How to Fill Out FEI and USEF Horse Passports

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1. Introduction
Graduate veterinarians are the only ones permitted to complete and stamp the diagram, description, vaccination, and lab-tests pages of the horse passports. The rest of the document will be completed by the owner or the National Federation (NF). The NF for the United States is the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) based in Lexington, KY. The International equestrian organization is the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI) based in Lausanne, Switzerland. Membership in these organizations, although highly encouraged, is not a prerequisite for completing a passport.

Role of the FEI Passport for Horses
The FEI Passport for Horses is required of all equine competitors in upper-level FEI events. The USEF National Passport is required of all equine competitors in most lower-level FEI events. The two primary functions of the passport are to uniquely identify the horse and to document the communicable disease vaccination and testing history. Secondary functions include documentation of current registration by the FEI and USEF, documentation of the current owner of record, documentation of events attended, and documentation of medication control samples obtained.

Completing the Passport
The influenza vaccination page and the diagram/description page must be completed before validation by the USEF and use at an event. Please review the entire passport to help the owner through this process as quickly as possible, but you are only responsible for the diagram, description, vaccination, and lab-tests pages.

Items Required
You will be expected to have a black ball-point pen, a red ball-point pen, and a personal or clinic stamp to complete the passport. The stamp must include your name and address and should be as small as is practical. Documents that are always helpful are the horse’s registration papers and the vaccination and Coggins’ history from your clinic. Also, white correction fluid is helpful just in case anything needs to be corrected. A passport can be completed in 1 hour on a horse by an experienced FEI veterinarian but allow a few hours in your schedule for the first few passports you complete.

For More Information
The FEI website is the place to find the latest information including rules, forms, and bulletins. Log on by typing www.HorseSport.org or www.FEI.ch.
2. Sections of the Passport

Front Page
The first page of the passport contains four or five pieces of very important information.

Registered Name
The name on the passport is the full name of the horse and is the name that must be used for all event documents and results.

Passport Number
The official, unique, sequential passport number is shown on the first page. The numbering scheme in use for about the last decade is three letters followed by five numbers. The three letters are the International Olympic Committee (IOC)-designated abbreviation for the countries of the world. The letters indicate the issuing agency only, not the country of origin or ownership of the horse. The five numbers are the sequential number of passports issued by that particular country.

Date of Expiry
Passports are not valid forever; they must be revalidated every 4 yr. The first expiration date is 4 yr after the application for the passport was received, not when the passport was validated or when first used.

Unique Equine Life Number
The Unique Equine Life Number (UELN) for horses in the United Kingdom is often listed on the front page. Additionally, Section IX pages (this horse not for human consumption) are generally stapled into the FEI Passports of U.K. horses. Both can be ignored for competition purposes.

NF Registration Number
The NFs will often hand print their registration number in the upper right corner of the first page of the passport. On U.S. passports, the number found there can usually be relied on to be the horse’s correct USEF registration number. This number being on the passport is for convenience only. It is not required.

Chestnuts Page
The Chestnut drawing page is used to aid in the unique identification of the horse. The FEI Identification of the Horse booklet states that chestnuts must be drawn if they have fewer than three whorls. Elsewhere in the booklet, it states that all horses must have three whorls indicated. Use some common sense about drawing the chestnuts. If there is any doubt (e.g., a solid colored horse with few or no unique markings), then draw them.

A suggestion for completing the page is to take digital or Polaroid pictures of each of the four chestnuts, place the picture behind the page, and trace the outline onto the passport. This has yielded the most accurate and simple-to-do drawings to date.

Ownership Page
The ownership page must be fully completed.

Validation
The passport must be validated by the NF. This generally will be done after you complete the document. Remind the owner that they need to return the completed passport back to the USEF for validation before it can be used at an event.

Registered Owner
The passport is the final authority on the registered owner of the horse at an FEI event. Often, the registration papers of the horse get changed, but nobody remembers to officially change the ownership on the passport; consequently, ownership does not get changed with the FEI. NF registration changes are not automatically forwarded to the FEI. Only a change of owner entered and validated on the passport is recorded by the FEI. Usually, all prize money will be distributed to the owner of record as listed in the passport, regardless of its agreement with the entry form.

Identification Page
The identification pages are for documenting each time a horse is identified by its passport by an FEI official. The identification pages give a concise history of the FEI-level events attended since obtaining the passport. These pages will be filled out by the FEI-event veterinarians at each event that the passport is required.

Pedigree
These pages are the newest in the evolution of the passport. The FEI is very cognizant of the desire to improve the economics of equestrian sports. Having a better knowledge of the lineage of the top-level horses will assist in increasing their value. Please encourage the owner to complete the pedigree pages; however, the pedigree pages are not required at this time.

Description and Diagram Page
The center of the passport is intentionally reserved for the most used page. The description and diagram pages, together with the chestnuts page, serve as the sole source of information for determining whether or not the horse can be uniquely identified. These pages contain the highest proportion of freeform information, and consequently, they are the pages where most errors occur.

Goal of the Diagram/Description
The first and foremost goal is to uniquely identify the horse. Can you assuredly say that only this one horse could be represented by this diagram and de-
cription? The FEI-event veterinarian must be able to answer this question with a “yes.”

Why Not Just a Photograph?
At first thought, a photograph may seem like a much better way to uniquely identify a horse. Photographs, unfortunately, have some major limitations. First, although many horses have unique facial markings, it is often impossible to tell one all grey gelding from another by looking at 3-yr-old photographs. Second, the quality of the photograph, the positioning of the horse, the number of pictures required to show all side of all legs and the head, and the age and deterioration of the photograph all lead to difficulty in uniquely identifying horses from photographs.

Why Not Just Microchip?
Microchip technology (Radio Frequency Identification; RFID) has improved exponentially over the past decade. At this time, there are many proprietary chips available, but no one standard has become accepted in the United States, much less in the world. Several electronic RFID readers would be required at every competition to read those currently in use. Horses from other countries would usually not be able to be scanned. At this time, chipping is not a practical method of uniquely identifying horses at international competitions.

Neatness
When entering the data, you should keep in mind that this is a permanent and extremely precious document for most owners. What you write in the passport will be read many times over the coming years and will determine if the horse is permitted to compete. Have someone else print legibly if your handwriting is not the most readable. Also, out of courtesy to others, please keep your stamps and writings inside the spaces allotted. Some passports do run out of space, and multiple-line usage is often a significant contributing factor.

Description
Review with the owner all of the text information at the top of the page including gender, color, country of birth, sire, dam of sire, etc. Work with the owner to be sure that the proper answers have been filled in. When entering the gender, spell out the entire word. Do not use “M” for either male or mare. Use “gelding,” “mare,” or “stallion.” The height is not required; if it is a pony, the height will be filled in by an FEI veterinarian accredited to conduct an official pony measurement.

Color of the Horse
Remember that this passport could be used anywhere in the world. As such, the meaning of the color of the horse must be understood similarly throughout the world. The list below is what has been agreed on worldwide. You should select the description that most closely approximates the horse that you see in front of you.

- Black: black pigment is general throughout the coat, limbs, mane, and tail, and there is no pattern factor present other than white markings.
- Brown: there is a mixture of black and brown pigment in the coat, and the limbs, mane, and tail are black.
- Bay-Brown: the predominant color is brown with a bay muzzle, black limbs, black mane, and black tail.
- Bay: bay varies considerably in shade from dull red approaching brown to a yellowish color approaching chestnut. It can be distinguished from the chestnut by the fact that the bay has a black mane and tail and almost invariably has black on the limbs and tips of the ears.
- Chestnut: this color consists of yellow-colored hair in different degrees of intensity, which may be noted. A “true” chestnut has a chestnut mane and tail that may be lighter or darker than the body color. A lighter-colored chestnut may have a flaxen mane and tail.
- Gray: the body coat is a varying mosaic of black and white hairs, and the skin is black. With increasing age, the coat grows lighter in color. The flea-bitten grey may contain three colors or the two basic colors and should be so described. A pure white is exceptional.
- Mouse-colored: this description is sometimes used for a grey horse with a black mane and tail.
- Blue Roan: the body color is bay or bay/brown mixed with white hair, which gives a blue tinge to the coat. On the limbs from the knees and hocks down, the black hairs usually predominate.
- Bay or Red Roan: the body color is bay or bay/brown mixed with white hair, which gives a reddish tinge to the coat. On the limbs from the knees and hocks down, the black hairs usually predominate.
- Strawberry or Chestnut Roan: the body color is chestnut mixed with white hairs.
- Blue Dun: the body color is a dilute black that is evenly distributed. The mane and tail are black. There may or may not be a dorsal band (list) and/or withers stripe. The skin is black.
- Yellow Dunn: there is diffuse yellow pigment in the hair. The mane and tail are black. There may or may not be a dorsal band (list) and/or withers stripe and bars on the legs. The striping is usually associated with black pigment on the head and limbs. The skin is black.
- Piebald: the body coat consists of large irregular patches of black and white. The line of
demarcation between the two colors is generally well defined.

- Skewbald: the body consists of large irregular patches of white and of any definite color except black. The line of demarcation between the two colors is generally well defined.
- Odd-colored: the body coat consists of large irregular patches of more than two colors that may merge into each other at the edges of the patches.
- Isabella: the body coat is of a cream color with a black mane and tail. When the term Isabella is used in German, it usually refers to a body coat of cream and yellow with mane and tail of the same cream or yellow color.
- Cream: the body coat is of a cream color with unpigmented skin. The iris is deficient in pigment and is often devoid of it, giving the eye a pinkish or bluish appearance.
- Palomino: the body coat is a newly minted gold-coin color (lighter or darker shades are permissible) with a white mane and tail.
- Appaloosa: body color is grey covered with a mosaic of black or brown spots.

From the registration papers or any other source, determine the appropriate answers to put on the horse’s permanent record for date of birth (not age), breed, sire, dam, and dam of sire.

**Diagram**

Although it is agreed that you should start at the head and work toward the hind and work from top to bottom, it is not generally agreed on whether or not you should start with the description or the diagram. Just remember that whichever you do first, the other must match exactly.

Some veterinarians mark every single white or gray hair on the body. This is fine as long as these peculiarities are not going to change with age. Passports are often used for 8–12 yr. Gray-flecked hair comes and goes in intensity, bald noses grow hair in winter, and dark patches migrate, but true scars do not disappear, whorls do not move, and white/dark areas change very little, even over decades. Do put in every old scar and white area, but you are discouraged from putting in shade variations or worrying whether or not some area is a flesh mark or not. The only items that should be entered into the passport are those that are permanent and will not change. Do enter whorls, prophet’s thumb marks, and the like, but do not enter recent wounds that might heal, scars that are coalescing, white marks that significantly change with the seasons, the spots on an Appaloosa, etc.

**Drawing the Diagram—The Head**

The description should begin at the forehead and move down the nasal bone, muzzle, lips, and chin. The description of the markings on the head should be clearly specified with reference to the whorls, the median line, and the eye level.

- Star: any white mark on the forehead. Size, shape, intensity, position, and colored markings (if any) on the white should be specified. Should the markings in the region of the center of the forehead consist of a few white hairs only, it should be described as such and not referred to as a star.
- Stripe: the narrow white marking down the face that is not wider than the flat anterior surface of the nasal bones. In many cases, the star and stripe are continuous and should be described as a star and stripe combined. Where the stripe is separate and distinct from the star, it should be described as an interrupted stripe. Where no star is present, the point of origin of the stripe should be indicated. The termination of the stripe and any variation in breadth, direction, and markings on the white should be so stated (e.g., broad stripe, narrow stripe, inclined to left, etc.).
- Blaze: a white marking covering almost the whole of the forehead between the eyes and extending beyond the width of the nasal bones, usually to the muzzle. Any variations in direction, termination, and markings on the white should be stated.
- White Face: the white covers the forehead and front of the face, and it extends laterally toward the mouth. The extension may be unilateral or bilateral, and it should be described accordingly.
- Snip: an isolated white marking, independent of those already named, that is situated between or in the region of the nostrils. Its size, position, and intensity should be specified.
- Flesh Mark: a lack of pigmentation, which is different from a white mark. Black spots within the flesh mark are to be indicated. All lip markings, flesh marks or white marks, should be accurately described. Please consider the time of year when drawing flesh marks.
- White Muzzle: the white embraces both lips and extends to the region of the nostrils.

**Drawing the Diagram—The Limbs**

The description of markings on the limbs should follow a logical sequence. Always start with the left forelimb and continue with the right forelimb, left hindlimb, and right hindlimb. Absence of marks must also be mentioned.

All white markings on the limbs must be accurately defined, and the upper limit must be precisely stated with reference to points of the anatomy (e.g., white to mid-pastern, white to upper third of cannon, etc.). The use of such terms as “sock” or
“stocking” are not acceptable. Some examples of acceptable terms are

- white coronet
- white pastern
- white fetlock
- white half cannon
- white from knee to hock, to hind quarter, etc.
- white patch on coronet. Its location must be specified: anterior, lateral, medial, or posterior.
- white ring around limb that does not extend down to the coronet.

The presence of colored spots in white marks should be recorded. Black spots in a white coronet are referred to as Ermine marks and are drawn with a black pen.

Any variation in the hoof pigment from black should be noted. Lack of pigmentation is noted by coloring in the white areas with a red pen. If the hoof diagram is not colored red, then the hoof is assumed to be pigmented (black).

Drawing the Diagram—White Marks

When using a red ball-point pen, everything white on the horse must be shown in red on the diagram

- White Marks: white marks must be clearly outlined with their irregularities indicated and without shading. They may be lightly hatched in, if desired.
- Bordered Marks: a white bordered mark has a definite outline that is bluish and corresponds to the black skin under the white hairs. Bordered markings are indicated by a double line.
- Few White Hairs: a few white hairs or grey-ticked areas are indicated with single short lines. The presence of white hairs in the mane and tail should be indicated with red lines.
- Unpigmented, Non–Hair-Covered Areas: areas such as flesh marks, wall-eyes, or white on the hooves are entirely colored in red.
- White Patches: large white patches on piebald or skewbald horses should be hatched in or line shaded to differentiate them from dark patches. Do not hatch in areas that are easily discernable as to which area is white, such as white on lower legs, single white spots or patches, star/stripe/snip areas, etc.
- Permanent white marks: acquired in the coat from trauma, freeze branding, surgery, etc., should be indicated in the diagram like other white marks and may also be indicated by a black arrow pointing at their location.

Drawing the Diagram—Black

When using a black ball-point pen, everything that is not white must be shown using black ink.

- Whorls: whorls are indicated by an “X.” If the whorl is elongated, it is shown by a continuous line from the “X.”
- Black Spots and Marks: black spots or marks on the coat, or within a white mark or flesh mark, must be outlined in black and left unshaded.
- Scars: scars from surgery, treatment, or accidents are indicated by arrows pointing at their location.
- Brand Marks: brand marks should be drawn in black. If the shape is not visible, the brand is considered a scar and indicated with an arrow.
- The Prophet’s Thumb Mark: this mark is indicated by a small triangle.

Most Common Errors

The most common errors include a diagram and description that do not match, obligate whorls that are not drawn or not described, white or striated feet that are not drawn in or not described, left and right sides that are reversed, and colors that are wrong.

Every marking on the diagram must be described in words in the description. Everything described in the description must be drawn on the diagram. It sounds simple, but it takes a lot of double checking and more than one set of eyes for reviewing. Often, the FEI veterinarian is the second set of eyes really checking a passport against the actual horse. The U.S. NF has a passport coordinator who checks every single passport, but he/she does not have the benefit of being able to see the horse.

Obligate Whorls

The FEI guide states that there are three obligate whorls on every horse, and they must be shown on every passport. These are the whorl(s) on the forehead and the whorls on the left and right crest. A whorl is defined as an area where the hair changes direction from a single point. It is not where the hair comes together (as in a tuft of hair) but where all the hair disseminates from a single point (as in a cowlick). It looks like a whirlwind with a central vortex devoid of hair. Nearly every horse’s hair goes forward at the poll and backwards at the withers. As such, somewhere in between, there must be a change of direction, specifically a whorl. Often, the crest whorls are found under the halter at the poll. In many, many years of examining passports, I have only seen one horse who does not have all three obligate whorls.

Sinuous whorls are whorls that are elongated (i.e., the hair continues whorling in a line). The hair starts spinning at one end (shown by an “X”), extends in a line (shown by a line), and dies out at the other end. A sinuous whorl starts at one end and goes toward the other, but it cannot have an “X” at both ends.
Hooves
Many veterinarians incorrectly put “white to fetlock” and just draw a line across the fetlock. As a result, there are no markings on the hoof or description otherwise, and the hoof is defined as entirely black. Keep in mind that no indication means black, a red line around means white hair, and filled-in red means unpigmented with no hair. The hooves must be filled in with red pen if they are all white or drawn in with red indicating where they are striated. Many horses are white from cannon to coronet but have black hooves.

Left/Right
If you become very experienced with passports, then you will never mix up left and right on the diagrams. Most people, however, occasionally reverse the sides. Pay close attention to proper left/right marking.

Ink Pens
Passports must be drawn in ink from a ball-point pen (not from a felt tip pen or roller-ball pen). Keep in mind the consequences of the passport getting wet. Many events take place rain or shine, and horses are always around water. A passport with a pink diagram page with no discernable markings is not useful.

Influenza Vaccination
Currently, the only vaccination requirement that the FEI has is for influenza vaccination. Accordingly, there are numerous pages for entry of the flu vaccinations.

The current rule states that there must be an initial vaccination pair with one vaccination and then a booster between 21 and 92 days later. This corresponds to 3 wk–3 mo. The current rule also states that there must be a booster within 364 days until January 1st, 2005 and within 6 mo and 21 days after the preceding booster. The general way to review this section is to find the initial pair; then, find each booster: <12 mo (up to 2004) and <6 mo (after 2004).

The horse’s veterinarian should enter the influenza vaccinations when they are given. Remember that the date is not month/day/year but day/month/year. Make sure that there is no mistaking what you mean by writing out the three-letter abbreviation of the month. For example, 11 May 2007 is preferred; 5/11/07 is not acceptable.

The current FEI rules state specific fines that must be levied for various levels of infraction of the influenza rules. The requirement and the fine amounts are specifically mandated in the rules and are not the veterinarian’s decision. Make sure that the horse’s owner does not get fined by following these vaccination requirements to the letter.

Other Vaccinations
Because there are no FEI requirement for vaccinations other than influenza, there are very few passport pages devoted to other vaccinations. The most common pages to fill up completely are the other vaccination pages.

The other vaccinations are only required when documenting vaccination for travel to a different continent or to provide explanation for a specific titer, also generally for foreign travel. When pages are running low, it is often best to keep track of vaccinations, including lot numbers and expiration dates, in a separate log book. If there ever is a need to enter the other vaccinations, then the information is available, and the space for such entries is still available.

Laboratory Test Results
In the official FEI event schedule, an event may require a certain result of a specific lab test as a prerequisite to entry. If so, this information must be entered into the passport. If it is not specifically required in the official schedule (Prize List), then it is not required to be in the passport. In the United States, Coggins’ Agar Gel Immuno Diffusion (AGID) test (for Equine Infections Anemia [EIA]) is the most common laboratory test requirement in official schedules.

3. Complete
If you have followed this how-to guide step by step, you have now completed your portion of the passport. Return it to the owner so that they can send it back to their NF for validation. Congratulations.

Reference