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Fact Sheet

Are You Ready to Ride Your Horse At a Show?

Whether you are an experienced competitor or a novice rider, there is always room to add to your knowledge bank! Animal science projects and events are continually evolving and it is to your benefit as well as that of your horse, to “stay on top” of things, literally! Most of our interaction as horse owners occurs at home or at a boarding facility, on a trail or in an arena. Regardless of where or what you are doing, there are a few basic things to keep in mind when dealing with horses and preparing to travel or compete with them.

Horse Health

Making sure your horse is healthy is a very important responsibility. All horses, especially in Florida, should be on a regular vaccination and deworming schedule. Because we are prone to large infestations of mosquitos, vaccinations against Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis and West Nile Disease are extremely important. All horses regardless of where they are located, are required to have a current Coggins Paper, or Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) Certificate. Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) is a viral disease and is a retrovirus. Because a horse can be a carrier but not show symptoms, proof of a NEGATIVE EIA test is required in order to transport your horse, or for entry into any competitive event. There is no vaccine or treatment for this disease, so you don’t want your horse exposed to it, and you need to make sure your horse is not a carrier. Horse health is directly related to proper nutrition including forages, grains, supplements and vitamins. Horse are not ruminants, but they still require forages or roughage. Feed for horses varies according to geography, breed, size,

age, forage ability or availability, and what you are using your horse for. You should consult with your local veterinarian, or Equine Specialist to help determine the proper diet for your horse. Proper feed can also have a direct effect on the condition of your horse’s feet, so having a good farrier is imperative. Make sure you take feed and/or hay to your event.

(Sample Coggins Paper)





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Equipment

When preparing for competitions, you should always ensure that your tack is in tip-top shape, before you get there. There is nothing worse than getting to an event and having your tack break! Taking good care of your tack will not only save you money in the long run, it may save your life. Losing a stirrup or a belly girt during an event could lead to serious injury or death. Prior to your event, make a check-list of the items you will need and make sure you have everything together. A good rule of thumb is to have a few spare parts with you. Some examples of things you might have in your tool box or show box might include:

A leather hole punch	Leather cleaner/conditioner	First aid kit (see detailed list)
Pliers Screwdrivers	Extra reins Hoof pick	Water and feed utensils (buckets and rubber feed tub) Combs and brushes
An extra bit Extra curb chain	Halter and lead rope Extra belly girt	Your show clothes and boots Helmet
Spare screws A leather bundle	Saddle and pad(s) Bridle	Your paperwork: Coggins Paper, Health Certificate, Registration, etc. (in waterproof package)



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Basic Items for Your Equine First-Aid Kit

- **Antibacterial soap** – such as Betadine or Chlorhexidine scrub. Clean wound and rinse with saline or water. Do not wrap a wound until it has been rinsed.
- **Antibiotic ointment** – apply to a wound after it has been cleaned and is dry. Examples include triple antibiotic, Neosporin or bacitracin.
- **Sterile gauze sponges and pads** – to cover minor cuts or wounds.
- **Bandages or vet wrap.**
- **Adhesive tape, 1-inch and 2-inch rolls** – use to hold bandages in place.
- **Household scissors and/or knife.**
- **Tweezers.**
- **Ice bags or a chemical ice pack.**
- **Rubbing alcohol** - use to disinfect thermometer after use.
- **Veterinary or human rectal thermometer.**
- **Lubricant** – a water-based lubricating product to help grease the thermometer.
- **Stethoscope** – make sure you have proper training in the use of a stethoscope.
- **Blood stop powder** – place in minor cuts and abrasions to stop bleeding.

Be Prepared

Keep good records, practice and become familiar with your horse's behaviors. Sometimes, the slightest change in behavior can be an indication that something is wrong. When you get to your event and have checked in, make sure that your horse is comfortable, has food and water, and is secure. Most importantly, do your best and have fun!

For more detailed information regarding 4-H horse events, visit the Youth Programs page at <http://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/youth/horse/Shows.shtml>