchip number is recorded on the passport, to indicate that an amendment has been made to the passport. The information in relation to the new microchip and amendment to the passport must be passed on to the issuing body in writing as soon as practicable, but in any event within 2 weeks of the amendment.

Suitability, or otherwise, of equines for human consumption

Equines must have a valid passport in order to be accepted for slaughter.

Equines, identified within six months of birth, are suitable for slaughter for human consumption (Article 20) unless signed out of the food chain in Section IX, Part II, of the passport by the keeper (at their own discretion) or by the keeper and the veterinary practitioner, Annex I, Section IX of Regulation 504/2008 refers.

Equines not presented for identification within six months of birth are not suitable for slaughter for human consumption and must be classified as not intended for slaughter for human consumption in Section IX, Part II, of the passport.

Duplicate passports

Where the original passport is lost and the animal's identity can be established by reference to the micro-chip the issuing body shall issue a duplicate passport. In all such cases the equine will be classified as not intended for slaughter for human consumption in Section IX, Part II, of the duplicate passport.

Replacement passports

Where the original passport is lost and the animal's identity cannot be established the issuing body shall issue a replacement passport. In all such cases the equine will be classified as not intended for slaughter for human consumption in Section IX, Part II, of the replacement passport.

Medicines

Equines benefit from certain exceptional provisions under EU and national medicines legislation (Directive 2001/82 and SI 786/2007). Since the effectiveness of these arrangements, particularly in terms of public health protection, hinge on the equine passport system, it is critical that keepers of horses and veterinary practitioners adhere fully to the provisions of Article 20 of Regulation 504/2008 and SI 786/2007.

In summary, the attention of veterinary practitioners is drawn to the following:

- The legal obligation (set out in Article 20(2) of Regulation 504/2008) on the veterinary practitioner to ascertain the status of the animal ('food/non-food') before deciding to treat the animal in accordance with the **exceptional** arrangements:
- The correct endorsement of the relevant part of the passport depending on the nature of the **exceptional** treatment administered or prescribed:
 - **If the animal is treated –**
 - (in accordance with the Cascade – Regulation 18 of SI 786/2007) with a medicine containing a substance which does not have a Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) and which is not on the 'Essential List (Commission Regulation 1950/2006), or
 - with a veterinary medicine, authorised by the IMB in accordance with Regulation 6(3) of Directive 2001/82 (Regulation 9(12)(b) of SI 786/2007) specifically for 'non-food horses', the veterinary practitioner and the keeper of the animal must exclude the animal permanently from the food chain by endorsing Part II of Section IX of the passport.
 - **If the animal is treated** (in accordance with the Cascade – Regulation 18(3)(b) of SI 786/2007) with a medicine containing a substance covered by Commission Regulation 1950/2006), Part III of Section IX of the passport must be completed in order to exclude the animal from the food chain for at least 6 months (the Animal Remedies Record – Regulation 42 of SI 786/2009 – must also be completed by the keeper).
 - **If a 'food equine' is treated**, other than in accordance with the exceptional arrangements outlined in the two previous bullet points (i.e. authorised product with an MRL), the normal requirements of Directive 2001/82 and SI 786/2007 (withdrawal period/record keeping) apply – it is optional whether to enter such medicines in Part III of Section IX of the passport.

Death of Equidae

Passports of equines disposed of in slaughter plants will be stamped "invalid" on the first page, the date of death will be recorded and the document will be returned to Equine Infrastructures Section, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Farnham Street, Cavan, from where they will be forwarded to the relevant issuing body. Where an equine dies other than in slaughter plants, the keeper shall return the passport to the appropriate issuing body within 30 days of the death of the equine with the date of death included. (Article 19). Issuing bodies must then update their databases accordingly, recording the death of the animal (Article 21).

Central Database for equines

DAFF has no plans to establish a central database for equines at this time.

Any further queries on equine identification should be addressed to:

**Equine Infrastructures Section, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
Farnham Street, Cavan**

e-mail: equine.infrastructures@agriculture.gov.ie

Telephone : 049-4368291

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