

Feeding and watering of horses



Feeding and watering around transport

Water and feed are essential. Horses must be fully hydrated and well fed **before travelling**. This will help prevent health and welfare problems during transport and all their negative consequences.



Keep in mind

- All horses need water to drink in **all weather conditions**, including very cold weather
- Horses that are **dehydrated** are **unfit** for transport, as they can never make up the deficit during transportation
- Transporting horses for **long journeys** (especially on hot or humid days, horses that are overweight or in overcrowded conditions) can cause them to become dehydrated

Remember, a well-hydrated and well-fed horse will arrive at its destination in better condition

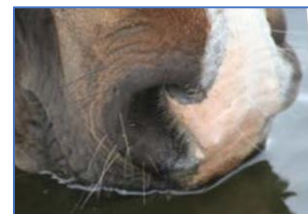


Dehydration – how and when do I check?

Visual inspection

Look out for

- Infrequent or abnormal urination and / or defaecation*
- Licking, panting and lack of sweating*
- Abnormal drinking behaviour (e.g. no drinking)*
- No response to surroundings*



Dehydration can lead to **serious health and welfare problems**:

- Horses showing signs of dehydration are **unfit for travel**, and must not be loaded
- If the health of any horse gives cause for concern, **veterinary advice** must be sought

Check before loading and at every stop!

Before transport

1. **Accustom** the animals to the means of feeding and watering, which will be used during the journey, before horses go on transport
2. **Plan** where and when the vehicle will stop to water and feed the animals
3. **Equip** your vehicle with a water tank (45 litres/horse/24hrs). Fill up the tank with clean, fresh water prior to each stage of the journey
4. Ensure that flooring remains **non-slip** for the entire trip. Provide absorbent bedding to help soak up any urine and manure excreted
5. Position the drinking and feeding devices in a way all horses can **access** them **easily** and without risk of injury
6. **Store feed** in a (closed) clean, dry and labelled facility
7. Adapt the **feeding equipment** to the type of food provided. Clean and disinfect all equipment regularly
8. Ensure all animals can **access water** when it is provided, whether they are individually stalled or not



During transport

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1. **Even better! Give all horses access to water and forage at the same time every 4,5 – 5 hours, for at least 30 minutes**
2. Do not feed animals prone to laminitis with concentrated feed (which has a high starch and / or sugar content)

After transport

1. Give each horse immediate **unrestricted access** to clean **water**. Unrestricted access to water does not increase the risk of colic
2. Empty and **clean** all water containers and feeding equipment thoroughly and refill with fresh water and new food between each new animal or group of animals



For more information, see the 'Practical Guidelines on the Watering of Equine Animals Transported by Road'

