

HARTFORD INDEPENDENT FAIR Equine Vaccination Program & Body Condition Scoring Requirement

BASIC JUNIOR FAIR EQUINE REQUIREMENTS:

REQUIRED VACCINATIONS: West Nile Combo, Rhino/Flu, and Equine Rabies

BODY CONDITION SCORE: Minimum Score of 4/9 to Exhibit and Show

Frequently Asked Questions...

Why are we implementing a vaccination program?

The vaccination requirements were implemented for several reasons. First, to ensure the viral protection of the animals that exhibit at the fair and reduce the risk of an "infectious outbreak". Second, Rabies is of human health concern, so to protect the exhibitors and the spectators that come to the fair. Third, allow an expert to inspect the animals prior to exhibition at the fair to ensure the animals are receiving adequate standard of care for their needs along with having a relationship with a veterinarian.

Why were these vaccinations chosen?

These are the current basic core vaccinations as recommended by the American Association of Equine Practitioners. Your individual horse may have additional requirements as recommended by your veterinarian. See http://www.aaep.org/vaccination_guidelines.htm. In addition to Tetanus, Eastern & Western Encephalomyelitis, West Nile Virus, and Rabies; for horses in frequent competition and comingling situations it is recommended to also vaccinate for Rhinopneumonitis (Equine Herpesvirus) and Equine Influenza at least once yearly.

What documentation is needed?

A valid document issued by the veterinarian stated they were appropriately given the required vaccinations as well as body condition scoring on a scale of 1-9. Attached is a copy of a Body Condition Scoring chart from Purina Mills. This is considered a standard amongst equine practitioners.

Do all vaccinations need to be given by a vet? Can I work with my vet to insure that they are all given, but I may give one or two myself – if my vet were willing to sign-off?

It is the veterinarian's liability to ensure the vaccines are given appropriately. Vaccination guarantees against these diseases are only worthy if the vaccines are administered appropriately by a licensed veterinarian. This decision is between you and your veterinarian and is upheld by a valid veterinary-client-patient-relationship. It is important for proper horse husbandry that you have a good relationship with your veterinarian and that an examination or your horses' health is performed at least annually. Again, an affidavit of vaccination and body condition scoring signed by a licensed veterinarian is the requirement for this program.

What if my horse was vaccinated just prior to learning of the vaccination requirements? I don't have documentation from a vet and my horse can't be vaccinated a second time... What should I do?

There is no detrimental effect to re-vaccination of your horse to these core vaccines; in fact, re-vaccination only serves to booster current titers achieved by previous vaccination. To meet the requirements of this program a signed affidavit of vaccination provided by the veterinarian giving these vaccinations is required.

Why are open class horses not required to be vaccinated?

"Rome wasn't built in a day" as they say. The fact that these open class horses are coming on and off of grounds only increases the need for a vaccination program for the horses that are being housed on the grounds all week, the junior fair horses. It is the hope for the future that vaccination is encouraged and eventually required for these open class horses as well. Also, horses housed together increases the risk of spread of disease and outbreak, whereas these open class horses are often hauled in and not housed directly with the junior fair horses.

Does my horse's BCS need to be listed on the vet's documentation of vaccination?

Yes. We prefer a standardized Body Condition Score based on a scale of 1-9. Enclosed is a standard Body Condition Score chart provided by Purina Mills which is viewed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners as standard measurement. A body condition score of 4/9 or greater on this applied scale is required by the 4-H Uniform Rules for exhibition. The fair veterinarian checking in horses on the haul-in day of the fair has the final say should a horse present to the fair with a Body Condition Score of less than 4/9, for that horse to be dismissed. Should your horse have a BCS of <4/9 or close to 4/9 it is recommended that you seek advice from your veterinarian prior to the fair as to the changes to your horses medical care and/or nutrition that can be made.

What if my BCS is scored in April, but my horse loses / gains condition prior to the fair?

It is important to also familiarize yourself with Body Condition Scoring so as to manage the health of your horse. Should you fear that your horses BCS is near or less than 4/9 prior to the fair it is your responsibility to seek the advice of your veterinarian as to the appropriate medical and/or nutritional changes that may be needed to help your horse maintain appropriate BCS.

Is there an upper limit to the appropriate BCS? Being over conditioned is just as bad, right?

The 4-H Uniform Rules require only that a horse be at a BCS of 4/9 or above. The reason for the rule is obvious and to eliminate questions about weight and animal welfare for horses exhibiting in 4-H competition. The rules require no upper limit to BCS, however, an over conditioned horse can indicate various medical conditions. Again, this is also something that requires to be addressed by a discussion and relationship between you, your horse and your veterinarian to best address your horses health.

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