

Equine Eye Certification - Equine Eye Registry Foundation (EERF)

Dr. Brian Gilger, Professor of Ophthalmology at the Equine Health Center of North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine, recommends that all performance horses, children's horses, and breeding stock have their eyes certified through the Equine Eye Registry Foundation (EERF). Furthermore, eyes should be certified prior to sale or purchase of all horses.

The purpose of this certification is to ensure that horses not have eye disease that may threaten the rider and to eliminate heritable eye disease in breeding horses.

EERF cooperates with the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologist (ACVO) to maintain a registry of horses. Horse owners may register the horse with EERF and receive a registration number and certificate. Your horse can be identified as being certified and registered with EERF to other interested horse breeders or buyers. □ Eye certification provides horse buyers and breeders with proof of your integrity and commitment to safety and to maintain the highest quality bloodlines.

Additionally, eye research will be enhanced because EERF will also maintain a closed research database (no owner information or horse identification will be released), which will consist of information that is a compilation of all examinations of horses (both normal and abnormal) done by veterinary ophthalmologists. Statistic reports generated from this database will help breeders and ophthalmologists identify trends in eye disease by breed and region. For more information, please see http://www.vmdb.org/h_eerfinfo.html.

Eye Certifications must be performed by a veterinary ophthalmologist and consist of a complete ophthalmic examination with your horses' pupils dilated. Examinations include the use of a slit lamp, and direct and indirect ophthalmoscope. The dilation medication usually lasts about 4-6 hours. It is recommended that the certification be performed every 2 years or prior to sale of breeding.

If you have questions or would like to schedule a certification examination, please call the NC State Ophthalmology Service at 919-513-6659 or contact Dr. Gilger at bgilger@ncsu.edu.