

Travel Tips for Show Season

By Emily Daily, Jump Media

With show season gearing up, riders around the country are busy planning their schedules. Deciding which competitions to attend isn't the only thing on their minds. Traveling to shows can be mentally and physically taxing on horses, so riders are always looking for ways to make their horses more comfortable while they are on the road and settling into the show grounds. Horses can face a myriad of problems while traveling with gut health issues, such as ulcers or weight loss, being some of the most prominent.



Horses traveling and showing can be stressful for horses.
by Laura Gillikin © Laura Gillikin

"It's stressful

what we do with horses, going from place to place. I'll do anything I can to help them," says Julie Curtin, a hunter rider and trainer based out of New Vintage Farm in Woodstock, Georgia.

The best way to keep the stress of traveling to a minimum for your horse is to be well prepared for your trip and also give him the health support he needs.

Preparation is Key

There are many things you can do to prepare for a trip, most of which you can check off your list weeks in advance. One vital step is completing all of your horse's necessary paperwork. Although a negative Coggins test is fairly standard, every state usually has its own health requirements as well. Check the current requirements in each state you plan to drive through. Most also require proof of vaccinations and a health certificate. Chat with your vet to find out everything you will need, and make sure you leave plenty of time for Coggins test results to come back before your anticipated departure date.

Have an updated, well stocked, travel veterinary kit

Also, plan to update your travel veterinary kit before your trip and ensure it is well-stocked. Inspect expiration dates and toss out any old medicine. Double check that you have all the essentials you will need in any type of emergency situation.

Before you pull out of the barn driveway with your horse, be sure that your towing vehicle and trailer are safe and road-worthy for the trip ahead. Check the inspection dates on both, as well as turn signal and brake lights and other basic necessities. You might even consider taking your vehicle to your mechanic for a tune-up. Make sure you have working spare tires for both the truck and trailer—and all of the tools (and knowledge!) needed to safely change one, if needed. It can also be helpful to have a membership to a roadside assistance company that caters to equestrians, such as U.S. Rider.

It can be a good idea to have a list of places where you can stable your horse overnight, if necessary. You can find people willing to put up a horse for the night as well as horse-friendly bed and breakfast establishments at www.horsemotel.com and www.horsetrip.com. Be sure to read the detailed descriptions, ratings, and comments to see which facility might be a good fit.

Comfort Counts

If you have a long trip ahead of you, plan for multiple rest stops. This will keep you mentally fresh and also give you plenty of opportunities to check on your horse. Help keep him hydrated by offering clean, fresh water at least every four hours throughout your journey.

You can also help reduce the amount of dust, molds, and other allergens floating in the air by wetting the hay your horse will be eating in transit and also using the most dust-free bedding possible. Make sure his head is tied loose enough so that he can cough and expel anything in his airway. Crack open trailer windows to give the area plenty of ventilation as well. Also, be sure to safely stow any loose buckets or equipment in the trailer.

When traveling and showing, a number of factors can also increase your horse's risk for colic or other gastric issues, such as ulcers. These include sudden variations in routine, lack of turnout or limited grazing time, changes in hay or grain, and dehydration. Fortunately, there are numerous ways you can help your horse cope with these common stresses. Along with appropriate management strategies, a daily gastric health supplement can be beneficial.

One option many top professionals rely on to keep their horses' stomach issues at bay and help them stay on top of their game is Ulceraser®, an all-natural, show-safe supplement created by Equine Elixirs.

"My horses live on the road competing most of the year, and Equine Elixirs has really made a difference in their comfort and performance," says Kristen Vanderveen, an international show jumping rider. "The Ulceraser® keeps all my horses feeling comfortable and relaxed. Little things make a big difference in our sport and this adjustment to our nutritional program has made that big difference."



Kristen Vanderveen and Bull Run's Faustino de Tili International show jumper Kristen Vanderveen by Jump Media © Jump Media



Equine Elixirs' Ulceraser® can help horses combat common gastric health issues, such as ulcers, colic, and weight loss.
© Giana Terranova Photography

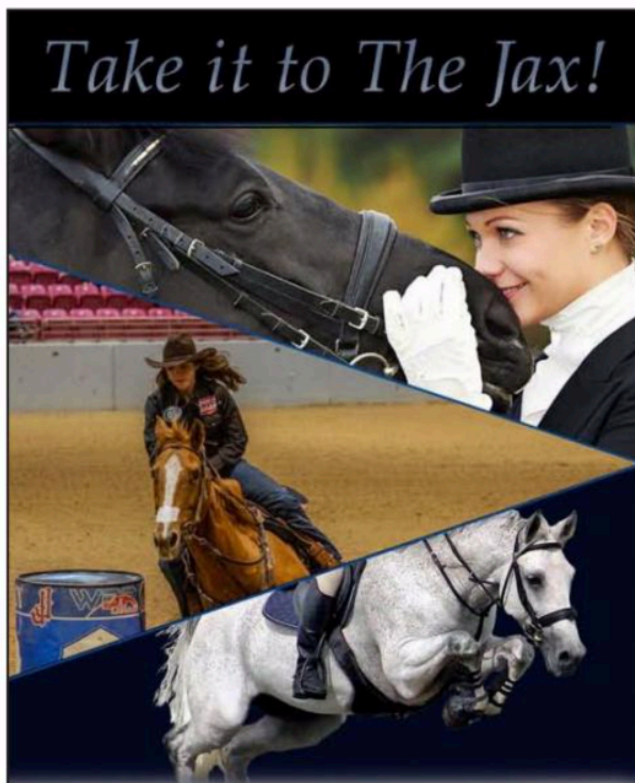
It's not uncommon for horses to shed pounds during times of stress, but the palatable, forage-based Ulceraser® can help combat unwanted weight loss and keep horses looking and feeling their best.

"They maintain their weight really well, even when we're on the road," explains Curtin, who often has to ship a long way for indoors and other shows from her farm in Georgia. "Our horses keep their weight through it all, and they always want to eat. A lot of times, when their stomachs bother them, they don't want to eat, which can lead to weight loss and stress. But with Ulceraser®, their appetite stays good and their coats are shiny.

"I want to keep them happy and keep their gut happy, which results in a happy horse," she adds. "That's what we're all trying to achieve—a nice, happy horse that enjoys its job.

There are so many things to consider when traveling with your horse, but you'll find it much easier to keep him healthy, safe, and at his peak with the right program and adequate planning.

Learn more about Equine Elixirs at www.equineelixirs.com. 



Take it to The Jax!

Jacksonville Equestrian center offers the perfect combination of world-class amenities in a convenient North Florida location situated in an 800-acre recreational park.

- 150' x 300' indoor coliseum
- Four outdoor arenas
- Four permanent barns
- 422 permanent stalls
- 16 covered enclosure wash stalls
- 200' x 400' turf derby field
- Seating for 5000 attendees
- 78 RV hook ups
- Easy access to the recreational park facilities including an indoor Olympic pool, golf course, ball fields, and hiking & biking pathways



Jacksonville
EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Contact us for more information & upcoming events

www.jaxequestriancenter.com

(904) 255-4254