

“Roadmap to facilitate the movement of competition horses -Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC) Countries, Syria and Jordan in the Middle East Region – Riyadh, KSA Workshop- February 2025”

Acronyms:

NCA: national customs administrations

NF: national equestrian federation

NRA: national horseracing authorities

NVA: national veterinary authorities

Challenge identified	Opportunities	Ultimate goal	Stakeholders to be involved	Stakeholder responsible- actions needed	Timeline for implementation
Difficulties to communicate with all involved representatives from all sectors, creating a Task force would be more efficient	A working group to be convened with contacts for each country: horse industry, Veterinary Authorities and potentially Customs Authorities.	Advance with the activities proposed in this update roadmap	Horse industry, Veterinary Authorities (VA) and potentially Customs Authorities	WEQAA, SEA, SEF, JCSA to compile a list and send it to WOAAH (Dr Meske) and IHSC (Mr Ogilvy, Dr Akerström). A survey to be conducted by Dr Meske and the WOAAH Regional Representation for the Middle East between designated contact points of the Working Group to assess the situation regarding the items in this roadmap and define activities to be implemented	
Lack of road transportation guidelines or standards in national/Regional (GCC) legislation (i.e., number of	Some National guidelines already available for road	Compile the existing national legislation (regulatory framework for the movement of horses) and have a	Horse industry, Veterinary Authorities	Veterinary Authorities: to compile the national/regional standards/legislation for the movement of horses and share them with the Working Group	

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<p>drivers allowed by legislation differs by country)</p>	<p>transportation (i.e., UAE) IFHA transport welfare guidelines - FEI guidelines (to be released in 2025)</p>	<p>common framework or Harmonise National guidelines for road transportation to be adopted by all GCC countries Harmonization of transportation standards essential for regional transportation</p>		<p>Horse industry: to compile private guidelines and shared them with the Working Group and GCC Members</p>	
<p>Standards for biosecurity facilities, quarantine protocols (i.e., isolation in vector protection facilities, monitoring, tests)</p>	<p>IFHA Minimum Horse Welfare Guidelines available (general, but could be adapted for this region) – Guidelines for the establishment of EDFZ GCC Standards for quarantine facilities</p>	<p>Harmonised guidelines on Quarantine facilities and how they are operated, and biosecurity principles for all GCC countries</p>	<p>Horse industry, Veterinary Authorities</p>	<p>David Craig to share the UAE guidelines developed by Veterinary Authorities with the Working Group. The guidelines were adopted by UAE Racing, but needs to be agreed upon and extend to all stakeholders</p>	
<p>Lack of implementation of GCC harmonised health certificates for competition Horses meeting WOAH Standards</p>	<p>GCC Certificate- GCC to be recognised as standard setting for the temporary movement of competition horses</p>	<p>Updated and adopt regionally the GCC Certificate- to be recognised as standard setting for HHP health requirements- search for agreement to extend it to 90 days by GCC for countries coming from outside the region (Europe EU- UK DEFRA- USA)</p>	<p>Veterinary Authorities mainly, and the Horse industry for the implementation</p>	<p>The Working Group to review the GCC health certificate for imported horses and shared it with Vet Authorities for their comments, including the duration (i.e., 90 days for imported animals from Europe, UK) (local horses already have a 90 day regional certificate)</p>	

<p>Customs immigration - border crossing HHP horses not yet recognised similar to competition camels.</p> <p>Lack of harmonisation of controls at the borders with different countries</p>	<p>Health Certificates could be sent in advance, and a separate lane could be organised for live animals.</p> <p>ATA Carnet already implemented in some of GCC countries (Bahrain, UAE)</p>	<p>To smooth the control at the borders for HHP horses – GCC to establish a fast-track procedure for HHP horses</p>	<p>National Veterinary Authorities - National/Regional Customs Authorities</p>	<p>National Veterinary Authorities -National/Regional Customs Authorities: With the recognition of Saudi Arabia by WOAHs as an AHS-free country assess the possibility of the removal of border control between UAE and Saudi Arabia, and also the border control in the causeway Bahrain- Saudi Arabia</p> <p>Identify potential meetings of GCC Customs Authorities and participate in those meetings (VA, NEF, Racing) and motivate them to attend this WSs</p>	
<p>Implementation available system for Traceability of HHP horses</p>	<p>FEI Horse App already being implemented in some countries (i.e. UAE) extend the implementation to all GCC countries- Make the FEI Horse Database available for Veterinary Authorities</p> <p>IFHA Guidelines on traceability</p>	<p>Implementation of FEI Horse App mandatory for all FEI events in GCC countries- or harmonisation of traceability systems</p> <p>Have a regional “TRACES” system to track ALL regional movements for both national and international horses</p>	<p>Horse Industry</p>	<p>FEI IT Department (Gaspard) – David Craig -FEI appointed foreign vet Delegate to ensure compliance</p> <p>Have a GCC Office of Equine Biosecurity?</p>	
<p>Countries with different AHS official status recognised by WOAH</p>	<p>SOPs for official status recognition</p> <p>implementation of new health certificates by</p>	<p>All GCC countries and Jordan having AHS free status officially recognised by WOAH-</p>	<p>Veterinary Authorities</p>	<p>Veterinary Authorities</p>	<p>May 2025</p>

	GCC countries according to the official recognition by WOAHA of Saudi Arabia as an AHS-free country				
Difference in control measure implemented including surveillance	Knowledge of control measures implemented (information from WAHIS)- Main equine diseases are notifiable to WAHIS in all countries	Analysis of the control measures implemented for the main equine diseases in the GCC countries (not a major concern)	Veterinary Authorities	To collect data on the survey with designated contact points on active surveillance activities for equine diseases	
Differences in AHS Contingency plans between countries	Most of the countries in the region have AHS contingency plans	Adopt an AHS Contingency plan at GCC level according to the WOAHA guidelines for contingency plans (not a major concern)	Veterinary Authorities	The Working Group could liaise with VA of GCC countries to collect and analyse the AHS contingency plans	
Formal Collaboration between Public (Veterinary Authorities) and Private (Horse Industry)	Strong collaboration between the horse Industry and the Veterinary Authorities in some countries (i.e., KSA, UAE)		Horse industry, Veterinary Authorities	Include in the survey a question on how Collaboration between the Horse Industry and VA can be improved	
Unknown capacity of National Labs for Equine Disease	A survey could be carried out to determine the diagnostic capabilities for equine diseases in	Organise rounds of PT between National Labs of GCC countries and WOAHA Ref labs Develop regional WOAHA reference labs for	Veterinary Authorities, Horse Industry	A survey to be conducted in 2025 between designated contact points from the VA and the horse industry to assess the diagnostic capabilities and needs in National and Private labs for the main equine diseases	

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	GCC countries and assess the willingness to participate in rounds of Proficiency Tests (PT) with Reference Labs	certain equine diseases such as equine piroplasmosis, Surra?			
Implementation of ATA Carnet for horses	The ATA Carnet is already being implement in some GCC countries (i.e., Bahrain, UAE)	implementation of ATA Carnet for horses	Horse Industry, Veterinary Authorities , Customs Authorities	A survey to be conducted to identify the GCC countries that already implement the ATA and assess the possibility and challenges for its implementation in other GCC countries and in Jordan	
Notable delays at BIPs for land transport of horses		Approved routes by the VA for transit of horses with , stations to unload the horses in case of contingencies or unexpected delays (point below). List of contact points in each country to contact in case of need	Veterinary Authorities , Customs Authorities	Written Official Protocol with approved routes for the border inspections at BIPs to prevent delays- Removal of the borders UAE-KSA and Bahrain-KSA?	
Encourage and strengthen regional international equestrian competition and racing	Kuwait, Oman and Jordan have limited international equestrian competition	A strong regional base for international equine competitions and racing including Kuwait, Oman and Jordan	Horse industry and Veterinary Authorities	Veterinary Authorities develop movement protocols, horse industry strengthens regional coordination and cooperation	Dec 2026

<p>Need for infrastructure (stations) specific for horses to make unloading safely during customs search but also allow for better welfare in case of long delays- Funding issues</p>	<p>(fenced shaded areas with water, food, manure management for safe unloading</p>	<p>Where needed, create fixed or portable stations at BIPs (in case of issues with Customs, injuries) - Liaison with Ministries of Transport</p>	<p>Veterinary Authorities , Customs Authorities</p>	<p>Vet Authorities- Customs</p> <p>Add in the survey the potential contact points, the existing equestrian facilities and approved designated routes for the transport of horses (if any) within GCC countries</p>	
<p>Lack of Education of horse owners- transporters- particular emphasis in Animal Welfare</p>	<p>Item to be included and discuss in the next meeting of the Equine Veterinary Council in Saudi Arabia, comprising WEQAA, SEA, JCSA, SEF. Have a regional education program for horse owners/transporters</p>	<p>Skilled horse transporters respecting animal welfare practices</p>	<p>Horse Industry, Veterinary Authorities, Horse transport companies</p>	<p>Education of horse owners- transporters activities- particular emphasis in Animal Welfare</p> <p>Assess potential partnerships with insurance companies to reduce the cost if transporters undertake the training activities</p>	
<p>Different capacities of horse transporters (linked to the above challenge)</p>	<p>Training activities for stakeholders, carriers to ensure correct Implementation of standards and welfare guidelines</p>	<p>Licensed/approved regional transporters?</p>	<p>Horse industry, Veterinary Authorities</p>	<p>The Horse Industry could organise training activities for horse transporters</p>	
<p>Transparency issues identified in all WOAHIHSC WS</p>	<p>Working Group to facilitate communications</p>	<p>Building Trust between countries is one of the issues identified in all WOAHIHSC WS</p>	<p>Horse Industry, Veterinary Authorities</p>	<p>Proposals:</p> <p>On a biannual bases IHSC-WOAH could lead an observation Team of GCC Members to visit racing</p>	

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				<p>and equestrian competition facilities, quarantine in each GCC country</p> <p>Exchange data between UNC fact</p>	
<p>Encourage and support equestrian industry and competition in Syria</p>	<p>Expand the base at the Gemini Club and Syria EDFZ</p>	<p>Syria with a known equine health status and developing equestrian industry</p>	<p>Veterinary Authorities and horse industry</p>	<p>Syria Veterinary Authority with regional cooperation of horse industry</p>	<p>Dec 2026</p>

The Asian racing Conference to be held in February 2026 in Riyadh would be a good opportunity to discuss the progress made in the activities of this roadmap