Feeding and watering of horses

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

**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

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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

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.

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