

Licenses and Registration



A foal undergoes an inspection for registration of its pedigree

HORSE REGISTRATION

Foal Registration

Specially trained inspectors from the Japan Race Horse Registry visit breeding farms to screen foals by sex, coat color, markings and microchips as well as to collect hair samples for DNA testing to verify parentage. Inspectors then visit the farms again the following year, when the horses are yearlings, to reconfirm the sex, coat color, markings and microchips of each horse, after which foal registration certificates are issued and registration is complete.

Racehorse Registration

Registration is required to enter racehorses in events operated by JRA and Racing by Local Governments. Only a horse's owner may apply to register the horse and any healthy racehorse two years old, or older that is to be entered in races can be registered. This process is done by supplying the horse's name and pedigree and the horse owner's name. Note that the same horse may not be registered to race in JRA and NAR racing at the same time.

Registration for Breeding

Registration as a broodmare, or a stallion, is carried out when a horse enters breeding service. Again, registration inspectors from the Japan Race Horse Registry check the horse's sex, coat color, markings and microchips and after successful completion of these checks, a certificate for registration for breeding is issued. Once a horse has been registered for breeding, it may not be used as a racehorse again.

HORSE OWNER REGISTRATION

As a general rule, a person aspiring to become a racehorse owner in Japan, must first be a resident of Japan (in the case of non-Japanese, a resident alien), not have a criminal record for imprisonable offenses.

Applicants must also demonstrate sufficient assets and income to possess a racehorse. Individuals, corporations and private groups (syndicates) may own racehorses. It is notable that there has been recent increased in members enrolled in membership corporations. Also, trainers, trainer's assistants, jockeys, stable hands and others who have direct contact with race operations and racehorses may not become horse owners while retaining their training, jockey, or stable hand status.

JRA began accepting applications for JRA owner registration for foreign persons who are non-Japanese residents in 2009. Further, details on this process are available on the website (japanracing.jp).

TRAINER LICENSES

One must pass either the JRA or National Association of Racing (NAR) license examination to obtain a trainer's license in Japan. A trainer's license is valid for one year and license renewal examinations are held annually. One must be 28 years of age or older to be eligible to take the test. Examination categories include racing regulations, hippology, tests on academic subjects, along with tests of equestrian skills, among other topics. Trainer's examinations are generally taken after experience has been gained as a jockey or stable hand. Trainers are required to be knowledgeable about the training and supervision of racehorses. They must also possess a variety of expertise pertaining to the education of young stable hands and jockeys, stable operations and so forth.

JOCKEY LICENSES

Only licensed jockeys may ride horses entered in races in Japan. One must pass either the JRA or NAR license examination to obtain a jockey's license to become a professional. A jockey's license is valid for one year, and license renewal examinations are held annually. One must be 16 years old or older to be eligible to take the test. Examination categories include racing regulations, hippology and other academic subjects along with a test of practical skills of the jockey's techniques. There is also a program under which short-term licenses, limited to three months, are issued to superior jockeys who have been licensed in other countries. JRA and NAR operate jockey training schools to train jockeys, and the majority of currently active jockeys have attended those schools.