



Joint WOAHIHSC Subregional Workshop on “Facilitation
of temporary international horse movement’ for Gulf
Cooperation Council (GCC), Jordan and Syria
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CHALLENGES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF COMPETITION
HORSES IN THE SUBREGION

Challenges for the international movements of Competition horses in the Subregion

- ▶ As mentioned in the opening of this Workshop that The equine industry operates on strict timelines and that the Equestrian Events require horses to move efficiently between countries, often under time-sensitive conditions.
- ▶ important workshop today in Saudi Arabian to study the current situation, discuss the challenges ,find solutions ,thinking how to develop the future of equestrian ,To reach our goals in Facilitation of temporary international horse movement' for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jordan and Syria
- ▶ However, The process of Transporting horses in the our region is frequently delayed due to presents of several Challenges in Logistics restrictions, Transportation (By Land and By Air) , regulatory differences, biosecurity & veterinary inspections, logistics, customs clearance procedures and climate conditions. Below is an analysis of the key facilitators and obstacles for horse movement in our region:



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▶ **Customs and Regulatory Complexities**

- ▶ The customs process remains one of the most challenging aspects of equine transportation. Despite existing frameworks, differences in quarantine protocols, and documentation procedures can lead to unnecessary delays.

▶ **Strict Regulations & Documentation**

- ▶ Different GCC countries have varying import/export regulations, requiring health certificates, vaccinations, and quarantine periods.
- ▶ Customs clearance delays can lead to prolonged transit times, stressing the horses.
- ▶ Some regions impose quarantine requirements, which can be costly and time-consuming.



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- ▶ **Inefficient Communication Between Stakeholders (Customs office and Border)**
- ▶ Effective horse movement depend on not only on regulations but also on clear and timely communication between national veterinary authorities, customs officials, airlines, and equestrian teams. Miscommunication of main office custom clearance and border control have been the main issue in delays of up to 8 hours at borders.
- ▶ Even though there have been Digital solutions, such as electronic certification systems, for some reason there are still delays



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- ▶ Limited Transport Infrastructure (allowing a lane only for equine passage)
- ▶ The availability of dedicated equine transport routes
- ▶ Road Transport Challenges
- ▶ Long distances between cities and across borders increase the horses fatigue and need for rest stops.
- ▶ Limited number of equine-friendly rest stations with proper ventilation, water, and feeding facilities.
- ▶ Road conditions and traffic in certain areas can cause travel delays.



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▶ **Extreme Climate Conditions**

- ▶ High temperatures (often exceeding 45°C) pose serious risks of heat stress and dehydration for horses.
- ▶ Humidity variations (especially in coastal areas) can affect the horses respiration.
- ▶ Long travel times can increase the risk of exhaustion and overheating.



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- ▶ Air Transport Limitations
- ▶ Limited availability of specialized equine cargo planes in the region.
- ▶ High cost of air transport for horses, including stall rental, veterinary supervision, and grooms.
- ▶ Limited direct flight options, particularly for competition horses traveling between the Middle East and other continents, result in increased logistical costs.
- ▶ Horses may experience jet lag and stress due to flight duration and cargo conditions.



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- ▶ **Veterinary and Biosecurity Risks**
- ▶ Horses are subject to diseases during transit, such as shipping fever (a respiratory illness caused by stress and poor ventilation).
- ▶ Cross-border disease control measures require compliance with health checks and quarantine protocols.
- ▶ Limited access to emergency veterinary care during road transport.

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▶ **Handling & Training Issues**

- ▶ Not all transportation providers have specialized staff trained in horse handling.
- ▶ Horses need to be properly conditioned for transport, which may not always be prioritized.
- ▶ Unfamiliar handlers and environments can cause anxiety and behavioral issues in horses.

▶ **Cost Factors**

- ▶ High insurance costs for equine transport.
- ▶ Expensive specialized transport vehicles with climate control and ventilation systems.
- ▶ Custom duties and border crossing fees add to the total expense.



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▶ **Causes of Border Delays for Horse Transport**

▶ **A. Lengthy Customs Procedures**

- ▶ Border control officials verify all documents, including health certificates, import/export permits, and ownership papers.
- ▶ Some customs posts are not specialized in equine transport, leading to longer inspection times.
- ▶ Lack of digital processing systems in some border areas increases paperwork delays.

▶ **B. Veterinary Inspections & Health Protocols**

- ▶ Horses undergo physical health checks at entry points, which can take several hours to days if issues arise.
- ▶ Some borders require additional blood tests or quarantine clearance before entry.
- ▶ If a horse shows signs of illness, it may be held for further examination or rejected at the border.



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▶ **C. Disease Control & Biosecurity Measures**

- ▶ restrict entry of horses from high-risk disease areas, leading to additional screening.
- ▶ Outbreaks of Equine Influenza, Glanders, or African Horse Sickness can result in sudden border closures or long quarantine requirements.
- ▶ If health regulations change suddenly, previously approved horses may need new clearance, causing further delays.

▶ **D. Political & Security Factors**

- ▶ Jordan-Syria border crossings sometimes face political restrictions, security concerns, or temporary closures.
- ▶ In some cases, border authorities may prioritize commercial goods over livestock, delaying horse transport.
- ▶ Some crossings lack specialized veterinary staff, requiring additional stops at designated facilities.

▶ **E. Weekend & Holiday Closures**

- ▶ Some countries have weekend closures (Friday-Saturday or Saturday-Sunday), leading to shipment bottlenecks.
- ▶ Public holidays can slow down processing, especially if advance arrangements are not made.



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- ▶ **Documents Required for Temporary Horse Movement**
- ▶ **A. General Documents (Common for All Countries)**
- ▶ Equine Passport (Issued by the horse country of origin or international equestrian body)
- ▶ Import/Export Permit (Granted by the receiving country Ministry of Agriculture or equivalent authority)
- ▶ Health Certificate (Issued by a licensed veterinarian within 48-72 hours before transport)
- ▶ Coggins Test Certificate (Negative test for Equine Infectious Anemia, valid for 30-90 days)
- ▶ Equine Influenza and Glanders Test (Depending on the country requirements)
- ▶ Proof of Ownership or Lease Agreement (To prevent illegal trade)
- ▶ Travel Manifest & Shipping Declaration (For customs and transport authorities)



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▶ **B. GCC-Specific Requirements**

- ▶ Temporary Import License (Issued for competition or breeding horses, typically valid for up to 90 days)
- ▶ GCC Health Certificate (Unified veterinary health document for Gulf countries)
- ▶ Microchip Registration or Brand Identification (Mandatory in most countries)
- ▶ Quarantine Clearance Certificate (If required, varies by country)

▶ **C. Jordan-Syria Specific Requirements**

- ▶ Jordanian Veterinary Certificate (Issued by the Ministry of Agriculture)
- ▶ Syria Import Approval (Varies depending on border security conditions)
- ▶ Transit Permit (If traveling between Jordan and Syria for competitions)
- ▶ Emergency Veterinary Contact List (Required for long-distance road transport)



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▶ **How to Minimize Border Delays**

▶ **A. Pre-Clearance & Digital Processing**

- ▶ Pre-submit all documents to customs and veterinary officials before arrival at the border.
- ▶ Use online clearance systems (where available) to reduce waiting times.
- ▶ Ensure all tests and certificates are up-to-date to avoid rejection or re-testing at the border.

▶ **B. Coordinated Scheduling**

- ▶ Avoid travel on weekends, holidays, or peak customs hours.
- ▶ Coordinate with local equestrian authorities to facilitate smoother border crossing.
- ▶ Book veterinary inspections in advance to prevent last-minute issues.



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▶ **C. Specialized Equine Transport Services**

- ▶ Use approved equine transport companies familiar with GCC and Middle East regulations.
- ▶ Choose routes with the least border congestion to reduce waiting times.
- ▶ Ensure transport vehicles have proper ventilation, feed, and water to keep horses comfortable during delays.

▶ **D. Contingency Planning**

- ▶ Prepare for unexpected delays by having a backup quarantine facility or stable nearby.
- ▶ Carry extra feed, water, and emergency medical supplies in case of long waits.
- ▶ Have a bilingual or Arabic-speaking connection to assist with customs communication.
- ▶ Establishing more equine rest stations along major transport routes.
- ▶ Expanding dedicated equine air cargo services in GCC airports.



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- ▶ Potential Solutions and the Way Forward
- ▶ To address these challenges, we must arrange:
 - ▶ Confirming the status of KSA as an African Horse sickness free zone with a WOAAH approved status (KSA initiative)
 - ▶ Standardization of customs procedures: Strengthening collaboration between equestrian governing bodies, veterinary authorities, and customs agencies to create uniform and mutually recognized health and transport protocols. (Region initiative)
 - ▶ Improved digital communication tools: Accelerating the adoption of electronic veterinary certification systems and real-time tracking for horse movements to reduce administrative delays.
 - ▶ Investment in equine-specific transport infrastructure: Developing dedicated transport corridors to minimize unnecessary handling and transit stress. (Land transportation Animal truck line Region Initiative)
 - ▶ Stronger partnerships with Lab entities (Bose) to develop testing of Horses within KSA. (KSA initiative)



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▶ **1. Streamlining Regulations and Bilateral Agreements**

- ▶ Harmonizing import/export regulations among GCC countries, Jordan, and Syria to ensure smoother movement.
- ▶ Establishing pre-cleared equine corridors for competition and breeding horses.
- ▶ Implementing digital veterinary certificates to reduce paperwork at borders.

▶ **2. Enhancing Air Transport Options**

- ▶ Increasing direct equine cargo flights between major airports.
- ▶ Providing subsidized or government-backed air freight for competition horses.
- ▶ Developing regional air hubs for equine transport to avoid long layovers.



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▶ **3. Improving Road Transport Facilities**

- ▶ Establishing dedicated horse rest stations with air-conditioned stabling on long routes.
- ▶ Upgrading border checkpoints with veterinary supervision to facilitate faster inspections.
- ▶ Encouraging private investment in specialized horse transport trucks with better ventilation and hydration systems.

▶ **4. Strengthening Biosecurity Measures**

- ▶ Creating regional disease control partnerships to standardize quarantine across GCC, Jordan, and Syria.
- ▶ Implementing pre-travel health monitoring programs to detect and prevent disease spread.
- ▶ Upgrading veterinary facilities along key transport corridors.
- ▶ Training more specialized equine transport staff and veterinarians.



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- ▶ Facilitation of Temporary Horse Movement
 - ▶ 1. Established Equine Transport Routes and Infrastructure
 - ▶ GCC countries (especially UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) have world-class equestrian facilities and dedicated horse transport services.
 - ▶ Major international airports in Dubai, Doha, and Riyadh have equine-friendly cargo terminals.
 - ▶ Specialized horse transport companies provide air-conditioned horseboxes and professional handlers.
 - ▶ 2. Special Equine Passports and Quarantine Protocols
 - ▶ Some GCC countries offer temporary import permits for horses participating in races, show jumping, and endurance events.
 - ▶ Horses can often travel under the Temporary Import Status, which simplifies customs procedures and reduces duties.
 - ▶ UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have implemented streamlined quarantine and veterinary checks for competition horses.



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▶ **3. Veterinary Supervision and Disease Control Measures**

- ▶ Strict health certifications (Coggins Test, Equine Influenza vaccination) are required, but some countries have mutual agreements to speed up approval.
- ▶ Veterinary officers at airports and border crossings facilitate quick movement for high-value sport horses.
- ▶ Advanced quarantine facilities in major GCC hubs like Dubai and Doha allow horses to undergo necessary health checks with minimal stress.

▶ **4. Equestrian Event Support & Diplomatic Agreements**

- ▶ High-profile equestrian events (e.g., Saudi Cup, Global Champions Tour) encourage governments to ease short-term horse movement regulations.
- ▶ Bilateral agreements between GCC countries, and sometimes Jordan, reduce paperwork for equestrian competition horses.
- ▶ Some nations issue special temporary horse visas, allowing movement with reduced quarantine periods.



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- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ While temporary international horse movement in the GCC, Jordan, and Syria faces regulatory, logistical, and border delays are often due to customs checks, veterinary inspections, and disease control measures and climate-related challenges, there are ongoing efforts to improve facilitation. Harmonized regulations, advanced transport infrastructure, and better biosecurity measures can enhance horse movement efficiency, benefiting equestrian sports, breeding programs, and trade in the region.
- ▶ However, pre-clearance, digital documentation, and the use of experienced equine transport services can significantly reduce delays.



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- ▶ Our industry grow well on being accurate, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that logistics and transportation are not barriers but facilitators of equine competitions and events. By working together to improve customs coordination and communication, we can build a more efficient, streamlined, and horse-friendly global transport network.
- ▶ Thank you, and I look forward to engaging discussions on how we can drive these initiatives forward.

