



HARNESS RACING VICTORIA

EQUINE WELFARE FRAMEWORK

A life worth living

Mellor D.J. Updating animal welfare thinking: Moving beyond the "Five Freedoms" to "A Life worth Living"
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Introduction

Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) is committed to high welfare standards of Standardbred horses involved in the harness racing industry. This framework sets clear welfare standards and what is considered best practice. It is expected that licensed participants, breeders, veterinarians, farriers, and all other stakeholders involved in the harness racing industry use this document and associated policies and guidelines to meet industry expectations.

Equine welfare best practice is an evolving journey, and this framework builds on all our past work at maintaining high animal welfare standards. This framework includes the Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Welfare Guidelines for Trainers, breeders and owners. These guidelines set clear animal welfare priorities and objectives for these stakeholders.

Acknowledgements

HRV would like to express gratitude to all persons who provided feedback and their expertise to create this framework.

A special thank you to New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing and Professor David Mellor for their guidance and assistance.

Expectations

HRV prides ourselves for setting standards and expectations that are above the legal minimum requirements as we strive to ensure our horses receive the best care and enjoy enriched and positive lives.

The information and expectations contained in these guidelines are the minimum acceptable standards for the care and management of Standardbred horses in our industry.

Failing to meet expectations

The HRV Integrity Department will not accept any compromise of horse welfare under any circumstances. HRV Integrity Stewards will take immediate action once aware of any animal welfare concern.

Any person suspected to be in breach of these welfare standards or the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (POCTA) the RSPCA will be notified and/or investigated by the HRV Integrity Department. These investigations may result in sanctions being imposed including but not limited to suspension, disqualification of licenses or potential criminal prosecution if in breach of POCTA.



Background

Animal Welfare has attracted increased focus in recent years and is significantly important it is addressed and maintained at a high level to meet current welfare standards along with community and industry expectations.

This has been demonstrated in recent years at HRV through the implementation of the following measures;

- Animal Welfare Online Course for participants and staff
- A dedicated Animal Welfare Investigative Steward
- Carrying out targeted and random welfare inspections
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and stronger communication and engagement with the RSPCA Victoria
- Increased oversight and tracing of Standardbred horses through public saleyards
- Auditing and corrective measures for traceability and deregistration of Standardbred horses
- Ongoing commitment to life after racing for Standardbreds by increasing rehoming options through the Harness Education and Rehoming Program
- Ongoing commitment to life after racing for Standardbreds through rehoming options through the Harness Education and Rehoming Program
- Veterinary assessments at racecourses including higher risk horses (Appendix 3)
- Conducting endoscopic examinations of race horses to identify respiratory abnormalities

Aim

The aim of this document is to ensure all participants in harness racing understand their duty of care and the expectations of HRV when caring for, training, breeding and housing Standardbred horses. HRV is committed to improving and ensuring Standardbred horses receive the highest level of care and welfare standards. As the welfare of horses is continually developing, HRV must ensure that education and expectations are clearly communicated with our participants.

Continuous improvement is part of HRV's commitment to Animal Welfare, this also highlights the need for improvement. Some of the areas that have been identified are increasing traceability, increasing rehoming opportunities for life after racing, emergency assistance for horses involved in disaster and increasing the number of stable/welfare inspections. Some of the key action items that HRV would like to achieve as part of the Integrity Department Annual Plan and their 3 year Road map.

The Animal Welfare Framework sets out a clear framework of the required care and responsibilities of the handler, owner and/or trainer of Standardbred horses. This framework covers before, during and life after racing expectations. This framework has been aligned with:

- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
www5.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/poactaa1986360
- The Code of Practice for the Welfare of horses
www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/538271/Code-of-Practice-for-the-Welfare-of-Horses.pdf
- IGSRV Welfare Guidelines
www.igsrv.org/welfare



What is considered 'good animal welfare'

The definition of what constitutes good animal welfare is continually changing and HRV has an obligation to ensure that all participants are educated and aware of what is required of them.

HRV has currently adopted the five Domains model of animal welfare (developed by Professor David Mellor) because it provides a comprehensive but integrated approach to managing and improving horse welfare. HRV recognizes education and training for all stakeholders is a critical part of this model.

Industry Standards

It is important as a person responsible for the life and welfare of a horse to understand the rules that specifically relate to animal welfare.

Welfare guidelines for horse racing

HRV expects that at all stages during the preparation and presentation of Standardbred horses at Victorian race meetings or trials for racing, that their welfare must take precedence over all other demands. Failing to ensure the welfare of horse and the needs are met, participants may be in breach of rule 218.

AHRR 218:

A person having responsibility for the welfare of a horse shall not fail to care for it properly.

Responsible handling

Any practice which causes physical or mental suffering, whether in stables, training or racing, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

AHRR 90 (2.10):

- a) *A trainer is at all times responsible for the administration and conduct of his stables.*
- b) *A trainer is at all times responsible for the care, control and supervision of the horses in his stables.*

Training methods

A document detailing Welfare Guidelines for Trainers is appended to this framework.

Training schedules must be developed for an individual horse which match their physical and mental capabilities. Excessive training demands are associated with injury and distress.

AHRR 225:

A trainer shall adequately condition, prepare and supervise horses trained by that trainer; prepare and supervise horses trained by that trainer.

Section 1

Welfare Assessment Guidelines and Expectations

In this section we will refer to the 5 domains model established by Professor David Mellor. This model has developed from the original 5 freedoms model used by animal welfare organisations for many years. The 5 domains model defines optimal and minimal provisions, and has successfully identified a range of husbandry, veterinary and equitation impacts on horse welfare⁵.

Five Domains Model of Animal Welfare



Adapted by HRV based on the assessment guide adapted by Cristina Wilkins, Horses and People Magazine, in collaboration with NZ Thoroughbred Racing, from Mellor, D.J. (2017). Operational details of the Five Domains Model and its key applications to the assessment and management of animal welfare. Animals 7(8), 60. doi: 10.3390/ani7080060

Introduction

The diagram above is used as a reference when assessing and understanding the welfare of a standardbred horse. It is important to understand how each of the domains can have a negative or positive impact on the mental state of a horse. The domains provide the requirements necessary for survival and health along with experiences that are enjoyable for animals such as social interaction, exercise, play and exploration.



DOMAIN

ANIMAL WELFARE AIMS

NUTRITION Provide ready access to safe water and a diet adjusted to the individual to ensure and maintain optimal health and fitness	Minimise thirst and hunger Enable eating to be a pleasurable experience
ENVIRONMENT Provide suitable safe enclosures with room to move, shade, good air quality and comfortable resting areas	Minimise discomfort and exposure Promote and provide a comfortable environment considering temperature, safety, and visual stimulus
HEALTH To diagnose, prevent and treat disease, injury and to create and implement good exercise conditioning and free exercise	Minimise negative experiences of ill-health Promote pleasures of optimal health, fitness, and free exercise
BEHAVIOUR Provide sufficient space, proper and safe facilities, compatible company to enable the horse to express normal behaviours	Minimise threats and unpleasant restrictions on behaviour Promote engagement in rewarding activities
MENTAL OR AFFECTIVE STATE Provide safe, compatible, and appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences	Minimise boredom, anxiety, fear, and loneliness Promote various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, and confidence

Adapted by HRV based on the collaboration NZ Thoroughbred Racing and Professor David Mellor



Provisions Explained

Nutrition

Providing appropriate nutrition is an important factor to not only the horses mental state but their overall condition. Some of the factors that must be considered when developing and implementing an appropriate feeding plan are:

- Nutritional and energy requirement of the horse eg, spelling horses will require less than broodmares or horses in work
- Quality of the feed
- Quality of pasture or hay available
- Whether the horse is stabled or paddocked

What is considered optimal when assessing nutrition? When assessing the nutritional aspect of horse welfare, ensure the horse has:

- Adequate body condition score (Appendix 1)
- Adequate amounts of palatable water available
- Eating enough food (volume available)
- Correct quantities
- Balanced diet

Examples of where a standardbreds welfare needs may not be met:

- *The body condition score is unacceptable (Appendix 1)*
- *Lack of food volume or water*
- *Unbalanced diet leading to health issues or concerns*

Environment

There are many considerations that should be made when assessing and creating the environment where you house a Standardbred horse. The expectations for housing and environment are as follows:

- Safe enclosure to minimise risks of injury whether that is fencing or stabling
- Ensuring opportunities are available for shade and shelter to protect from weather extremes
- Environmentally comfortable surroundings – eg. ensuring there is adequate air flow and lighting
- Social contact or suitable company
- Suitable surfaces in accessed areas such as training track and the stables
- Carrying out familiar and regular routines
- Adequate space

Examples of where a Standardbreds environmental needs may not be met:

- Unsuitable air flow
- Small area of confinement
- Unsuitable surfaces
- Unpleasant/strong odours
- Exposure to toxic substances
- Exposure to weather without shelter
- Isolation



Provisions Explained

Health

The health of a Standardbred horse is assessed in many ways including all 5 of the Domains which will have an affect on the horse's health. When considering the health of the horse the following are the expected standards of HRV.

- Therapeutic substances are used appropriately and in accordance with veterinary guidelines
- Veterinary care is provided promptly when required
- Injuries and conditions are managed correctly in consultation with a Veterinarian
- Invasive procedures are conducted only by a Veterinarian
- Horse feet at all times shall be adequately cared for
- Horse shoes should be designed and fitted to minimise the risk of injury
- Coat condition
- Exercising regime to not exceed the physical capabilities and fitness including considerations of the horse's stage of physical development and conformation

Examples of where a standardbreds health needs may not be met:

- *Poor coat condition or skin lesions*
- *Overgrown hooves*
- *Untreated injuries*
- *Toxicity*
- *Unsound*
- *Obesity or poor body condition*

Behaviour

Careful consideration should be given to the social aspect of welfare. Horses are herd animals who thrive on social activities. Providing an opportunity for social interaction is an expectation along with:

- Providing and promoting a culture of ethical and empathetic human interaction with horses
- Engaging activities
- Opportunities for browsing and foraging
- Opportunities to play
- Sufficient sleep and rest
- Bonding with humans and other animals

Examples of where a standardbreds behaviour needs are not being met:

- *Lack of social interactions*
- *Undesirable behavioural traits such as weaving*
- *Antisocial or aggressive behaviour*

Mental or affective state

Each of these can provide positive and pleasurable experiences that enhance an animal's mental state. When we consider how the mental state of a horse is relevant when assessing the welfare needs, we need to look at creating positive experiences.

The expectations for the mental welfare of a horse are:

- Keeping negative experiences to a minimum or low level
- Meeting the previous 4 domains being nutritional, environmental, health and behavioural needs
- Providing opportunities for positive experiences

Examples of where standardbreds mental needs may not be met:

- *Negative experiences and no positive experiences*
- *Showing signs of distress due to other welfare needs not being met.*

Section 2

Welfare considerations and expectations for life stages

Breeding, Rearing and Pre-Training

Breeders and owners looking to produce high quality Standardbreds have many responsibilities. The responsibility starts with ensuring the mare is in good health, selecting a suitable stallion, preparing the mare and meeting ongoing care, foaling down, weaning and then breaking and pre-training. This is a lengthy process that requires commitment and patience.

- Ensure the mare is in good health
- Assess the compatibility of the mare and stallion to aim to produce sound, healthy foals
- Provide suitable facilities for housing mares and foals
- Engage veterinary services when required
- Source assistance for broodmare and foal management

Pre-Training

Pre-training is considered a licensed activity and must only be carried out by a licensed trainer with HRV. This process should be based on the individual horse to minimize stress or injury. The pre-training process is an important step to creating the training foundations for the rest of the horses career. HRV strongly encourage trainers to set foundations at this early stage for the horses life after racing.

Racing

HRV have adapted the International Group of Specialists Racing Veterinarians (IGSRV) welfare guidelines as the Harness Racing Victoria Welfare Guidelines for Trainers (Appendix 2). These guidelines along with the 5 domains welfare model provides information and an assessment tool to owners, trainers and governing Authorities when reviewing the welfare of Standardbred horses involved in the racing industry



Retirement and Traceability

Standardbred horses are known for their quiet temperament, endurance and can be used for a variety of disciplines. HRV's expectation is that the owner or trainer is responsible for finding a suitable home that will ensure the welfare of the horse is met. When considering retiring a Standardbred the most common avenues for rehoming are:

- HERO – Harness Education and Rehoming Opportunities program
- Pony Club
- Trail riders
- Adult Riders Club
- Endurance

The HERO program has upwards of 150 horses on its books, comprising of graduates which have been re-educated and rehomed, are in training, on HERO agistment or in the care of their racing connections awaiting a placement. HERO has built an excellent reputation on the back of best practice training and responsible rehoming which fulfils the community's life after racing expectations.

HERO can be contacted on **0407 413 156**

It is important to note that Standardbred horses must be deregistered when the decision is made to retire the horse, but their welfare should continually be monitored throughout the life of the Standardbred from cradle to grave.

- 96A. (1) The Controlling Body may on application made by the owner of a horse withdraw the registration certificate of the horse.
- (3) (a) Where a registered horse has been retired from racing or a decision has been made to not race the horse, the owner or trainer of the horse at the time of its retirement must, within one month of the horse's retirement, notify the Registrar by lodging the relevant form prescribed by the Registrar.
- (b) Where a registered horse has been retired from racing or a decision has been made to not race the horse but retain it for the purposes of breeding, the owner of the horse at the time of its retirement from breeding must, within one month of the horse's retirement notify the Registrar by lodging the relevant prescribed form.



If the horse is assessed and is deemed unsuitable to be rehomed due to behaviour, injury, or other significant reason the owner or trainer must ensure the horse is humanely euthanised and HRV are notified within the time frames below.

- 96A. (1) (4) The owner or trainer of a registered horse at the time of its death shall:-
- (a) In the case of a horse which dies within 14 days of being entered for or participating in a race notify the Controlling Body of the death within 24 hours of its occurrence.
 - (b) In any other case notify the Controlling Body of the death within 7 days of its occurrence.
 - (5) A notification of death under sub rule (4) shall be in writing or such other form as the Controlling Body may determine.
 - (6) The person in possession of the dead horse's registration certificate shall within 7 days of such notification return the certificate to the Controlling Body.
 - (7) The owner or trainer shall comply with any direction given by the Stewards or the Controlling Body to verify the death.
 - (8) The owner or trainer of a horse whose death has been notified, or which should have been notified, under sub rule (4)(a) shall not dispose of the carcass without the permission of the Stewards or the Controlling Body.
 - (9) Where notification has been given in accordance with sub-rule (3) the horse will cease to be registered and is ineligible to race unless it is re-registered.
 - (10) A person who fails to comply with this rule is guilty of an offence.
- 96B. Notification of deregistration or death shall be given to the Controlling Body on Form R25-A.



Section 3

Welfare Reporting and Tools

Welfare Hotlines

Equine welfare best practice is an evolving journey, and this framework builds on past work in the animal welfare area. This framework also includes Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Welfare Guidelines for Trainers to assist them to serve to guide us into the future, setting clear priorities and objectives. Any breaches of these guidelines in animal welfare standards will be referred to the HRV Integrity Department for investigation.

If you have concerns relating to the welfare of a standardbred you can lodge a report by the following:

- Report suspicious activities at thetrots.com.au
- Email us at integrity@hrv.org.au
- Telephone our dedicated hotline on 9214 0651
- Racing Integrity Commissioner via the Racing Integrity Hotline: 1300 227 225
- Urgent matters for 24-hour support RSPCA Victoria on rspcavic.org or (03) 9224 2222

Self-Assessment tool

Understanding 'good welfare' is essential but putting these measures in place to correct or enhance the welfare state is just as important. HRV challenge all participants to review and assess their horses state to create positive welfare experiences and outcomes.



Standardbred Welfare Assessment Guide

Meeting the physical and behavioural needs is the standard requirement, understanding and providing positive experiences enhances equine welfare. How many positive experiences can you provide?

Use the chart below as a guide to assessing your horses environment.



NUTRITION



NEGATIVE FACTORS

- Not enough food
- Not enough water
- Poor quality or lack of feed variety



POSITIVE FACTORS

- Ample water available
- Quantity of food
- Balanced diet
- Variety of foods or grazing



MENTAL FACTORS

- The pleasure of drinking
- Pleasure of chewing or grazing for long periods of time
- Pleasure of different tastes
- The feeling of being full



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



NEGATIVE FACTORS

- Unsuitable confinement
- Soiled bedding
- Thermal extremes (too cold or too hot)
- Lack of enrichment
- Smell or noise pollutants
- Uncomfortable light intensity
- Hard flooring or surface



POSITIVE FACTORS

- Ample space and confinement
- Clean bedding
- Fresh air
- Thermally comfortable
- Cushioned bedding
- Comfortable lighting intensities



MENTAL FACTORS

- Comfort experienced through positive environmental factors



HEALTH



NEGATIVE FACTORS

- Injuries
- Disease
- Poisons
- Lameness
- Poor fitness
- Poor body condition



POSITIVE FACTORS

- Appropriate body condition
- Appropriately nourished
- Injuries managed well and with veterinary assistance
- All diseases minimised, Veterinary treatment utilised



MENTAL FACTORS

- Good physical health and fitness
- Vitality of physical health or fitness



BEHAVIOUR



NEGATIVE FACTORS

- Normal behaviour restricted
- Reduce grazing or social interaction
- Movements or exercise restricted
- Insufficient sleep and rest



POSITIVE FACTORS

- Engaging environment
- Daily exercise
- Social Interaction with both horses and people
- Foraging and exploring
- Sufficient sleep and rest



MENTAL FACTORS

- Calm, confident and secure
- Social interactions
- Enjoyable foraging/ exploration
- Rewarding variety

Adapted by HRV based on the assessment guide adapted by Cristina Wilkins, Horses and People Magazine, in collaboration with NZ Thoroughbred Racing, from Mellor, D.J. (2017). Operational details of the Five Domains Model and its key applications to the assessment and management of animal welfare. Animals 7(8), 60. doi: 10.3390/ani7080060



*Thank
you*

To everyone who has been a part of
Victoria's Standardbred life after racing
revolution over the past five years

With amazing support from all sectors of the industry, the HERO Program continues to set the equine welfare benchmark through the development, facilitation and promotion of pathways for retired pacers and trotters

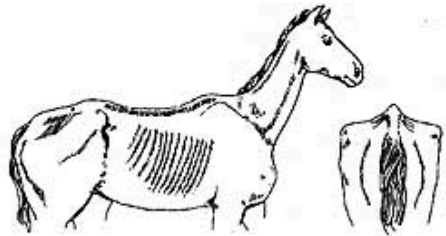
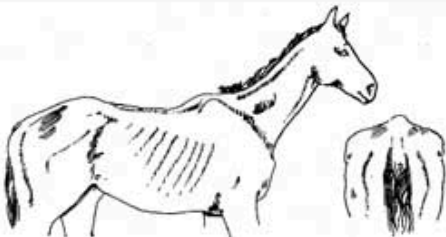
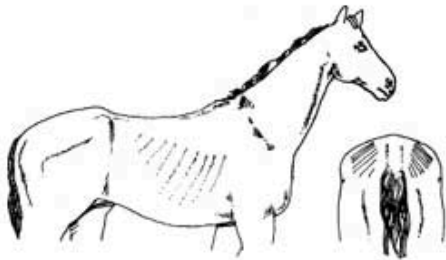
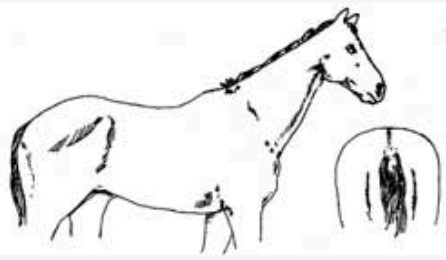
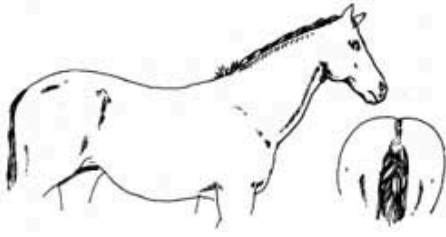
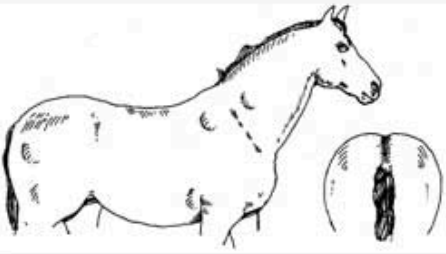
To learn more about HERO, visit www.hrvhero.com.au or follow HRVHERO on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

To discuss donating a horse to the HERO Program or inquire about sponsorship opportunities, Ph 0407 413 156 during business hours or email hero@hrv.org.au

HERO is proudly supported by Harness Racing Victoria and the Victorian State Government



Appendix 1

0 Very poor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very sunken rump • Deep cavity under tail • Skin tight over bones • Very prominent backbone and pelvis • Marked ewe neck
1 Poor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunken rump • Cavity under tail • Ribs easily visible • Prominent backbone and croup • Ewe neck - narrow and slack
2 Moderate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat rump either side of backbone • Ribs just visible • Narrow but firm neck • Backbone well covered
3 Good		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rounded rump • Ribs just covered but easily felt • No crest, firm neck
4 Fat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rump well rounded • Gutter along back • Ribs and pelvis hard to feel • Slight crest
5 Very fat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very bulging rump • Deep gutter along back • Ribs buried • Marked crest • Fold and lumps of fat

Acknowledgement
 This BSC scoring diagram is copied from the Code of Practice for Welfare of Horses (Revision 1)

Appendix 2

HARNESS RACING VICTORIA WELFARE GUIDELINES for TRAINERS

As a minimum these guidelines aim to adapt the overall intentions outlined within the 'Welfare Guidelines for Horseracing' published by the International Group of Specialist Racing Veterinarians (IGSRV) and the basic needs of a horse stated within the Victorian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses.

The Victorian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses recommends the basic needs of a horse, irrespective of the husbandry system, include:

- Readily accessible food and water to maintain health and vigour;
- Freedom of movement to stand, stretch, turn around, walk forward, lie down and roll;
- Regular exercise;
- Social contact with other horses or people;
- Accommodation that neither harms nor causes undue strain or discomfort;
- Protection from disease, and regular inspections to assess the need for attention to feet, teeth and parasite control;
- Rapid identification and treatment of injury and disease.

These guidelines further intend to assist licensed persons within the Victorian Harness Racing Industry by outlining the minimum training guidelines approved by Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) for a horse covered by the Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR).

Trainer's responsibilities

A Trainer is at all times responsible for the administration and conduct of their stables and the care, control and supervision of the horses within that stable. Should a Trainer be absent from their stables for a period longer than 48 hours they must seek approval from the HRV Stewards and nominate a licensed person to be in charge of the stables in their absence. This absence does not remove the Trainer's responsibility of the stable.

AHRR 90A(2.10)

- (a) A trainer is at all times responsible for the administration and conduct of his stables.
- (b) A trainer is at all times responsible for the care, control and supervision of the horses in his stables.
- (c) If a trainer is to be absent from his stables for a period exceeding forty eight (48) hours he must after obtaining the approval of the Stewards nominate a licensed or registered person to be in charge of such stables during his absence.
- (d) If a trainer is unable to attend a race meeting where any horse trained by him is engaged to race:-

- (i) He must nominate in writing his licensed stable representative or another licensed trainer to be responsible for such horse at the meeting.
- (ii) The nomination must be notified to the Stewards no later than one (1) hour prior to the advertised starting time of the race.
- (iii) The nomination must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee of such nomination.
- (iv) The nomination cannot be further delegated.
- (e) Any nomination by the trainer in accordance with sub-rules (c) and (d) does not relieve the trainer of the responsibilities imposed by sub-rules (a) and (b).

AHRR 190

- (3) If a person is left in charge of a horse and the horse is presented for a race otherwise than in accordance with sub-rule (1), the trainer of the horse and the person left in charge is each guilty of an offence.
- (6) Where a trainer intends to leave another person in charge of a horse in the trainer's absence, then prior to doing so, the trainer must notify the Chairman of Stewards, and the notification must be in the manner, within the time, and containing the information determined by the Controlling Body or the Chairman of Stewards.

Stable returns

A Trainer must lodge a stable return immediately once a horse enters their care with the intention of racing. A Trainer must notify HRV immediately in writing or via Harnessweb that a horse has left their care.

Victorian Racing Information

1 Stable Returns

- 1.1.1 A Stable Return, with all sections completed, must be lodged with Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) immediately when a horse comes under the control of a trainer with the intention of preparing the horse to participate in racing.
- 1.1.2 Any trainer relinquishing the training of a horse shall notify HRV in writing, or via HarnessWeb, immediately upon the horse leaving his/her care.

Behavioural needs

A Trainer should provide appropriate intervention therapy based on veterinary advice or accepted practices to horses displaying a pathological behaviour pattern (stereotypies) including but not limited to weaving, crib-biting, wind-sucking, self-mutilation, pawing or kicking.

Supervision

A Trainer should ensure that all horses within the stable are appropriately supervised and should be inspected at a minimum twice daily to ensure that all basic needs are met e.g. food, water and health check.

A Trainer should ensure that any person left in charge of the stable in their absence is able to rapidly identify signs of ill health in a horse.

A Trainer or the person left in charge of the stable should have ready access to a registered veterinary practitioner to diagnose and treat any illness or injury.

A Trainer should consider plans in the event of emergency situations such as fire, flood, contagious disease, significant injury or death. These plans should also include the requirement to report the instance of contagious disease and death to Harness Racing Victoria as required by the AHRR.

Horse Identification

A trainer should ensure that upon a horse entering the stable it is appropriately inspected so as to establish its identity.

Licensing

A Trainer must ensure that only licensed persons are performing duties within the stable that are regulated by licence. AHRR 90A(2.9)(a) states:

The holder of a trainer's licence shall ensure that all persons carrying out the activities of a stablehand are licensed as stable hands.

Water

A Trainer should ensure that all horses under their care have access to an adequate supply of good quality water to sufficiently meet their daily needs and maintain the good health of each horse.

Water containers should be a design that does not cause injury, however properly secured and non-spillable.

Water containers and mechanical water sources (automatic watering systems) should be inspected at least daily to ensure they are functioning properly and for cleanliness.

Where water is supplied in buckets the supply should be inspected at least every twelve (12) hours to ensure adequate access to water. The inspections should be increased in times of extreme heat.

Where dams are utilised horses must have safe and easy access and the dam should be free of rubbish and contaminants. The level and quality of water within the dam should be closely monitored during periods of low rainfall and extreme heat.

Should the provision of sufficient water not be able to be met horses must be moved, agisted, sold or Harness Racing Victoria contacted for assistance.

Feed

A Trainer should ensure that each horse under their care is provided with a diet of sufficient quantity and quality to maintain good health and meet the physiological requirements of each individual horse. This may include the provision of protein and mineral supplements when required.

If a horse fails to maintain body condition the quantity, quality and availability of the feed along with the health of the horse should be evaluated. This evaluation could consider the following factors:

- State of the horse's teeth;
- Extent of parasitism (worms etc.);
- Veterinary advice sought

Horses should not be allowed to access feed harmful to their health. Examples include:

- Mouldy feed or hay;
- Lawn mower clippings;
- Poisonous plants

Where provision of sufficient feed for good health cannot be met the horses must be moved, agisted, sold or Harness Racing Victoria contacted for assistance.

Transport

Trainers should ensure that horse floats and trucks used for transport are designed and maintained to minimise risk of injury to all horses in their care. Trainers must also ensure when conveying their horses with a horse truck or float, that these vehicle are appropriate, safe and the welfare of the horse is a priority.

When planning travel Trainers should assess the following requirements:

- Nature of the intended journey (race meeting etc.)
- The weather and road conditions anticipated
- The duration that horses will be without feed and water
- Planned rest stops and breaks

Harness Racing Victoria recommends that horses should be allowed to have rest periods every four to six hours. If horses require travel for more than 24 hours then horses are given rest periods at ten hours. Horses should be offered water/food if travelling for periods longer than four hours. They should also be fed well and well hydrated prior to travel.

Training

A Trainer should ensure that each horse is exercised daily, except where the activity may be detrimental to the health and welfare of the horse.

Horses should not be overworked. The training workload imposed should not exceed a horse's fitness, maturity or strength.

Horses on mechanical exercising devices such as walking machines, jogging machines or treadmills should be closely supervised at all times.

A Trainer should ensure that a "trackwork spotter" is in place prior to any horse entering the 'registered training track' so that all persons and horses are supervised in case of accident.

When introducing new horses or those returning from a spell the workload should be gradually increased to prevent injury or stress.

A Trainer should ensure that they and all persons conducting training activities are wearing the appropriate safety equipment as required by the Australian Harness Racing Rules.

AHRR 159A(1) states: A driver shall wear a helmet which has been approved and entered in the register of helmets approved by Harness Racing Australia.

AHRR 159A(2) states: A driver shall at all times when driving or riding a horse keep his or her helmet correctly fastened.

AHRR 159A(7) states: A person shall at all times when driving or riding a horse wear a body protector which has been approved by Harness Racing Australia.

AHRR 159A(8) states: A driver shall not be in possession of a modified body protector.

Stabling

A Trainer should ensure that the stabling premises are designed and maintained to minimise risk of injury to all horses under their care.

Stables and yards should be of a sufficient space to allow the horse to stand freely with the head fully raised, walk forward, turn, lie down, roll, stretch and groom themselves without restriction.

Appropriate clean bedding should be provided in stables to ensure sufficient warmth, comfort and prevent abrasions.

The flooring of stables, yards and tie-up areas should have surfaces which provide sufficient drainage and firm footing for horses.

Gateways and stable doorways should be designed to provide safe and easy access.

The stabling premises should have adequate natural ventilation and should not be enclosed.

The stabling premises should have sufficient lighting to allow for horses to be attended to in an emergency situation during night hours.

Dirty bedding and stale or contaminated feed or water should be removed daily. Disposal of washings, urine and manure should be done in accordance with the requirements of the relevant statutory authorities.

Shoeing

A Trainer should ensure that a horse's hooves are maintained to permit normal mobility and to maintain hoof shape and function.

A Trainer should inspect the hooves and shoes of a horse regularly for signs of injury, loose shoes or impacted stones. Loose shoes with risen clenches (shoe nails) should be removed to prevent possible injury.

Dental care

A Trainer must engage an accredited Equine Dentist or Veterinarian to perform or attempt any dental procedure. A Trainer should inspect, or have inspected, a horse's teeth at least once a year.

Harness, gear & equipment

A Trainer should ensure that only gear approved by Harness Racing Australia for the use in trials and races is used in training.

A Trainer must ensure that a piece of harness, gear, equipment or other item is not used in a manner which contravenes AHRR 213(a).

AHRR 213(a) states:

A person shall not:-

- (a) by use of harness, gear, equipment, device, substance or any other thing inflict suffering on a horse.

A Trainer should ensure that harness, gear, equipment or other items in contravention of AHRR 213(b) are not in their possession.

AHRR 213(b) states:

A person shall not:-

- (b) have in his possession any harness, gear, equipment, device, substance or any other thing capable of inflicting suffering on a horse.

A Trainer should ensure that all harness, gear or equipment utilised within the stable is of sufficient quality and strength to cope with the stresses likely to be imposed on it during use.

A Trainer should ensure that only whips which are approved for use in trials or races are utilised during training and are not misused in any way.

Rugging must be appropriate for the weather conditions and not result in heat stress to the animal.

Rugs should be fit for purpose, particularly in extremes of hot, cold or wet weather. Rugs used in wet weather should be weatherproof. Rugs should be well fitting and in good repair.

Veterinary treatment / injuries

A Trainer should ensure that regular treatment for internal worm parasites is undertaken and treatment of external parasites such as lice is performed. Should a sufficient response to routine treatment not be achieved veterinary advice should be sought.

A Trainer should ensure that a horse which receives veterinary treatment is afforded sufficient time to fully recover prior to competing. A trainer should also report on the incidence of racing injuries within their stable to HRV or any illness which may have affected their performance.

AHRR 89 (1)

After the running of any race and for a period of 7 days thereafter if the owner, trainer, driver, stablehand or any person in charge of the horse is aware of or has knowledge of anything which may have affected the horse's performance in that race, he or she shall report it immediately to the Stewards.

A Trainer should monitor the incidence of racing injuries within their stable to identify risk factors which may include but not limited to; track conditions, frequency of racing and horse immaturity.

Should a horse under a Trainer's care be severely injured requiring euthanasia on humane grounds this should be undertaken as soon as possible with the sole aim of minimising suffering.

Substances

A Trainer must ensure that all Australian Harness Racing Rules relating to the administration of substances, prohibited or otherwise are adhered. The applicable AHRR are 188; 188A; 190; 190A; 190AA; 190B; 192; 193; 196A; and 196B.

A trainer should ensure that a horse under their care is not administered any substance which has not been registered, labelled, prescribed, dispensed or obtained in compliance with relevant State or Commonwealth legislation, unless directed to do so by a registered veterinarian. Should this occur this may be an offence under the provisions of AHRR 194.

AHRR 194 states:

A person who procures or attempts to procure or who has in his possession or on his premises or under his control any substance or preparation that has not been registered, labelled, prescribed, dispensed or obtained in compliance with relevant State and Commonwealth legislation is guilty of an offence.

Retirement

A trainer should encourage owners of a horse being retired from the harness racing industry to appropriately rehome such horse should the owner not be retaining ownership of the horse. Should the owner be encountering difficulty Harness Racing Victoria may be contacted for assistance.

A trainer must ensure that any horse which is retired is deregistered in accordance with the Australian Harness Racing Rules.

AHRR 96A (3) states:

Where a registered horse has been retired from racing or a decision has been made to not race the horse, the owner or trainer of the horse at the time of its retirement must, within one month of the horse's retirement, notify the Registrar by lodging the relevant form prescribed by the Registrar.

Appendix 3

Raceday Veterinary Examination Policy

Horses covered by this policy

The following horses are covered by this policy and should be examined by the official on-course veterinarian prior to competing:

- Horses which have attained an age of twelve (12) years of age or older
- Horses which have started in two hundred (200) or more races
- Horses which have not raced for twelve (12) months or longer
- Horses which raced the day prior

The following horses should be examined after competing:

- Horses which have attained an age of twelve (12) years of age or older
- Horses which have started in two hundred (200) or more races
- Horses which have raced more than once at a meeting
- Horses which have not raced for twelve (12) months or longer
- Horses which are engaged to race the day immediately following

Examination type

The type of examination to be conducted is at the sole discretion of the official on-course veterinarian.

Examination should be undertaken both pre and post- race, and at a minimum consist of:

- Auscultation of the cardiac and respiratory system
- Trot up in a straight line (ideally without harness equipment) to assess lameness

If lameness is determined, further assessment of injury or limb as required.

The HRV Stewards will be guided by the advice provided by the official on-course veterinarian as to the suitability of a horse to fulfil any immediate racing engagement.

Licensed persons/registered owners – requirements

A licensed person and/or registered owner shall not hinder or fail to assist the official on-course veterinarian in their examination of a horse.

Any failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy may result in action being taken against that person under the provisions of Australian Harness Racing Rule 238 which states:

A person shall not fail to comply with any order, direction, or requirement of the Controlling Body or the Stewards relating to harness racing or to the harness racing industry.

Appendix 4

Racing In Hot Weather Policy

Purpose

This policy is to assist in the safety and welfare of horses and participants in hot weather conditions at Victorian Harness Racing meetings.

This policy outlines the relevant and appropriate risk factors to be considered when determining whether a meeting should proceed as planned on days of high thermal load and the procedures to be adopted.

Effective date

This policy is effective from 1 February 2017.

Assessing risk factors

Environmental conditions

A day with high ambient temperature, low humidity and a reasonable breeze would not typically cause adverse effects on a Standardbred.

Standardbreds are most likely to be adversely effected by heat stress on days of high ambient temperature, high relative humidity and low wind speed. This would be described as a day of high thermal load.

Although horses cool themselves extremely efficiently through evaporative cooling, this process loses its effectiveness on days of high thermal load (high ambient temperature, high relative humidity and low wind).

Measurement of thermal load

The measurement in degrees Celsius included in weather reports is simply air temperature, measured by a Dry Bulb thermometer. It does not provide a comprehensive measure in assessing the potential risks from heat exposure.

The best available measure is the Wet Bulb Global Temperature (WBGT). The WBGT takes into account ambient temperature, humidity, wind speed and cloud cover.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) is able to provide information on thermal comfort and heat stress indicators on a regional basis through its website, in the form of web bulb global temperature or WBGT. The Stewards officiating at a meeting are able to access this information from the BOM website as it is updated during the day, and therefore able to monitor for the possibility of adverse conditions for racing in hot weather.

The Chairman of Stewards acting at any race meeting is responsible for obtaining the forecast prior to a meeting and accessing the WBGT shade temperature throughout the meeting via the link: www.bom.gov.au/products/IDV65079.shtml

Where possible a WBGT thermometer should be used by the Stewards and/or the Official Veterinarian at the racecourse in determining the thermal load.

Individual factors - horses

The below factors can possibly influence an individual horse's failure to handle racing in hot weather:

- Travel to a race meeting in a float with low levels of ventilation
- Horses that are unable to sweat well (dry coated)
- Excitable temperament
- Not acclimatised to local conditions (eg. recently relocated from interstate/New Zealand)
- Lack of fitness. (Resuming from a spell)
- Withholding of water on raceday. (Not recommended during hot weather)

Scratching penalty

On a race day where the forecast maximum temperature for the race meeting venue is determined by the Bureau of Meteorology to exceed 38 degrees Celsius, the trainer of a horse engaged at that meeting may scratch the horse free of penalty prior to 8.30am on the day of the meeting. Scratching's effected after 8.30am on race day will attract the normal scratching penalty. Such applications may only be made on the day of the race.

Should a horse be scratched oncourse by the Official Veterinarian due to the hot weather conditions the Stewards will consider any recommendations from the Official Veterinarian in determining an appropriate scratching penalty.

Exertional heat illness - horses

Signs of heat stress include:

Rapid shallow breathing (panting) with flared nostrils

- Excessive sweating
- Elevated body temperature
- Staggering gait / weakness
- Agitated and distressed appearance
- Impulsive kicking with hind limbs or striking out with front limbs
- Occasionally collapse

Should any of the above signs be identified either pre or post-race this must be immediately reported to the Official Veterinarian and the Stewards.

Protective procedures

The below protective procedures should be implemented when the forecast ambient temperature is 38 degrees Celsius or above, or the WBGT shade is 28 degrees Celsius or above.

Race clubs

- Where possible horses should be stabled out of the sun and in areas that are breezy.
- Ensure adequate wash bays and hoses are available to enable rapid post-race cooling of horses.
- Ensure adequate horse drinking water is available.
- Ensure sufficient ice, water, scrapers, sponges, towels and extra water hoses available. Race club staff should provide large bins and ensure that these are continually stocked with bags of ice and water to assist in the cooling of horses.
- Ensure the swabbing stall interior is as cool as

possible, by hosing the roof, allowing adequate ventilation and/or provide fans / air-conditioning.

- Tie-up stalls equipped with fans if possible to enable horses to cool down throughout the day.
- Race clubs must ensure adequate running water is immediately available to thoroughly and repeatedly wet affected horses in order to maximise evaporative cooling. An adequate number of hoses should be provided for this purpose in the parade ring and the race day stalls by the Club conducting the meeting. The club must ensure that all relevant hoses are connected and have adequate water pressure.
- Horse involvement in post-race presentations minimised or cancelled. (Seek guidance from officiating Stewards).

HRV Stewards

- Race club officials should be informed to have ice, water, scrapers, sponges, towels and extra water hoses available. Race club staff should provide large bins and ensure that these are continually stocked with bags of ice and water to assist in the cooling of horses.
- Consideration should be given to employing an additional official veterinarian to patrol the stable area and monitor recovering horses.
- Stewards will minimise the time that horses are required to enter the parade ring and assemble at the pre-race circle.
- Horse involvement in post-race presentations minimised or cancelled.
- The Chairman of Stewards may issue directions to race club officials, licensees and the Official Veterinarian to properly give effect to this policy in order to assist the Official Veterinarian in their duties.

Official Veterinarian

Closely monitor horses for signs of heat stress where possible:

- In the tie-up stall area prior to presentation in the mounting yard
- In the parade ring pre-race
- On arrival at the starting point
- On return to the parade ring post-race
- While in the swabbing area (pre- or post-race)

If the official veterinarian is concerned about a horse's condition pre-race, they shall immediately report their concerns to the Stewards.

Any horse found to be exhibiting signs of heat stress will be given appropriate treatment.

Appropriate treatment may include:

- Repeated application of cool water to the entire body of the horse, followed by scraping of excess water from the horse.
- Walking the horse in a breezy, shaded area between bouts of hosing.
- Oral and/or intravenous fluid therapy if indicated.
- Corticosteroid anti-inflammatory treatment if indicated.
- Sedative drugs if indicated.
- Use of air-conditioned stall if available.
- Use of forced ventilation (fans) if available.
- Use of ice-water soaked towels applied to the horse's body and changed frequently as towels heat up.

The official veterinarian should have an adequate supply of relevant treatments on hand for emergency use.

Trainers & stablehands

Evaporative cooling, particularly sweating, is the most important means of dissipation of body heat for the exercising horse. The liberal application of cold water in shaded, well ventilated places will greatly assist the processes which enable horses to lose excessive body heat on hot days.

Horses can be assisted in cooling down after racing in hot weather by maximising the efficiency of evaporative cooling:

- "Wet and Walk" as water evaporates from the skin it removes body heat causing the horse to cool. Increasing air flow over the horse's skin surface, by walking in shady, breezy areas, improves evaporation rates.

- Horses may need to be hosed and scraped several times in between walking. Scraping of excess water from the coat stops the water acting as an insulating barrier and aids evaporation.
- Bucketing or sponging ice cold water over the horse assists in the recovery of heat affected horses.
- In very humid and wind-still conditions, it may be difficult with the above methods for sweat and water to evaporate quickly enough for adequate body cooling. In these circumstances the use of air-conditioned stalls (which provide cool and dry air) and/or the use of fans (to improve air flow over the horse's skin surface) should be utilised.
- Horses should be allowed to drink as much fresh, clean water of ambient temperature as they require after racing.
- Horses must be allowed sufficient time to adequately cool down before being floated back to their stables in a well ventilated float.

Industry Participants

Heat illness can occur in humans during activity on days of extreme heat conditions.

Participants and race day staff should ensure they maintain a regular fluid intake prior to and during the race meeting to replace fluid losses from excessive sweating. It is preferable to drink cool water and sports drinks with electrolyte additives rather than soft drinks as these often contain sugar or caffeine which further add to dehydration through their natural diuretic effects.

Any participant experiencing signs of heat illness should immediately report such to the oncourse medical officials and the Stewards conducting the meeting.

Race Meeting Postponement/ Race Start Time Alteration

All the above factors should be considered by the Chairman of the race meeting and the officiating Veterinarian in determining whether the meeting is postponed or the race start times altered to a cooler part of the day or night.

Appendix 5



EIPH Endoscopic Examination Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the safety and welfare of horses which are observed upon endoscopic examination to have a significant amount of blood present in the trachea as a result of Exercise-Induced Pulmonary Haemorrhage (EIPH);
- Ensure the safety of licensed participants, particularly those who drive, or compete in races against, horses which have been observed to have a significant amount of blood present in the trachea as a result of EIPH;
- Ensure the racing performances of each horse is as consistent as possible as EIPH can adversely affect performance.

The purposes of this policy will be achieved by allowing sufficient time for healing to occur by preventing the horse from racing for a specified period. The purposes of this policy will be further aided by requiring a clearance from the stable veterinarian and the horse required to trial satisfactorily prior to being permitted to race again.

Background

The Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Stewards have formulated this policy as the safety and welfare of horses and participants are of paramount importance to HRV, the harness racing industry and a fundamental expectation of the general public.

The consistent performance of horses is also necessary to ensure wagering confidence.

Scope

This policy applies to any horse which undergoes an endoscopic examination at the direction of the HRV Stewards or an officiating veterinarian at a race or trial meeting conducted within Victoria.

Relevant Australian Harness Racing Rules

The Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) provide the necessary powers for Stewards to order a horse to be examined in any manner in which they deem appropriate.

AHRR 15(1)(k) states:

15(1) Stewards are empowered –

(k) to inspect, examine or test in such manner as they consider appropriate any person, horse, racetrack, stable, stud, artificial breeding station or other place, item, document, equipment, vehicle or substance.

The AHRR provide further powers for the Stewards to bar a horse from racing.

AHRR 15(1)(aa) states:

15(1) Stewards are empowered –

(aa) to bar a horse from racing;

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

‘Significant amount of blood in the trachea’

Grade 3 and/or Grade 4 EIPH as identified on endoscopic examination by:

Grade 3 EIPH = multiple, distinct streams of blood covering more than a third of the tracheal circumference, with no blood pooling at the thoracic inlet;

Grade 4 EIPH = multiple, coalescing streams of blood covering more than 90% of the tracheal surface, with blood pooling at the thoracic inlet.

‘Officiating Veterinarian’

A Veterinarian registered by the Victorian Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria, or similar, and is engaged by a harness racing club in Victoria and/or HRV to officiate as a Veterinarian at a race or trial meeting.

Stewards Action

Upon the HRV Stewards being informed by the officiating Veterinarian that, in their opinion, a horse has been observed upon endoscopic examination to have a significant amount of blood in the trachea as a result of EIPH the following shall occur:

- The horse be stood down from racing for a minimum period of twenty eight (28) days from the date of detection;
- The horse not be permitted to start in a race until a veterinary clearance is provided to HRV;
- The horse trial to the satisfaction of the Stewards on one occasion after a period of no less than twenty one (21) days expiring from the date of detection.

Should a horse suffer a bleeding attack as defined by AHRR 101 the mandatory provisions of that rule shall be acted upon when it is determined, in the opinion of the Stewards, such occurrence was not from external trauma.

