

Taking horses abroad if there's no Brexit deal

Summary

How people taking horses abroad would be affected if the UK leaves the EU with no deal.

Detail

If the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 without a deal, find out how this would affect those involved in moving horses (and other equines) from the UK to countries within the EU, for example for racing, competition or breeding.

A scenario in which the UK leaves the EU without agreement (a 'no deal' scenario) remains unlikely given the mutual interests of the UK and the EU in securing a negotiated outcome.

Negotiations are progressing well and both we and the EU continue to work hard to seek a positive deal. However, it's our duty as a responsible government to prepare for all eventualities, including 'no deal', until we can be certain of the outcome of those negotiations.

For two years, the government has been implementing a significant programme of work to ensure the UK will be ready from day 1 in all scenarios, including a potential 'no deal' outcome in March 2019.

It has always been the case that as we get nearer to March 2019, preparations for a no deal scenario would have to be accelerated. Such an acceleration does not reflect an increased likelihood of a 'no deal' outcome. Rather it is about ensuring our plans are in place in the unlikely scenario that they need to be relied upon.

This series of technical notices sets out information to allow businesses and citizens to understand what they would need to do in a 'no deal' scenario, so they can make informed plans and preparations.

This guidance is part of that series.

Also included is an [overarching framing notice](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-governments-preparations-for-a-no-deal-scenario/>) explaining the government's overarching approach to preparing the UK for this outcome in order to minimise disruption and ensure a smooth and orderly exit in all scenarios.

We are working with the devolved administrations on technical notices and we will continue to do so as plans develop.

Purpose

This notice explains the actions those involved in moving horses and other equines from the UK to countries within the EU, for example for racing, competition or breeding, would need to consider if the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 without a deal.

Before 29 March 2019

The movement of horses and other equines between the UK and other EU countries is subject to EU rules, mostly detailed in Council Directive 2009/156/EC and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/262. These govern the movement and import of equines and establish guidelines for equine identification.

They require, in general terms, that equines travel with two documents: an ID document (passport) which also includes details of their health status; and either an Intra-Community Trade Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC) or a veterinary attestation. These documents confirm fitness to travel and absence of disease. Which of the two additional documents are required depends on the purpose of the movement and perceived health risk associated with that equine type (for example racing, competition, or breeding). It is currently not necessary for equines moving between member states to do so via a Border Inspection Post (BIP).

Under a separate Tripartite Agreement (TPA), movements of certain types of horse between the UK, Ireland and France are further streamlined. For movements between the UK and Ireland, only an ID document is required. For movements between the UK and France, an ID document and commercial document (DOCOM), along with an entry on the TRACES system, is required. There is no requirement for the equines to move between member states via a BIP.

In the UK, equine ID documents (passports) are produced by private bodies, known as passport issuing organisations (PIOs), which can include breed societies. Applications for ITAHCs are made to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the certificate is then completed by an authorised Official Veterinarian (OV). OVs also produce the veterinary attestation, where required. APHA provides this service in England, Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs' Veterinary Service is responsible. This would continue

to be the case in a 'no deal' scenario, with the changes outlined in this technical notice accommodated for.

After March 2019 if there's no deal

If the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 with no deal in place, the UK would be treated as a 'third country' and therefore any movement of equines to countries within the EU would be subject to EU third country rules. In order to travel from the UK as a listed third country, a horse or other equine would need an appropriate ID document and appropriate health documentation. These are mostly contained in Council Directive 2009/156/EC, Council Directive 91/496/EEC (the latter covering veterinary checks applied to imports) and Commission Implementing Regulations 2015/262 and 2018/659 (covering conditions applied to all EU equine imports).

We are seeking discussions with the European Commission to allow the UK to become a listed third country on the day we leave the EU. However, to allow effective contingency planning, in the event that the UK is not a listed country equine movement to the EU could not take place. We are confident however, that the UK meets the animal health requirements to secure listing, as other countries such as Australia and New Zealand have done.

The import of equines from the EU into the UK will not change immediately after exit as we are replicating current systems.

ID document

Equine ID (passports), issued by industry, would continue to be used in the UK, as they contain information relating to identification and veterinary procedures undertaken that could help to maintain a robust national equine health and traceability regime.

These industry-issued passports would continue to be valid for EU travel for horses registered either on a studbook or pedigree register; or with a national branch of an international organisation for racing or competition.

All other horses and equines travelling from the UK to the EU would have to travel with a new government-issued ID document which is expected to contain very similar information to that in existing passports. This is a requirement of the EU in relation to movements from third countries.

Export certification

As the UK would be a third country, an Export Health Certificate (EHC) would be required to move equines, on a permanent or temporary basis, to the EU.

The EU currently imposes additional requirements on third countries dependant on their perceived level of disease risk. The UK could expect to be subject to fewer additional requirements in a 'no deal' scenario, given its current low disease risk profile, meaning a less burdensome process for certification.

However, EU certification would require additional action from vets to confirm the absence of equine disease. This new process would require more planning from the equine owner and could involve increased cost if additional blood tests are required, estimated to be between £200 and £500 depending on the third country category the UK is placed in after leaving the EU.

The Export Health Certificate (EHC) would replace the veterinary attestation or Intra-Community Trade Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC) currently required. In addition, equines entering the EU from the UK would have to pass through a Border Inspection Post (BIP) in an EU member state.

Tripartite Agreement

The Tripartite Agreement would no longer be valid if the UK leaves the EU with no agreement, as it operates as a derogation to current EU rules and only named EU member states are eligible to use it.

Implications

In the event of a 'no deal', those wishing to move equines from the UK to countries within the EU would need to:

- apply to the APHA in GB or the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs' Veterinary Service in Northern Ireland both for the new export certification required by the EU; and
- if their horse is not registered either on a studbook or pedigree register or with a national branch of an international organisation for racing or competition, apply for a new government-issued ID document.

An Official Vet (OV) could deal with the veterinary elements of both of these in a single visit. This process is the same as that currently in place for the production of Intra-Community Trade Animal Health Certificates (ITAHCs). Consequently, it is not

anticipated that significant additional time would be needed to produce the required documentation, although additional veterinary time to complete the necessary blood tests will need to be factored in.

Training packages for operational staff and OVs across the UK would be updated to reflect any new arrangements.

More information

If you are involved in exporting horses and other equines to the EU we recommend you also refer to the technical notice on [Exporting animals and animal products if there's no Brexit deal](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exporting-animals-and-animal-products-if-theres-no-brex-it-deal>).

This notice is meant for guidance only. You should consider whether you need separate professional advice before making specific preparations.

It is part of the government's ongoing programme of planning for all possible outcomes. We expect to negotiate a successful deal with the EU.

The UK government is clear that in this scenario we must respect our unique relationship with Ireland, with whom we share a land border and who are co-signatories of the Belfast Agreement. The UK government has consistently placed upholding the Agreement and its successors at the heart of our approach. It enshrines the consent principle on which Northern Ireland's constitutional status rests. We recognise the basis it has provided for the deep economic and social cooperation on the island of Ireland. This includes North-South cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland, which we're committed to protecting in line with the letter and spirit of Strand two of the Agreement.

The Irish government have indicated they would need to discuss arrangements in the event of no deal with the European Commission and EU Member States. The UK would stand ready in this scenario to engage constructively to meet our commitments and act in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland, recognising the very significant challenges that the lack of a UK-EU legal agreement would pose in this unique and highly sensitive context.

It remains, though, the responsibility of the UK government, as the sovereign government in Northern Ireland, to continue preparations for the full range of

potential outcomes, including no deal. As we do, and as decisions are made, we'll take full account of the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.

Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area and participate in other EU arrangements. As such, in many areas, these countries adopt EU rules. Where this is the case, these technical notices may also apply to them, and EEA businesses and citizens should consider whether they need to take any steps to prepare for a 'no deal' scenario.