

## THE FUTURE OF HORSE WELFARE AND ETHICS IN THE SPORT HORSE INDUSTRY IN THE UK

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### The official view

- ☐ Monitoring of welfare issues in the sports horse industry is seen as the responsibility of the relevant governing bodies, except in cases so severe they infringe the law:
  - The majority of equine sports (racing, jumping, dressage, eventing, polo, endurance riding etc) operate under complex rules drawn up by the individual governing bodies of the sports to protect the welfare of the horses involved and ensure fair competition.
  - Para 367 of the Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2009, National Equine Welfare Council)

### Organisations involved in Sports Horse Welfare

- ☐ **Government and enforcement bodies**
- ☐ **Other national bodies**
- ☐ **Competition organisations**
- ☐ **Studbooks and shows**
- ☐ **Local organisations**

### Main current sports horse welfare issues

- ☐ **All sports and competitions**
  - Drug use/abuse, unacceptable training methods
- ☐ **International Competitions**
  - Biosecurity in relation to London 2012, Greenwich as venue
- ☐ **Dressage**
  - Over-exhaustion (rillway), over-training of young horses
- ☐ **Eventing**
  - Horse falls, horse education
- ☐ **Showjumping**
  - Sensitisation of legs, rapping etc
- ☐ **Sports horse breeding**
  - Overfeeding of youngstock and
  - Breeding from ungraded / unregistered / unproven stock
- ☐ **Racing (Horseracing Regulatory Authority)**
  - Over-use of whips, racing injuries, retting medicines

### Current enforced legislation

- ☐ **Current legislation**
  - At least 60 different sets of main EU legislation
  - A total of 64 UK Orders and Statutory Instruments
- ☐ **Key legislation**
  - Animal Welfare Act (2006) and Animal Health and Welfare Act (Scotland) Act 2006
  - Horse Passport Regulations 2009
  - 2008/500/EC Methods of identification of equidae

### Other relevant regulations

- ☐ Overall policy as outlined in Equine Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain
- ☐ Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium for Horses Ponies and Donkeys
- ☐ British Equestrian Federation Rule Book
- ☐ Individual rule books of regulatory bodies for specific disciplines / breeds
- ☐ Welfare of Animals During Transport: Advice for transporters of horses, ponies and other domestic equines

### Other relevant Codes of Practice of the Horse

- FEI Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies at Events
- BHS Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies at Events
- British Horseracing Authority

### Equine Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain

- Drawn up in 2007 and currently being updated.
- Highlighted need for more co-ordinated policy and action, especially in the sports horse sector because:
  - Surveillance of general standards of health and welfare is provided via industry and sports groups
  - Some organisations work closely together, others operate in isolation, only working with other organisations when required
  - Skills passport for competition grooms being developed
  - Many charities and regulatory bodies have educational programmes but they are largely un-coordinated
  - Apart from general suggestions that better training of riders and horse keepers could be developed, no policies / actions are suggested to improve monitoring of welfare of sports horses in training at home.

### British Equestrian Federation Rule Book, Disciplinary and Anti-Doping Rules

- All BEF member bodies must abide by these rules.
- Many studbooks and unaffiliated / Riding Club organisations also follow them
- Stewards and judges are required to enforce them at an Event.
- World Class, Performance, Potential and Equine Bridge programmes provide welfare guidance, training and veterinary monitoring for elite and potential elite riders and horses
- Very little guidance is given as to how training and welfare of a sports horse can be monitored at grass roots/ novice level when not at a competition

### BHS Code of Practice and specific Discipline rules

- BD, BE, BS and all other BEF member bodies have sections in their rules based on FEI Code of Conduct
- BHS Codes of Practice and for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies at Events

### Future legislation

- Any further legally enforceable regulations relating to equine welfare along Danish lines are extremely unlikely unless enforced by EU because:
  - Most are covered by self-regulatory Codes of Practice
  - Current government/coalition has promised to roll back legislation rather than add more
  - Enforcement agencies (i.e. DEFRA, local authorities, Ministry of Transport) are reducing not increasing staff due to funding cuts
  - Involvement of RSPCA in enforcement can cause problems