Horse passports

1. UK horse passport rules--‘a catalogue of misunderstanding’ (2013) Veterinary Record, 172 (22), p. 571

2. Confusion over horse passports (2013) Veterinary Record, 173 (11), p. 258


Abstract: Contingency planning for potential equine infectious disease outbreaks relies on accurate information on horse location and movements to estimate the risk of dissemination of disease(s). An online questionnaire was used to obtain unique information linking owner and horse location to characteristics of horse movements within and outwith Great Britain (GB).

Results: This online survey yielded a strong response, providing more than four times the target number of respondents (1000 target respondents) living in all parts of GB. Key demographic findings of this study indicated that horses which were kept on livery yards and riding schools were likely to be found in urban environments, some distance away from the owner’s home and vaccinated against influenza and herpes virus. Survey respondents were likely to travel greater than 10 miles to attend activities such as eventing or endurance but were also likely to travel and return home within a single day (58.6%, 2063/3522). This may affect the geographical extent and speed of disease spread, if large numbers of people from disparate parts of the country are attending the same event and the disease agent is highly infectious or virulent. The greatest risk for disease introduction and spread may be represented by a small proportion of people who import or travel internationally with their horses. These respondents were likely to have foreign horse passports, which were not necessarily recorded in the National Equine Database (NED), making the location of these horses untraceable. Conclusions: These results illustrate the difficulties which exist with national GB horse traceability despite the existence of the NED and the horse passport system. This study also demonstrates that an online approach could be adopted to obtain important demographic data on GB horse owners on a more routine and frequent basis to inform decisions or policy pertaining to equine disease control. This represents a reasonable alternative to collection of GB horse location and movement data given that the NED no longer exists and there is no immediate plan to replace it.


Abstract: Reasons for performing the study: The National Equine Database (NED) contains information on the size and distribution of the horse population, but the data quality remains unknown. These data could assist with surveillance, research and contingency planning for equine infectious disease outbreaks. Objectives: (1) To assess the extent of obsolete and missing data from NED, (2) evaluate the extent of spatial separation between horse and owner location and (3) identify relationships between spatial separation and land use. Methods: Two questionnaires were used to assess data accuracy in NED utilising local authority passport inspections and distribution of questionnaires to 11,000 horse owners. A subset of 1010 questionnaires was used to assess horse-owner geographic separation. Results: During 2005-2010, 17,048 passports were checked through local authority inspections. Of these, 1558 passports (9.1%; 95% confidence interval [CI] 8.7-9.5%) were noncompliant, with 963 (5.6%;
95% CI 5.3-6.0%) containing inaccurate information and 595 (3.5%; 95% CI 3.2-3.8%) classified as missing. Of 1382 questionnaires completed by horse owners, 380 passports were obsolete (27.5%; 95% CI 25.2-29.9%), with 162 (11.7%; 95% CI 10.0-13.4%) being retained for deceased horses and 218 (15.8%; 95% CI 13.9-17.7%) having incorrect ownership details. Fifty-three per cent (95% CI 49.9-56.1%) of owners kept their horse(s) at home and 92% (95% CI 90.3-93.7%) of horses resided within 10 km of their owners. Conclusions and potential relevance: Data from a small sample survey suggest the majority of data on NED are accurate but a proportion of inaccuracies exist that may cause delay in locating horses and contacting owners during a disease outbreak. The probability that horses are located in the same postcode sector as the owner's home address is larger in rural areas. Appropriate adjustment for population size, horse-owner spatial separation and land usage would facilitate meaningful use of the national horse population derived from NED for risk modelling of incursions of equine diseases into Great Britain.


Abstract: Reasons for performing study: Disturbances in skeletal development, primarily osteochondrosis (OC) and palmar/plantar osseous fragments (POF), have been commonly reported as problems in young horses. However, there are few reports of such findings for epidemiological analyses or breeding purposes. Objectives: To evaluate equine hospital data as a possible source of information for genetic evaluations by estimating prevalence and heritability of OC in the stifles, hocks and fetlock joints and of POF in the fetlock. Methods: Data on Swedish Warmblood (SWB) horses were obtained from a large equine hospital in south Sweden. Prevalences were based on radiographic examinations of 879 screened horses, mainly evaluated as part of a prepurchase examination and 3639 horses with a reported history of orthopaedic problems. For the heritability study the 2 data sources were pooled and 3199 examined horses with pedigree information were considered for the linear animal model analyses. Results: The overall prevalence of OC was 13% (stifle 9%, hock 6% and dorsal osseous fragments in fetlock [DOF] 10%) and POF 10%. The overall heritability of OC was 0.05 on the visible binomial scale. The corresponding heritabilities for OC in the stifles were 0.03, hock 0.08, DOF 0.10 and POF 0.13. These values correspond to heritabilities of 0.09-0.38 on the underlying quantitative scale. Conclusions and potential relevance: Obtained prevalences and heritabilities were in accordance with other studies, supporting the hypothesis that data regularly obtained from equine hospitals may be a valuable source in studies of inherited disorders such as OC and POF. There is a need for more standardised documentation of diagnoses and consistent recording of identity of examined horses using passports or breed databases. Compilation of results from major clinics is desired in order to cover most progenies of stallions used in a region or nation.


Abstract: Detailed knowledge of horse populations can better facilitate effective control of equine diseases. Preliminary studies were undertaken to ascertain the type of information held on the UK's National Equine Database (NED) and to determine the geographical resolution at which mandatorily recorded owner addresses might be a suitable proxy for predicting horse locations. Results indicated that relatively few UK passport-issuing organisations requested details of where horses were kept in addition to owner address details. Examination of data on 1440 horses held on an Animal Health Trust syndromic surveillance database showed that 90% of them were kept within 10 km of their owners. While owner location may provide an indication of where most horses are kept, further work is also needed to evaluate the usefulness of NED as an epidemiological resource in future equine disease control measures.

Abstract: This edition reflects the significant changes in animal welfare legislation (Animal Welfare Act 2006 and Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006) as well as improved scientific knowledge of welfare issues in equines. It serves as a reference document for many local authorities, police forces and welfare organizations involved in horse welfare investigations. Moreover, it is designed to assist anyone responsible for the welfare of horses, ponies and donkeys in meeting their obligations under the new welfare legislation in England, Wales and Scotland. Focus is given on the following needs: suitable environment; suitable diet; need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour pattern; need to be housed with or apart from other animals; and protection from pain, suffering, injury or disease. Equine transportation, export and importation, identification and passports, establishments, activities and EU legislation are also highlighted.


Abstract: Accurate identification of horses is important for competitive events, trading of horses, breeding and in veterinary public health. The primary goal of this manuscript was to determine the accuracy of identification of horses based on appearance; the accuracy was expected to be >90%. A secondary goal was to identify possible factors that render the identification accurate. In the first part of the study, 331 horse signalments (generated by veterinarians and officials of the Swiss Equestrian Federation, including signalments produced in other countries) were evaluated by means of consistency without knowledge of the corresponding horses. There were significantly more errors in the foreign passports. In the second part of the study, 100 randomly chosen signalments of Swiss National Equestrian Federation passports (SVPS) and of 100 foreign horse passports were compared with the corresponding horses. Accurate identification was always possible based on the signalments of the Swiss Equestrian Federation passports, but not always based on the foreign horse passports. In the third part of the study, 66 randomly chosen registration papers from the Breeding Associations of Swiss Sport Horses (ZVCH) were compared with the corresponding adult horses. There were close to 60% more errors in signalments of registration papers than in those of the Swiss Equestrian Federation passports (p<0.05). It was concluded that the accuracy of identification of a horse based on appearance is more than 9.0% when all the markings have been recorded carefully, completely and correctly.


Abstract: This paper presents some pointers on filling out the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) and United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) horse passports. The role of the FEI passport for horses is discussed. Moreover, the sections of the passport are


Abstract: We do not have a system that uniquely identifies a food product on one's plate back to the animal that produced it but we have much more information available than in the past and, all the time, the situation is changing and is likely to change further as new technologies are adapted. While the information we have available now is more comprehensive than ever, it will only be better than what has gone before if it is more accurate, reliable and accessible. There is also a cost burden to maintain the databases, and ensure compliance with the legislation and upon producers, in obtaining and recording this information. The Livestock Identification and Tracing Programme is a government initiative to improve the quality,
accuracy, availability and timeliness of livestock data. A future SVJ article will look at some current projects under this initiative.