

THE ONE Magazine FOR ALL Gaited Horses

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THE GAITED HORSE

Is importing
for you?



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Importing Horses: A Complex Proposition

By Linda Hobst

Exotic breeds hail from exotic locations. What could be better than a horse born and bred in its homeland?

ARE YOU THINKING OF IMPORTING A HORSE INTO THE UNITED STATES? Experienced breeders have been importing for decades in order to build up herds, improve bloodlines and diversify breeding stock. Likewise, export travel for eventing sport horses and racehorse prospects is also on the rise. As part of an international industry, horses move between countries for breeding, competition and recreation almost everyday.

The Internet and communication by e-mail has made it easier than ever to "shop" all over the world. Numerous websites provide enticing information on almost every breed to be found. As a result, we've seen more breeds being introduced to the U.S. equestrian, such as Icelandics, Friesians and the Brazilian Mangalarga Marchador. This makes it tempting to consider importing, but is this a realistic way to go for the average horse enthusiast?

Import Requirements

IMPORTING LIVESTOCK INVOLVES THE SELECTION AND PURCHASE of the animal, treatment for exposure to disease, compliance with the agricultural quarantine regulations for both the exporting and importing countries and the transportation logistics from farm (seller) to final destination (buyer). While no special license to import is necessary, each step in the purchase and importing process has numerous nuances that are best navigated by experience.

Laying all well planned logistics aside, the primary concern is being sure that the USDA will grant the horse being imported admittance into the United States. Quarantine in a designated USDA facility is required for all horses entering the U.S. for a period ranging from three days to seven

Photo courtesy: Linda Hobst



Entrance to the fabulous Fountainhead Ranch in Brazil.





Mangalarga Marchador horses running free on the range in their native Brazil. Where else could you find such a selection?

days, depending on the country of origin. While in quarantine, tests for equine Piroplasmiasis, equine infectious anemia (EIA/Coggins test), glanders and dourine are conducted and the horses are inspected for external parasites. **Horses that test positive for any of the diseases are refused entry into the United States and must be shipped back or destroyed.** Not a decision anyone would want to make.

Federal law also requires that all breeding horses over the age of two traveling to the United States from a country that is known to have the disease Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) must go to a CEM quarantine facility for rigorous testing and treatment for a period of 15 days for mares and 30 days, or more, for stallions. (Geldings are exempt as non-breeding horses.) Horses from the member states of the European Union* are among the countries affected with Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM). CEM is a venereal disease of horses caused by bacteria and spread through breeding. Ultimately, CEM results in a mare's inability to conceive. Stallions can carry the bacteria, but do not show clinical signs.

Horses should be insured whenever possible. Full mortality, limited theft endorsement and special endorsements such as rejection at port of entry, quarantine and transportation coverage should be thoroughly examined.

The primary concern is being sure that the USDA will grant the horse being imported admittance into the U.S.

Buyer Beware

OK, SO YOU UNDERSTAND THE RISKS, but where do you start? There's no substitute for knowing from whom you are buying, especially when dealing with a foreign country. Horror stories abound of individuals not getting the same animal

** Horses from Iceland are exempt from testing for dourine, glanders, equine piroplasmiasis, and equine infectious anemia during the quarantine period following importation. Iceland has never had a reported case of dourine, glanders, equine piroplasmiasis, or equine infectious anemia.*

they had paid for upon arrival in the U.S. or not having them clear when they arrive.

Even working with the best of the foreign breeders and their veterinarians, there often remains cultural differences and "things that can get lost in the translation". The best route to take is to work with an experienced U.S. importing breeder who can present a selection of animals and is actively involved in the entire process. (Breed magazines and associations can provide a selection of names to contact.) They will have a vested interest in making the experience



Imported Mangalarga Marchador stallion, JALLAO, owned by Marsha Siebeck. Photo courtesy, Marsha Siebeck.

as hassle free as possible as they assist in the selection of the horse to import, payment arrangements, securing the services that prepare the horse for shipment, working with the freight forwarder who will facilitate the horses arrival into quarantine and arrange for the transportation to final destination. It is common for some horses to not "clear" the tests

for piroplasmio-



Equine Piroplasmosis

Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) is a disease of Equidae (horses, donkeys, mules, and zebras) caused by protozoan parasites, which invade and destroy red blood cells. Two species of protozoa, *Babesia equi* and *Babesia caballi* are present in 90% of the world inhabited by horses. Only Canada, United States, Australia, Japan, England and Ireland are not considered to be endemic areas.

The greatest risk for introduction of this disease is through trading of animals or international equestrian sports, where infected and non-infected animals are in contact. The disease is blood borne, and is generally transmitted by ticks and other insects. Many disease free countries have the climate suitable for a foreign tick vector, or have ticks, which could act as vectors.

Diagnosis is through serological techniques, unfortunately both false positive and false negative tests occur. *B. caballi* causes a less severe disease as only about 1% of the red blood cells are infected. Infections may not be apparent, but can persist from one to four years, although they are eventually eliminated. They may be associated with poor appetite, poor performance, and weight loss. *B. equi* infects up to 20% of red blood cells, leading to more severe clinical signs with fever, anemia, icterus (jaundice) increased respiratory and heart rates, and enlargement of the spleen.

Anemia caused by the loss of red blood cells and released hemoglobin may cause icterus and dark urine. Colic, constipation followed by diarrhea, and swelling of the legs can occur. Foals can be infected in utero, and can be aborted or born anemic and weak. Animals with *B. equi* infections become life-long carriers.

The USDA is changing the current import test for equine Piroplasmosis to a more sensitive test because of problems with positive horses slipping into the U.S. under current testing. The change, along with USDA's new policy of refusing entry to horses after a single positive test (previously a retest was given if a positive test was received), is likely to have an impact on segments of the horse industry that move horses internationally.

quarantine facilities for horses imported into the U.S. have exceeded the space available. As recently as 1999 the horse industry opposed licensing private farms to quarantine permanent entry horses, but has since reconsidered given the tremendous influx of imported horses, overcrowding, delays, and other problems. With delays of up to two months at certain times of the year, the USDA was under considerable pressure to find alternatives. To locate the closest private quarantine, contact your veterinarian and local USDA office, as they are your best resource for locating permitted facilities.

Premier International Quarantine Center (PIQC), among the newest private quarantine facilities in the U.S., is a good example of what to look for in a private facility. Located in Ocala Florida, PIQC it is approved as both a CEM Quarantine and USDA Export Quarantine Facility, while serving

as an Import Quarantine Facility, as well. "The fact that we handle both directions, coming and going, gives us a unique position among private quarantine facilities," states Marsha Sielbeck, a managing partner of Premier International Import Export, LLC.

"Why Ocala? As the horse capital of Florida, it caters to every

Work out the "what if" in advance with a contingency plan and be prepared for the unexpected.

breed and discipline. It actually is more convenient and flexible. Depending on the season, booking slots at

the three U.S. ports that accommodate horses, Newburg (NY), Miami (FL) and Los Angeles, (CA) can be limited due to overbooking or "phantom bookings" by shippers."

Sielbeck explains further. "It can be less expensive and easier on the horse to come into the U.S. through the Miami Port, enjoy a restful quarantine in Ocala, and then be transported to the West Coast with a professional horse

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Importing Horses

transportation service. Each horse experiences a calm, quiet stay in a peaceful secluded indoor environment with a relaxing view and daily turnouts in lush pasture. Unlike other quarantine facilities, we also provide our clients with a clubhouse and viewing area so you can see your horses prior to their release, thus providing owners and trainers with peace of mind."

Horses that must undergo CEM testing before traveling out of the U.S. will find that the Premier International Quarantine Center makes economic sense for a lengthy and usually expensive process. Federal law requires that all mares and stallions traveling outside the United States must undergo a minimum 30-day quarantine and testing under the supervision of the USDA for CEM.

Helpful Website Resources

USDA - www.usda.gov

U.S. Customs Service - www.customs.gov

American Horse Council - www.horsecouncil.org

Aphis Veterinary Services - <http://cofcs66.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/importing.html>

Breed Resources

Mangalarga Marchador Horse Association

P.O. Box 770955
Ocala, FL 34477
(352) 427-9644
www.mmhaa.com

Rancho Linda Marchadores

P.O. Box 1008
Bonsall, CA 92003
(858) 212-6650
www.marchadorhorses.com

Paso Fino Horse Association

101 North Collins Street
Plant City, FL 33563-3311
(813) 719-7777
www.pfha.org



A newly imported Mangalarga Marchador mare and foal.

Make it Easy

THE BEST ADVICE? Work with U.S. breeders who are experienced in

importing. Make sure you have a clear understanding and a contract that spells out all aspects of the purchase, including terms and delivery.

Although it's relatively unlikely, understand that once the animal is transported following a pre-shipment quarantine exam in the country of origin, the risk of "not passing" the U.S. quarantine exam remains. Work out the "what ifs" in advance with a contingency plan and be prepared for the unexpected.

Often imported is a "two for one" package of mares that are in foal. One Mangalarga Marchador mare foaled two weeks early on the airplane while it was on the ground in Brazil with a delay, so the mare and foal were able to get off before takeoff. The filly and mare shipped a few months later sharing the same container. The filly was named Ariel.

Peruvian Paso Horse Breeders' and Owners' Association

P.O. BOX 478
WILTON, CA 95693
(916) 687-6232
www.aacbpqh.org

Peruvian Paso Horse Registry of North America

3077 Wiljam Court, Ste. A
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
(707) 579-4394
www.pphrna.org

United States Icelandic Horse Congress

38 Park Street
Montclair, NJ 07042
(973) 783-3429
www.icelandics.org

Import Resources

Los Angeles Import Center

11850 S. La Cienega Blvd.
Hawthorne, CA 90250
(310) 725-1970

Miami Animal Import Center

P.O. Box 660657
Miami Springs, FL 33266
(305) 526-2926

New York Animal Import Center

200 Drury
Rock Tavern, NY 12575
(845) 564-2950

Premier Import Export & Quarantine Center

8250 NW 136th Ave. Road
Ocala Florida, 34482
(352) 368-5786



Mangalarga Marchador

Brazilian Gaited & Sport Horses

With over 180 years of pure Iberian heritage, these descendants of the Portuguese Royal Alter Stallions bred to Barb Mares have become the national horse of Brazil. Intelligent with a mild gentle temperament, they average 14.5-16.5 hands in height. Extremely versatile, Mangalarga Marchador horses are adaptable to all climates, terrains, feed, and riding disciplines. They are naturally gaited, well-suited for endurance, pleasure and trail riding, cutting and barrel racing and can be trained in dressage.



"One of the great gifts to the horse world is to have the Mangalarga Marchador horse breed introduced at this time for pleasure riders who want an athletic, exotic, magical, yet sensibly personable equine companion," states renowned clinician Linda Tellington-Jones. "They ride as smooth as a 'Porsche'. With their romantic Iberian heritage, there is no comparison among gaited breeds."



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www.marchadorhorses.com
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