

## **Session 2: Horse Digital Passport**

In the second session, delegates were introduced to the Horse Digital Passport project, which aims to enhance biosecurity, improve traceability, and streamline horse movement through secure digital identification.

In his presentation, **FEI Veterinary Director Göran Åkerström** provided delegates with an overview of the current landscape of equine documentation, contrasting the European Union's (EU) strict requirement for physical passports (SLID) with the diverse systems used worldwide.

While the Horse Digital Passport would initially complement the physical SLID within the EU, outside the region, the passport could serve as a potential replacement for physical documents.

The FEI Veterinary Director emphasised that the digital passport will benefit both private and public sectors by providing a secure means of monitoring, real-time traceability, and facilitating horse movement across regions. In highlighting the complexities of international horse legislation and governance standards, he also pointed out how the FEI's existing partnership – through the International Horse Sport Confederation (IHSC) – with the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH), public authorities globally support the advancement of a Horse Digital Passport initiative.

**FEI Technology and Sports Services (TSS) Director Gaspard Dufour** then provided an in-depth presentation of the different facets of the Horse Digital Passport eco-system.

By way of definition the digital passport refers to a secure and portable form of identification that exists digitally in electronic or computerised form. It serves as a virtual lifelong representation of a horse's identity and individual information, similar to a physical passport.

Among other features, the Horse Digital Passport is intended to provide the horse with a unique digital identity, a full history of the horse's records over its lifetime, mirror the content of a physical passport, provide new functionalities thanks to digitalisation, and store secure information accessible to stakeholders with appropriate permissions.

As a digital solution, the intention is for the Horse Digital Passport to be accessible to a wide range of users, including owners, athletes, riders, grooms, stable managers, veterinarians, farriers, breeders, National Federations (NFs) and public authorities.

The FEI TSS Director then guided delegates through the existing modules in the FEI HorseApp that can be adapted for the Horse Digital Passport.

Both the FEI TSS Director and the FEI Veterinary Director explained how the Horse Digital Passport will increase traceability throughout a horse's lifetime, facilitate horse movement, facilitate FEI and NF horse welfare as well as clean sport and biosecurity controls. The Horse Digital Passport also has the potential to protect the genome integrity of horses in the future.

While alternative digital solutions are available, it was emphasised that the FEI's role is in maintaining the high health standards essential for the future of equestrian sport.

## **Session 2: Horse Digital Passport Summary**

In explaining the different functionalities of the Horse Digital Passport, the FEI TSS Director also explained that this information can be accessed via mobile apps and online platforms, with various features for registered users depending of their roles and rights.

Although the digital passport launch would initially cover only FEI competing horses, NFs will have the option to join in a second phase. To support the creation and implementation of the Horse Digital Passport, a proposed fee increase of the Horse Registration Fee from CHF 10 to CHF 55 has been suggested, with assurances that the new fee will only be applied when the solution is fully ready.

The project timeline indicates that the first release of the Horse Digital Passport will be available in January 2026.

Several key points and clarifications were addressed during the discussion session.

Firstly, it was confirmed that the digital passport will not replace the physical passport immediately; both versions will be available in the short term, with the physical passport continuing to incur a fee. The digital passport is also being designed with broader adaptability in mind, allowing it to serve various sectors within the equestrian community as well as functionalities.

The FEI is actively reviewing the legal implications of the digital passport, especially regarding ownership records in the database. Key questions include who will access confidential information, and who will be responsible for updating and verifying vaccination records. These issues are essential to ensure that the digital passport operates within legal boundaries while protecting data privacy.

When working on the second version of the Horse Digital Passport, allowing NFs to join and benefit of the system, a revenue sharing solution will be put in place. The objective would be to allow NFs to continue generating revenue when issuing passports to support development, maintenance, and assistance to all users. In turn, this will be beneficial for horse welfare at all levels. To maximise the digital passport's impact, the FEI plans to continue working closely with regulatory bodies such as the European Union, aiming to integrate the digital passport within broader legislative frameworks.

A noteworthy feature of the digital passport is the secure, non-editable record of vaccinations and other medical records. This approach will strengthen biosecurity and traceability by ensuring that vaccination records are reliably documented and safeguarded.

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