

The Epidemiological Situation of the Horse Stock in Ukraine

Romanovics Zinovij, Deputy Head Veterinarian of Subcarpathian County

There are 737,000 horses in Ukraine. The stock is used as draught horses and sport horses, as well as for hippotherapy and leisure. The horses used for selective breeding are kept in 17 stock-farms.

The most widespread breeds are the following:

Sport horses: pure-blood and Ukrainian jump horse, Russian trotter, Orlov trotter

Draught horses: Russian draught horse, toriysaka, novooleksandrivska

Breeds of mixed use: trakehner, hucul

The *toriysaka* breed is a heavy draught horse. It was bred in Estonia by cross-breeding various (mainly Northern) draught horse breeds.

The *novooleksandrivska* is a region-specific heavy draught horse.

The *trakhener* breed is mainly used as a saddle-horse. It is bred by cross-breeding the pure-blood Turkmenian saddle-horse, the pure-blood Arabian saddle-horse and the local horse stock. It is an excellent sport horse as well as a very good cart-horse.

The *hucul* breed is a mountain horse, the oldest, most traditional horse of the Carpathian Mountains. It is a physically fit, undemanding, longeval, fertile breed. It differs from all other breeds in its physical appearance, origin and way of life. Originally, it was a mountain pack-animal, but is can also draw carriages weighing several times its own weight on difficult ground. It has been deliberately bred and pedigreed since the end of the 19th century, the first studbook for hucul horses was issued by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. After the disintegration of the Monarchy, hucul horses were dispersed in the succession states. Unfortunately, they were not pedigreed in Ukraine till 1949. Thanks to the efforts of hucul breeders, the number of hucul horses is now growing in the Subcarpathian region. In the village Galambosfalva (Golubine) in the Szolyva district, the breed association ('Plemkonecentr') was founded, and this association works on the improvement and reproduction of the breed on a scientific basis. There are currently 80 pure-blood hucul horses on the Galambosfalva stud-farm. The hucul is now an ideal hobby and leisure horse, as it is suitable for hippotherapy and mountain tourism.

Horse breeding is controlled by the Ukrainian Horse Breeding Corporation and the Ukrkinyprom Association. Breeding objectives are defined by the Ukrainian Horse Breeding Federation (Konjarstvo Ukraini), and the same organisation performs the examination of horse-keeping conditions, as well as the testing of horses at stud-farms and private breeders.

Horse-keeping tools and tackle are provided by the Ukrkinyprom Association, popularising the new devices related to horse-keeping and the usage of horses.

In Ukraine, the horse stock is free from the contagious diseases that fall under reporting obligation. In the last 5 years, there have been sporadic cases of rabies, tetanus, leptospirosis, trypanosomiasis and infectious anaemia.

There have been no cases of babesiosis, viral arteritis, West Nile fever, African horse sickness, piroplasmiasis, equine herpes virus infections, rhodococcosis and infectious anaemia in the last 5 years in Ukraine.

Faecal tests have shown oxyuriasis, parascarisidosis, strongylidosis and dicrocoeliosis.

State-run programs prescribe obligatory annual tests for

- glanders,
- tuberculosis in regions where it is detected in cattle,
- infectious anaemia and trypanosomiasis in state farms and if horses are placed in new stocks within the country.

All horses have to be vaccinated for anthrax, and also for influenza in case of transportation to races and exhibitions.

Horse import is regulated by Directive no. 71. (June 14, 2004) of the State Veterinarian Office.

Only healthy animals are allowed to be imported that were born and brought up in the country of origin, and (if they are broodmares) they are no more than 3 months pregnant.

Imported horses must not be vaccinated for viral encephalitis and myelitis, or for equine influenza, African horse sickness and leptospirosis, and have to come from regions that are free from the following diseases:

- dourine, vesicular stomatitis, African horse sickness, glanders and Venezuelan encephalitis for the last 2 years
 - equine influenza for the last 12 months (the whole country)
 - equine viral arteritis, piroplasmiasis (*Babesia caballi*), theileriosis (*Theileria equi*) for the last 12 months (the region)
 - the farm of origin has to be free from Western and Venezuelan encephalitis and myelitis, rhinopneumonitis, infectious anaemia, scabies and small pox for the last 3 months
 - the region where the farm is located has to be free from rabies for the last 12 months.

For horses to be transported to Ukraine, it has to be certified that signs of viral arteritis did not occur during the last 28 days prior to transportation, the two diagnostic tests performed every 14 days yielding negative results.

Horses to be transported to Ukraine have to be quarantined for 30 days on the territory of the exporting country, under the supervision of the Ukrainian state veterinarian. For the duration of the quarantine, body temperatures have to be taken for each quarantined animal every day. Diagnostic tests for glanders, dourine, piroplasmiasis, theileriosis, rhinopneumonitis, encephalitis and myelitis, infectious anaemia, viral arteritis and leptospirosis have to be performed in the state laboratory of the exporting country, with the procedures accredited in that country.

Diagnostic tests for dourine and glanders have to be performed 15 days prior to transportation, for infectious anaemia 30 days prior to transportation, for viral arteritis twice, 14 days apart, 28 days prior to transportation. The animals have to be vaccinated for influenza with inactivated vaccine. Vaccination for anthrax has to be performed not later than 20 days prior to transportation to Ukraine (if it had not been performed in the last 6 months prior to transportation). Deworming and treatment against external parasites also have to be performed.