Horse Show Prep Checklist – 05/09/2020

**Way Before (at least a few months, or as soon as you decide to sign up for the show) -**

* Double check require memberships & registrations for horse & rider, this way there's time to work out any issues
* Schedule or plan any required vet appointments (will do you need a new coggins or health certificate for out of state travel?)
* Try on rider show outfit to make sure everything still fits & is ready to go
* Start memorizing & practicing dressage test
* Start pulling the horse's mane & clipping them, this stuff is a ton easier if you're not trying to shave an entire harry monster all at once
* Practice braiding if it's been awhile or there's problem sections of mane (blanket rubs or sections that are growing out)
* Practice trailering & loading the horse if it’s been awhile or if there’s anything you’d like to improve on
* Organize travel plans for horse shipping & hotel for humans if needed
* See who else from the barn is also going to the show to share tack stalls, horse transport, potluck...

**1-2 Weeks Before -**

* Bath horse, that way you just need to do a touch up at the show & they have a chance for their natural oil to help bring back the shine
* Brush out mane & tail after the bath
* Wash grooming brushes (always do this when you give the horse a bath that way you're not using dirty brushes on a clean horse :)
* Wash horse cooler & any horse blankets that need to be packed
* Deep clean saddle & bridle taking them apart & also cleaning all attachments (girth stirrups, saddle cover), that way the day before the show you just need to do a quick wipe down
* Make sure you have & pack extra copies of important horse paperwork (memberships, coggins, entry forms, lease, health certificates...)
* Start packing your travel trunk/tub as things you won't need until show day are cleaned

**2-3 Days Before -**

* Check ride times & make a game plan (work backwards from your ride time to when you need to start getting ready each day)
* Pack horse grain & hay
* Clean any riding gear that will be used for schooling at the show (other saddle pads & non-show riding gear)
* Clean riding helmet & any other riding accessories (whip, spurs...)
* Ensure your travel trunk/tub is packed & ready to go
* Prep your hay net & horse travel gear (breakaway halter, shipping boots, head bumper, stud chain lead, stick/whip...) one tub or bag is great
* Touch up any clipping that isn't show ready, fresh bridle path & nicely trimmed feet help clean up any horse :)

**When you arrive at the show -**

* Check in at the show office (BEFORE unloading the horses), get your number, double check ride times haven't changes, & ask about schooling in the show rings
* Find your stall (BEFORE unloading the horses)
* Spread out bedding in your horse’s stall (think comfy hotel bed, you want it to be better than home :)
* After you know where you're going & have a safe place prepared you can unload the horse, don't forget to take off any shipping wraps & prepare all the shipping things for the trip home
* Let you horse settle in & take a break while you unload, don’t forget to hand up a clean full whaterbucket as soon as you get it unloaded
* Take your horse for a walk all around the showgrounds so then can get familiar with the place, where gloves & use a chain lead on this first walk just in case (the show grounds will be busy & it's better to have it just in case, leave it behind next time after you're sure your horse is comfortable if you want)
* If time allows do a schooling ride, preferably in the show arenas

**Night before (but AFTER any schooling rides) -**

* Wipe down saddle & bridle (including bit), don't forget to take off anything used for schooling that's not show-legal
* Scrub any white parts on the horse & clean up any thing that's gotten icky since bath time (think poop stains!)
* Brush out tail & groom the rest of the horse really good
* Double check that you have everything for showing while there's still time to go home our shopping if needed :)
* Braid mane & forelock (maybe the morning of depending on ride times)
* Pick up a show program & highlight or mark your ride times to take to the warm-up ring in your "ring bag/bucket" (also a good time to prep the rest of the stuff)

**Show day -**

* Feed Horse, make sure horse is feed breakfast 2+ hours before your ride, if you're showing with friends this is a great thing to take turns on
* Clean water buckets, just like at home but it's even more important to make sure they are drinking enough when you're traveling
* Take horse for a walk, it's always a good idea to get your horse out & let them stretch their legs after they finish eating since they aren't being turned out
* Clean stall, if you have a helper they can do this while the horse is out for a morning walk, but if you keep the stall as clean as possible there's less chance for the horse to get dirty :)
* Groom the horse really good, brush out the tail again, touch up any braids that need it & wash anything the horse got dirty overnight (don't forget to pick out feet after a morning walk)

**What do bring with you to the warm up ring -**

* Horse all tacked up & ready to go
* Rider all decked out in show gear (with helmet!)
* Any whips or spurs needed
* Show coat if rider isn't wearing it
* Headsets if trainer will be using them for schooling
* Water bottle for rider
* Test book or copies for last minute checks
* Show program to double check ride times & order of go
* Damp rag to clean up boots & horse slobbers

**Before leaving the horse show for the day -**

* Wipe down all your tack & riding gear so it's ready for you again tomorrow
* Make sure your saddle & any other not-easily-replaced valuables are either locked up or take them with you for the night
* Straighten & clean everything up so it presents a neat image & is ready for you in the morning (it's also easier to tell if something is missing...)
* Same feed, water, & clean stall routine as in the morning
* Another walk is always nice for the horse, especially if there's some grass they can eat

**After show -**

* Wash any horse show specific or travel gear (white saddle pads, wraps, & boots used on the horse for trailering)
* Wash or clean riders show outfit (show coat, show shirt, white breeches, stock tie)
* Clean & polish riders show boots/half chaps
* Basically clean & repack anything for next time that you can