

# C. Jarvis Insurance Agency INC.

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Providing Equine -Liability - Farm and Ranch Insurance since 1946

**News**

## On the Road. . .

With the very mobile population of the United States, horse transport is becoming a very common concern of horse owners. You'll need to decide well in advance of the trip whether you are going to transport your horse by personal trailer or commercial van. The following suggestions apply which-ever mode of transportation you choose.

The preparations for long distance transportation should start a minimum of two months in advance. Why so long? Because vaccination, deworming, general health care, and acclimatization to trailering all take time.

Is your horse vaccinated for all of the diseases common to Virginia and the East Coast? If not, early planning is essential because most vaccinations require two initial injections, three to six weeks apart. No matter where you are trailering your horse, always find out about needed vaccinations ahead of time from an equine veterinarian in the destination locale. Tetanus, influenza, and herpesvirus vaccines are always a must, and depending upon the time of year, Eastern/Western encephalitis boosters also might be needed. Rabies, Potomac

horse fever, and botulism vaccinations also are recommended for shipment to the East Coast. Contrary to popular belief, adult horses as well as foals can become severely ill with botulism.

If your horse just needs boosters, give them 30 days prior to leaving. An animal vaccinated today is not protected against disease tomorrow. The body needs at least 30 days to adequately respond to the vaccine for protection. Although no vaccine is 100% effective, you can improve the horse's protection by proper vaccination timing and decreasing other stress as much as possible.

Transportation is stressful to any animal's body, so decreasing the stressors will help your horse cope with shipping. Besides updating vaccinations, have your horse's teeth floated if necessary, and be sure that hooves are trimmed or reshod prior to shipping.

Another way to decrease the stress of a long trip is to make sure your horse is used to the trailering process. If you are transporting the horse yourself, the worst time to get the horse accustomed to the trailer is on hauling day. Beginning four to eight weeks ahead of time will afford you the luxury of training

your horse to travel. This is also an excellent time to have your horse trailer inspected and prepared for long hauling maintenance: brakes, lights, tires, floorboards, safety chains, etc.

For long distance transportation, a reputable commercial horse transporter might be a viable, cost-effective option. Professional horse vanning companies ship thousands of horses around the country every year, from backyard horses to Kentucky Derby contenders. Horses are loaded into semi-trailers that are deeply bedded with straw or shavings. These trailers are usually equipped with special shock absorbers and ventilation systems to ensure the horse has a smooth, comfortable ride.

Whether you ship your horse yourself or by commercial van,

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JUNE 2003 NEWS-PAGE 2

a question often arises about wrapping your horse's legs. For long-distance shipping, protection is of primary importance, especially for performance horses. Is your horse difficult to haul because of pawing, kicking, or scrambling in the trailer, or does he stand solidly in the trailer? Horses which don't like being shipped should have protective wraps on their legs to prevent injuries, which can sometimes be serious, such as a hind hoof stepping on the bulbs of a front foot.

Horses need to get used to having bandages on their legs, whether you choose leg wraps or boots that attach by Velcro straps. Otherwise, horses can find themselves fighting the strange feeling of leg bandages while trying to keep their balance in the trailer. Do you know how to properly bandage a horse? If not, no bandages are better than poorly wrapped bandages. Wraps that are applied too tight can cut off circulation to the hoof, leading to laminitis, while loose wraps can fall to the horse's feet, where they can cause the horse to fall. If you feel the horse needs the added protection, but you are not comfortable with keeping bandages on the horse for the length of the transportation, shipping boots with Velcro might be your best answer. Again, the horse needs to become accustomed to having

them applied and walking in them. These boots provide protection and can easily be applied to the leg.

Call ahead to the state veterinarian's office of your destination to be sure you have an appropriate health certificate and required blood tests. This is especially important for equine infectious anemia (which requires a Coggins test) and travel restrictions due to vesicular stomatitis and other diseases.

One other important factor on the day of shipping: contact your veterinarian to give the horse a gallon of a mixture of mineral oil and water by stomach tube. Since the horse's eating and drinking routines will be disrupted during transport, this combination will help maintain the hydration of the horse and prevent constipation. The mineral oil also helps prevent toxins from being absorbed by the intestinal tract.

Finally, your job is not over when your horse reaches his destination. Studies have suggested that normal racehorses transported by air should have at least three days of rest prior to racing. Your horse should also have a period of time to rest after a long trailering. Take the horse's temperature twice daily for three days and carefully watch his feed and water

intake as well as his general demeanor. Pneumonia and gastrointestinal problems are the most common health problems associated with long-distance transportation.

Advanced planning is the key to uneventful, successful cross-country shipping of horses. Preventive medicine, acclimating your horse to trailering, and oiling him will greatly help your horse in his travels.

**Please be sure to stop by our web site to see our newest Breed Spotlight titled "Something Really Special... The American Miniature Horse". This feature is filled with charming photographs by equine photographer, Stuart Vesty and there is a great deal of information regarding one of America's fastest growing breeds.**

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