

Information to PreRace veterinarian

First. All dogsled should be checked MUST be identified by microchip reading, both because dogs can not start without a chip according to NHF's regulations, and because microchips stop working sometimes. This we experience every year.

Make sure that the vaccination status is valid until the race starts, otherwise the dog will not be allowed to start. Vaccine must be given at the same time or later than the microchip.

ALL dogs presented you should be fully vaccinated against parvovirus, infectious hepatitis and distemper. In addition, intranasal kennel cough vaccine is mandatory. Valid Injectable vaccines witch contains Bordetella Bronchoseptica AND parainfluenza will be accepted if is documented by veterinarian/ pharmacy that no intranasal vaccines are approved in your country. Rabies vaccine is necessary if dogs come from countries where rabies exists or will be driving through such countries.

It's too late to vaccinate dogs when they are presented to PreRace check. Revaccination with injectable vaccines according to manufacturer recommendations and legislation is possible, but not recommended.

There are two reasons why dogs should be checked before race. The first reason is that through a physical examination should be stipulated that the dog is healthy, adequately trained and injury free. This will determine whether the dog is ready to start in a long distance race. It is created a form that participant must fill out in advance, which will aid in the risk assessment of each dog. You are of course free to ask more details for a complete medical history.

The second reason is The Animal Welfare Act. It provides the organiser of competitions responsibility to see to it that animals that start in the competition, are physically able to do so. The certificate from this survey will be used by the race organiser towards Norwegian authorities to document that the dog were approved to start in the race. Individual knowledge is essential in a race to take the best possible care of the dog. Therefore borrowed dogs are considered being exposed to greater risk in the race, especially if the dog is borrowed recently and not trained by the musher.

The musher is responsible for their dogs at all times. This also means providing the necessary information to you that is necessary for a good PreRace check. Of particular interest, in addition to vital signs, a good examination of heart and lungs. Feel the pulse quality, check capillary refill time, look at mucosal colour in addition to using a stethoscope.

Dogs who have had illnesses and injuries last six months should be given special attention. Dogs treated with antibiotics for pneumonia diagnosed in this period, it is recommended not to start the race. If the disease is less than 3 months back in time, or it is still possible to determine changes in the lungs in such a dog, SHALL not be approved to start. Please also pay particular attention to dogs that perform less than expected.

Then comes the body condition score and appetite.

Give the musher an assessment of the dog's dental health. This has significance for the food intake during a race. In addition, the pain and risk of infection that poor dental health leads. It's developed a Body Condition Score for long distance competition dogs. This is found on the homepage. The text version is at the bottom of this page. It will also be evaluated by race veterinarians throughout the competition. If you are not used to assess BCS on dogs, acknowledge if the dog is athletic built. This means well-developed muscle mass that is evident across the shoulders, back, thighs specifically. Over the ribs and spinal knuckles should be a thin, but clearly palpable fat layer before the competition starts. As for human athletes. A sled dog is not equivalent to a marathon runner in muscle mass, more like a decathlon athlete.

Finally an assessment of locomotive system and paws. See that fur is good and solid, without shavings or bigger hairless places. Think of lice as a differential diagnosis if this is the case. Normal amount of training on a long-distance race dog is at least 2500 km before race start.

Body Condition Score:

1: Prominent ribs, backbone and spine of shoulder blade. Tummy tucked in under transversal backbone on lumbar vertebrae. No palpable fat on ribs, sternum (breastbone) or sacrum. Eyes and temporal might be sunken in. Evident loss of muscle mass on back, thigh and shoulder muscles. Severe deficit on energy. Too thin to start. Drop during race. Intensive care required.

2: Prominent ribs, backbone and spine of shoulder blade. Tummy some tucked in under transversal backbone on lumbar vertebrae. No palpable fat on ribs, minimal on sternum (breastbone) or sacrum. Minimal loss of muscle mass on back, thigh and shoulder muscles. Less convex curves on muscles. Pronounced deficit on energy. Borderline. Too thin to start. Feed and rest more during race.

3: Intercostal room/ ribs less obvious, backbone and spine of shoulder blade equal to muscles/ might show some prominence. Some palpable fat, most in the dens of sacrum. No or minimal layer of palpable fat on ribs. No/ Minimal loss of muscle mass. Convex curves on muscles. Some deficit on energy. Watch BCS closely.

4: Some muscular prominence over bones on backbone and spine of shoulder blade. Good convex curves on muscles. Slight palpable fat on ribs, dens of sacrum filled out. BCS ok.

5: Good muscular prominence over bones on backbone and spine of shoulder blade. Good convex curves on muscles. Palpable fat on ribs, sacrum partially filled out. BCS ok.

6: Good muscular prominence over bones on backbone and spine of shoulder blade. Good convex curves on muscles. Fat clearly palpable on ribs, sacrum all filled out/ hip bones less prominent. BCS ok. Good starting weight in cold conditions.

7: Some muscular prominence over bones on backbone and spine of shoulder blade. Curves on muscles difficult to determine. Fat covering all over. Some overweight.

8: Fat. Too heavy to race.

9: Obese. Too heavy to race.