

## **Commission Regulation (EC) No 504/2008.**

### **Identification of Equidae Guidelines to Passport Issuing Bodies**

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

*Consult DAFM website [www.agriculture.ie](http://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 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 across the EU (Article 1).

#### **Issuing bodies**

An up-to-date list of the organisations approved by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Article 4) for the purposes of issuing identity documents for horses (referred to below as “issuing bodies”) can be accessed by clicking on:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/farmingsectors/horses/equineidentificationdocumentspassports/ApprovaltoissueEquineIdentificationDocsJan13.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 an identification document ( passport) (Article 21).

#### **Identification system**

From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 the identification system for equidae will comprise of a passport (i.e. the identification document issued for the lifetime of an animal), a micro-chip and details recorded on a database by the issuing bodies (Article 3) under the unique equine life number.

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.

Before issuing a passport (Article 9), the issuing body, or person acting on its behalf, must take all appropriate measures to:

- Verify that a passport has not already issued for the animal

- Prevent fraudulent issuing of multiple passports for an individual animal
- These measures will, at a minimum, include consulting the appropriate papers and electronic records available, checking the animal for any signs indicative of any previous identification as outlined in Article 10.

The passport must be in accordance with Article 5 and comply with the model set out in Annex I to Regulation 504/2008 and must be completed in accordance with Articles 5 & 11

The passport shall not be duplicated or replaced except in accordance with Articles 16 & 17.

### **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 microchips must inform DAFM 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 a micro-chip may cease to function, in such instances the veterinary practitioner should implant a new micro-chip, the number of the new microchip must be recorded on the passport and this information must be passed on to the issuing body.

### **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 (Article 16)***

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 (Article 17)***

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 (Council 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.

There is a legal obligation on the veterinary practitioner to ascertain the status of the animal ('food/non-food') before deciding to treat the animal in accordance with these **exceptional** arrangements and the veterinary practitioner is required to make the appropriate endorsement of the relevant part of the passport depending on the nature of the **exceptional** treatment administered or prescribed.

### **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, Food and the Marine, 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).

### **Databases for equines**

Each issuing body must record the minimum dataset outlined in Article 21. This information must be retained for at least 35 years or two years from the death of the animal (Article 21). DAFM has no plans to establish a central database for equines at this time.

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Any further queries on equine identification should be addressed to:

**Livestock Breeding, Production & Trade Section,  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Farnham Street, Cavan**

e-mail: [equine.infrastructures@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:equine.infrastructures@agriculture.gov.ie)

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Issued by The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine