



WALNUT GROVE

VETERINARY SERVICE

Coggins Tests & Health Certificates

Most everyone who has horses realizes that they periodically need a “Coggins” test performed. However many people aren’t sure exactly what the Coggins test is. The Coggins test is named for Dr. Coggins who developed the test in 1970. It tests for the disease Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA), or swamp fever. EIA is caused by a virus that is spread by biting insects, such as horse and deer flies. While the virus that causes EIA is somewhat similar to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), only horses, donkeys and mules can be infected with EIA. Horses that are clinically affected by the disease often have somewhat vague signs such as fever, anemia, depression, and weight loss. It is also possible for horses to carry the disease but to appear clinically normal for many years. Unfortunately there is no effective treatment or vaccine for EIA. Per state and federal law, horses with EIA must be either euthanized or must live isolated from other horses, and housed under strict guidelines for the duration of their lives.

Before the development of the Coggins test, EIA was a much more common disease. The widespread testing and subsequent elimination of infected horses has drastically reduced the incidence of the disease, though every year there are horses diagnosed with EIA.

Since the advent of the Coggins test, horses are required to have a recent negative test result to cross state lines, and to enter some shows, sales, races, or other events. States differ in their requirements for how recent a negative test result must be (usually within one year, though some states require a negative test result in the last 6 months). Individual events may also have their own requirements for negative Coggins tests. In addition to a negative Coggins, the USDA requires that horses have a certificate of health signed by a licensed, accredited veterinarian in order to cross state lines. Health certificates are only valid for 30 days from the date they are issued and require a specific destination (we need the actual address of where your horse is going). As with Coggins tests, individual events (even within Ohio) may have their own requirements for health certificates.

If you will be heading to a show, sale or other event, please keep in mind the following:

- It usually takes about one week to get Coggins test results back, so make sure to schedule an appointment well ahead of time. In the event that you need a Coggins test result back faster than one week, we can submit 3 day or 24 hour Coggins, however they are considerably more expensive.
- We cannot issue a health certificate without a negative Coggins test result.
- In most states foals that are less than 6 months of age and are traveling at the dam’s side do not need Coggins tests, though their dam does.
- If your horse is traveling out of the country (including to Canada), there are requirements beyond the usual Coggins and health certificate, so please check with us well in advance of the trip.
- Some states have additional requirements beyond Coggins and health certificates, so please check with your destination ahead of time.