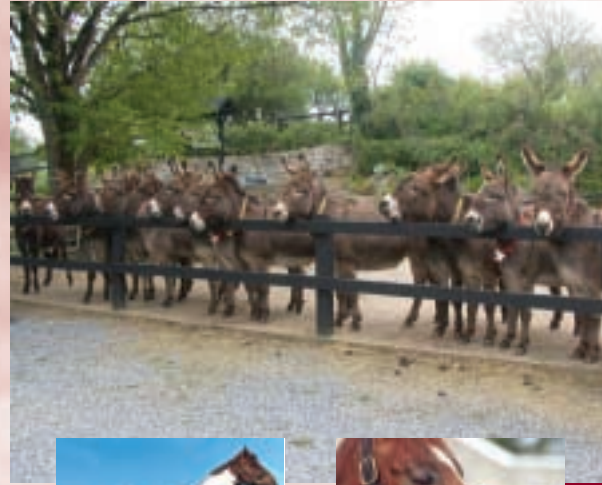


Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council



For further information please contact:
The Secretary
Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council
Animal Health and Welfare Division
Agriculture House
Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Telephone: 01-607 2049
Email: fawac@agriculture.gov.ie
www.agriculture.gov.ie/fawac



Animal Welfare Guidelines for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys

***Animal Welfare
Guidelines
For
Horses, Donkeys
and Ponies***

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
The Five Freedoms Concept	3
Responsibility of Ownership	3
Housing and Facilities	4
General Management Considerations	7
Health/Good Husbandry	11
Appendix 1: Condition scoring	16
Appendix 2: Legislation	20
Appendix 3: DAF Guidelines	21
Appendix 4: Registered Farriers	23
Appendix 5: Notifiable Diseases in Equines	23

AN INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR PATRICK FOTTRELL

Chairperson of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

The Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council was set up to allow representative groups with a variety of perspectives on animal welfare, meet and exchange views, seek consensus on various issues and developments relevant to the care of farm animals. These guidelines are the product of this consensus and have been adopted unanimously by the Council.

Horses, ponies and donkeys have long been part of the Irish way of life and not only in rural areas. There is no doubt that horses and ponies make a significant contribution to the economy as well as to sport and recreation. The equine industry is a significant contributor to economic activity and a source of employment in the countryside.

The welfare guidelines have been produced to promote sound welfare and management practices and contains recommendations to assist horse owners, keepers and others to achieve high standards of animal welfare.

Having reviewed existing guidelines within the European Union, the Council has developed these with the intention of encouraging owners of horses, ponies and donkeys to adopt and maintain the highest standards of husbandry.

The Council acknowledges that good farm animal welfare has been an integral part of Irish livestock farming which is largely grass based and extensive by nature.

The Council has adopted the best farm animal husbandry practices and welfare standards, which take account of the five basic needs:

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
4. Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and distress

In maintaining these guidelines, horse, pony and donkey owners can demonstrate Ireland's prominence in the practice of farm animal welfare standards.

Professor Patrick Fottrell
Chairperson



THE FIVE FREEDOMS CONCEPT

Welfare codes usually list five basic freedoms that should underpin animal welfare best practice at farm level. The five freedoms are listed below and provide an overall concept of animal welfare.

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
4. Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and distress

The five freedoms concept can be summarised for horses* as follows:

- Access to fresh water and an appropriate diet to maintain health and vigour
- Adequate comfort and shelter, freedom from stress or fear
- The prevention of vice** injury, parasitic infestation and disease
- Freedom of movement and the opportunity to exercise normal patterns of behaviour
- The company of other animals (particularly of like kind)

This guide does not address the issue of the transport of horses.

Horses require calm, sympathetic handling by competent and experienced people. Horses respond best to a firm but gentle approach and to rewards for correct responses. Handlers should think ahead to ensure that horses are not panicked by unexpected occurrences.

RESPONSIBILITY OF OWNERSHIP

When considering horse ownership, the following points should be included before making a decision:

The Right Owner

- Should have a basic knowledge of horses and have the availability of experienced stable/horse management

* The term horses in this guide is used to include all domestic equine species; horses, ponies, asses (donkeys), hinnies and mules. Reference is generally made to horses, but should be similarly construed for other equids. Specific reference is only made to donkeys where considered necessary.

** stereotypy/abnormal behaviour

- Should have financial resources and time to ensure good care and management of a horse

The Costs Include ...

- buying a suitable type of horse
- having the horse examined by a Veterinary Surgeon before purchase
- renting grazing/stabling
- feeding and other fixed costs (assuming no illness or injury)
- foot care every six to eight weeks
- worming the horse every six to eight weeks
- annual vaccinations and teeth check/rasp
- extra food and bedding over winter
- the extra cost associated with unexpected veterinary attention, treatment, even surgery
- taking out annual horse insurance
- the basic equipment, such as head collars, grooming kit, etc.
- providing a stable or field shelter
- appropriate safe fencing for horses (not barbed wire)
- proper care of the retired horse and appropriate disposal (humane destruction, when necessary)



The Time Commitment is Significant and Involves...

- daily inspections
- mucking out/feeding/exercising the horse
- making time available to allow your veterinary surgeon or farrier to visit

HOUSING AND FACILITIES

SHELTER

Effective shelter will afford protection against cold winds and driving rain. During the summer months it will provide shade and protection from the sun. Shelter may be provided by any of the following:

- shelter belts
- trees

- hedges
- walls
- purpose-built shelters (open fronted shelters and windbreaks)
- rugs (waterproof turnout rugs)

The lack of adequate shelter and feeding can result in cold stress, discomfort, weight loss (loss of body condition) and increased susceptibility to diseases. Waterproof rugs can also be used to protect horses from inclement weather. If horses wear rugs they should be properly secured and be the appropriate size for the animal concerned. The rug should be removed and replaced daily and checked regularly to ensure that it is not causing injury or discomfort from rubbing or slipping. Donkeys can reasonably withstand cold weather conditions, but are intolerant of heavy rain. Very young and very old animals will be more susceptible to climatic extremes and require extra consideration.

HOUSING

Housing facilities should be designed and constructed to provide for the horse's welfare. (See Appendix 3: S156, Department of Agriculture and Food, Minimum Specifications for Horse Facilities and Fencing). Horses should be provided with a clean, dry area for lying down. In all types of housing systems horses should be free to stand up or lie down comfortably at all times. Housing facilities should provide for enough height to permit horses to have a full range of head and neck motion without touching the ceiling when standing with four feet on the floor. Flooring should be properly designed, constructed and maintained to provide good traction, proper drainage, comfort and prevent injury. The design of housing facilities and the materials used in their construction should permit thorough cleaning and disinfection from time to time.

Loose boxes (or traditional stables) are the most common form of stabling individual horses.*

Groups of horses can be out-wintered together in communal barns. This form of loose housing is often the most practical system for managing young-stock or brood mares that have already formed social groups whilst at grass during the summer. Loose housing is economical and labour saving but care must be taken to ensure that all horses fare equally well.

SEGREGATION

The introduction of a new horse or horses to an existing group can result in bullying. This may be alleviated by increasing the space allowance or penning the new animal adjacent to the existing group for a short period. The shy horse not getting sufficient food or being bullied, must be removed and given individual attention. A horse that is aggressive to others, should also be removed.

Segregation of incompatible animals is particularly important where communal or loose housing systems are used. Horses should not be hind-shod in these systems.

*A horse box does not constitute appropriate permanent housing.

STABLE SIZE

In a loose box, the horse must have sufficient room to lie down, readily rise and turn around in comfort, without the risk of injury. The recommended minimum box sizes are 3.66m x 3.66m (12ft x 12ft) for horses and 3.05m x 3.05m (10ft x 10ft) for ponies. Boxes for foaling, and for mares with a foal at foot, should be a minimum of 4.6m x 4.6m (15ft x 15ft). Loose boxes constructed smaller than these minimums may increase the risk of injury to both the horse and its handler.

Any aisles or passageways should be of sufficient width to enable horses to be led safely past other horses and provide sufficient room to enable a horse to be comfortably turned around.

VENTILATION

Ventilation systems in horse stables/housing should be capable of maintaining an air change rate to prevent excessive heat and moisture levels and to remove major dust and gas contaminants that can be damaging to the respiratory system of horses and humans. Mechanically ventilated stables should be equipped to introduce and uniformly distribute fresh air/or to exhaust foul, moisture-laden air. Stables may be adequately ventilated through the use of air intakes and exhaust openings to give reasonable air exchange without creating draughts. The use of a half door solely as a means of ventilation is not adequate. Air movement should not cause discomfort to horses in stables.

LIGHTING

Horse stables/housing should be well lit to permit proper observation of all horses. Any light source within a stable should be positioned so that it is inaccessible to the reach of horses. It should be fitted with waterproof protective covering, as required under National Rules for electrical insulation. Natural light sources should be utilised as much as possible in the design of the facility. (See Appendix 3: S156, Point 4 of Department of Agriculture and Food, Minimum Specifications for Horse Facilities and Fencing).

BEDDING MATERIAL

Adequate suitable bedding material is necessary to provide warmth and protection from draughts, to prevent injury and jarring of the legs, to enable the horse to lie down in comfort, to reduce the risk of the horse becoming cast and to encourage the horse to stale (urinate). Bedding material must be non-toxic and provide effective drainage (and/or be absorbent), to maintain a dry bed and to keep the air free from dust and ammonia.

Various types of bedding material are available, such as straw, wood shavings, paper, and hemp. Whichever bedding material is used, it must be of good quality and well managed. The effectiveness of all bedding material diminishes if they are poorly maintained or if insufficient quantities are used.

HAZARDS

All fields and buildings should be kept clear of debris such as wire, rope, baler twine, plastic or other similar materials, which could be harmful to horses. All animals should be able to rest in comfort and have protection from extremes of heat and cold and wet weather, as appropriate for the species.

FIRE & OTHER EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS

Horse owners and keepers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies and should ensure that staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. Where horses are housed, knowledge of fire precautions by the owner/keeper and all staff is essential.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

IDENTIFICATION

Owners of an equidae, which are **horses, donkeys, ponies**, should be aware of new regulations entitled: 'European Communities (Equine Stud-book and Competition) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 399 of 2004) now in place on the identification of equidae in Ireland.

These Regulations implement EU Decision 2000/68, and mean that:

- from 4th October 2004, all equidae when they are being moved out of a holding must be accompanied by an identity document. Such movements will include movement between premises, entering competitions, for the purpose of breeding, leaving Ireland, being sold or being presented for slaughter.
- from 1st January 2005, all equidae being presented for slaughter for human consumption must be accompanied by a passport which was issued at least six months before being presented for slaughter. This is to ensure that the maximum withdrawal period after the administration of a drug has been observed.
- from 1st July 2004, certain medication given to equidae that are intended for human consumption must be entered in the identity document by the veterinary surgeon administering the medication. The horse owner or keeper will need to declare in the passport whether the horse is ultimately intended for human consumption. If it is, the details of veterinary medicines used will have to be recorded by the veterinary surgeon in the passport.

The owner of a horse has to ensure that the horse passport is given to the keeper or person in charge of the horse. The keeper of a horse has to ensure that the horse is accompanied by its horse passport. Micro-chipping is the preferred form of horse identification.

It should be noted that the identification provisions have been in force for all horses which are registered with approved studbooks or organisations since 1993. Since January 2004, all horses being presented for slaughter that are intended for the food chain have to be accompanied by an identity document. This Regulation extends the requirements to all equidae.

The registration authority for the issue of the identity documents for equidae that are not eligible for entry into a studbook or approved organisation, is the Irish Horse Board (IHB), which can be contacted at (01) 5053584.

HANDLING

Horses should be handled quietly, with care and patience, to avoid injury, pain or distress. Handling and restraining devices must be used humanely by experienced operatives and with regard to the horse's natural movement, temperament and physical capabilities. All halters, head collars and other equipment used to restrain or handle horses should be fitted with a method of quick release in case a horse becomes entangled in the equipment. Where animals are kept in a semi-feral state and are not halter broken (such as those used in conservation grazing), special handling facilities may be required for routine management (e.g. worming or hoof trimming) and treatment of minor ailments. These should be built for the purpose and designed to induce the least amount of stress to the animal and to avoid danger to either animals or handlers.

TACK & EQUIPMENT

All tack and equipment used to handle, drive, or ride horses should be well fitted without causing the horse pain, discomfort or fear and should be maintained in good functional condition. All horse clothing should be fitted correctly, to minimise slipping or rubbing and causing discomfort and the risk of entanglement. All equipment must be used humanely and with regard to the horse's natural movement, temperament and physical capabilities.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT

Yards and pastures should be properly fenced to confine horses. The suitability of fencing varies according to the disposition of the horses, as well as stocking density and paddock/pasture size. As a general rule, a horse requires a minimum of one to one and a half acres of average to good grassland to provide for grazing. Rotational grazing using cattle or sheep is recommended to ensure maintenance of quality grass.

Other points to consider are:

- Control grazing levels and do not over-graze pasture
- Maintain existing drainage systems by keeping ditches clear from debris
- Cut and remove tall ungrazed grass where dung soiled areas are forming
- Control weeds by mechanical control or spot-treatment with herbicides

- Remove noxious weeds/poisonous plants and trees
- Pick up dung regularly and rest and rotate grazing areas to help with parasite control
- Where possible, remove horses when the ground is very wet to prevent poaching of the ground and possible health problems such as mud fever.

FENCING

Fences should form both a physical and visible barrier to minimise the potential for injuries. Fences should be maintained in good repair. Fences and gates should be maintained to prevent horses from gaining access to roadways; perimeter gates should be kept closed and preferably locked. Barbed wire and narrow gauge high tensile steel wire, because of their cutting, non-stretching and non-breaking properties, can cause severe injury to horses. Horses should be introduced to unfamiliar fenced areas during daylight hours to reduce the risk of injury. Electric fencing units should be installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's specification. Only electric fencing that is designed for use with horses should be used. All power units for electric fences must be effectively grounded to prevent short circuits and/or electricity being conducted to unwanted places, i.e. gates and water troughs. Horses should be supervised when first introduced to electric fencing.

Conventional horse fencing includes timber, wire, various types of chainwire or weldmesh, and vinyl or pvc.

(See Appendix 3: S156, Department of Agriculture and Food, Minimum Specifications for Horse Facilities and Fencing and S157, Department of Agriculture and Food list of Accepted Proprietary Horse Facilities.).

PADDOCKING OF HORSES

One of the basic rules concerning horse ownership is that horses cannot be maintained in good health just on any old block of vacant land. Paddock horses must have adequate grass to maintain condition. If pasture is inadequate, they should be fed at least once daily or moved to a larger area with better grazing. In a good season and where stocking rates are appropriate, horses will do as well on grass as on handfeeding.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

The Noxious Weeds Act 1936 (See Appendix 2) empowers the Department of Agriculture and Food Inspectors and/or members of the Garda Síochána to investigate complaints where land in agricultural production (which includes farms that have diversified into equine activities) is threatened by injurious weeds spreading from land nearby.

Ragwort is a common poisonous plant of horse pasture, particularly where pasture is poorly managed. The toxins in ragwort are cumulative, and result in irreversible liver damage and digestive disorders. Ragwort poisoning is fatal. Therefore, this weed must be removed from land to which horses have access. Ragwort remains toxic and becomes more palatable when dried, and is particularly dangerous in hay or haylage. Any plants

should be pulled up, removed from the pasture and destroyed by burning. Ragwort is equally poisonous to humans, therefore protective gloves should always be worn when removing ragwort. Extreme care should be taken to dispose of the plant safely and responsibly.

TETHERING

Tethering can be defined as securing an animal by an appropriately attached chain or rope, to a secure point or anchorage, causing it to be confined to a desired area. Horses are commonly **tied up** in a housed (confined) environment either in stables as a temporary method of restraint, in stalls as a means of containment or whilst travelling (being transported).

Tethering in an open environment at grass or whilst grazing should not be practiced as it restricts the animal's freedom to exercise to find food and water, or to escape from either predators or the extremes of hot and cold weather. It also risks an animal becoming entangled, or injuring itself, on tethering equipment.

Tethering of horses on the roadside is a completely unacceptable practice.

The **twitch** should only be used by skilled and experienced personnel and when necessary for safety purposes. The twitch should be constructed of suitable material to avoid damage to the animal. The horse must be relieved from the twitch at regular intervals to avoid restriction of blood supply.

STRAYING

Under the Control of Horses Act 1996 it is an offence to allow horses to stray. If your horse strays onto someone else's land you are liable for any damage it causes. It is the responsibility of your Local Authority to enforce the Control Of Horses Act. (See Appendix 2)



CLIPPING

Those undertaking the clipping of horses should be experienced, competent and have received training in clipping techniques. A suitably competent person should supervise inexperienced operators. When clipping, care should be taken not to cut the skin of the horse. Where a wound does occur immediate treatment should be given. A safety plug should be used on an extension lead when clipping in case horse stands on live wire.

Clipping operators should clean and disinfect their equipment between horses to minimise the risk of spreading disease. Horses that are clipped need to have adequate protection from the weather by housing and the use of field and stable rugs. The removal of protection (housing and/or rugs) should be done gradually as the climate improves.

HEALTH/GOOD HUSBANDRY

The guidance contents cannot be exhaustive and is not intended as a substitute for expert advice. If further advice is required it should be sought from your veterinary surgeon.

The most significant single influence on the health and welfare of the horse is the care and management given by the owner or keeper of the horse. All horse owners and keepers should be aware of the health and welfare needs of their horses and be capable of safeguarding them under all foreseeable conditions. People working with horses should understand and accept responsibility for the health and welfare of the horses in their care. Employers have an obligation to train employees with respect to humane handling and animal care.

Every person responsible for the supervision of horses must be able to recognise early signs of distress or ill health and have a knowledge of basic equine first aid. They should also have access to a veterinary surgeon for diagnosis and treatment of any serious illness or injury. Records of routine worming and/or vaccinations should be kept.

Management practices should accommodate the natural behaviour of horses, such as their need to graze, their need for exercise and to socialise. Long-term stabling, without exercise is unacceptable.

Every horse must have free access to a supply of fresh, clean drinking water to meet its individual maintenance and activity requirements. The exception being when access to water may need to be withdrawn for short periods of time during exercise and transport. A horse's daily water requirements may range from 20 to 70 litres, depending on air temperature and humidity, bodyweight, level of activity and health. Every horse must be offered daily an appropriate ration of food, to maintain its body condition at between Body Condition Score 2 and 4 (See Appendix 1).

Every horse's daily forage/ration must take into account type and size of animal, maintenance and activity needs and other factors considered relevant to the individual animal and its environment. Horses are "trickle feeders" and should have access to forage feed during most of their non-active hours. This may be fresh grass, hay, haylage or straw as appropriate or preferred. Excess consumption of straw bedding can lead to colic and must be curtailed.

GENERAL INSPECTION

Horses kept in stables and yards should be inspected for signs of injury and ill health **at least twice a day**. Horses turned out in paddocks should be inspected for body condition, signs of injury, ill health, ill-fitting halters and rugs and the availability of food and water **at least once a day**.

Mares in late pregnancy should be checked **at least twice daily** for signs of impending foaling and far more frequently as the time of foaling approaches.

Horses with halters and/or rugs should not be grazed extensively unless they can be inspected every day.

A veterinary surgeon should be consulted urgently by the owner or person in charge of the horse if there are any signs of *:

- acute abdominal pain or colic
- serious injury involving deep wounds, severe haemorrhage, suspected bone fractures or damage to the eyes
- evidence of straining for more than 30 minutes by a mare due to foal
- inability to rise or stand
- inability or abnormal reluctance to move
- severe diarrhoea
- prolonged/abnormal sweating
- high temperature, anxiety, restlessness, loss of appetite
- any other signs of acute pain or injury
- respiratory distress

However, a veterinary surgeon should in any event be consulted where there is sign of ill health or injury, in order to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering.

CONDITION SCORING

A horse's body condition should be maintained between Body Condition Score 2 and 4 on a scale of 0 Very Poor to 5 Very Fat (Reference: Carroll, C. L. & Huntington, P. J. (1988) Body Condition Scoring and Weight Estimation in Horses. Equine Veterinary Journal 20(1), pp 42-45). (See Appendix 1)

For any horse not under veterinary direction, a condition score below 2 is unacceptable. The horse should not be worked and should be placed on a sufficient and appropriate feeding programme to raise its condition score to a minimum of 2. Horses should not be permitted to reach a condition score of 5. Where identified, they should be placed on an appropriate less-than maintenance diet.

* Please note that this list is a guide only and is not exhaustive.

LAMENESS

Lameness is usually an indication of pain and if not promptly diagnosed and treated may lead to unnecessary suffering. Advice from a veterinary surgeon should be sought and acted upon at the earliest opportunity.

FOOT CARE

Hooves should be trimmed as often as is necessary to maintain the health of the foot. The frequency of hoof trimming will depend on such factors as age, season, nutrition, management and injury. There are fundamental differences in the structure and treatment of donkeys' hooves and specialist advice should be sought if the attending farrier or veterinary surgeon is not experienced in donkey foot care. As a guide, hooves should be checked, trimmed and shoes renewed if present, by a registered farrier every 4-8 weeks. The Irish Farriery Authority maintains a register of Farriers. (See Appendix 4).

DENTAL CARE

Horses' teeth should be examined at least annually. Uneven wear and abnormalities of teeth should not be allowed to interfere with normal eating habits. Dental care will depend on such factors as nutrition and management system.

INTERNAL PARASITES

Internal parasites should be controlled by grazing management and anthelmintic treatment administered at appropriate times based upon the lifecycle of the parasite. Advice on appropriate treatment, timing and steps to avoid the development of anthelmintic resistant worms should be sought from a veterinary surgeon or specialist adviser. Not all horse anthelmintics are licenced for use in donkeys. Veterinary advice must be sought before introducing donkeys to horses to avoid a dangerous lungworm infestation.

EXTERNAL PARASITES

Where external parasites occur, such as lice or mites, prompt diagnosis and treatment should be undertaken in consultation with a veterinary surgeon.

VACCINATIONS

Before embarking on vaccination, consultation should be made with a veterinary surgeon with regard to establishing an appropriate vaccination programme. Horse handlers should also consult their doctors to ensure that their personal tetanus vaccinations are kept up to date.

There are four diseases of horses for which vaccination is currently available: Tetanus, Equine Influenza (flu), Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) and Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA).

Tetanus, otherwise known as 'lockjaw', is a fatal disease of horses caused by toxins produced when spores of the bacteria, *Clostridium tetani*, multiply within deep penetration wounds. The toxins produce paralysing muscle spasm and cause death by respiratory arrest. All horses are at risk from tetanus and should be vaccinated. There are various vaccination regimes, which vary according to the make of vaccine used. They all recommend a primary course of 2 injections 4-5 weeks apart followed by boosters at intervals varying from 1 to 3 years depending on the particular brand of vaccine and the risk circumstances. In situations where there is a risk of a horse developing tetanus, and there is any doubt about the tetanus vaccination history or if inadequate immunity has developed, Tetanus antitoxin (TAT) should be given to provide emergency protection against the disease.

The **Equine Influenza Virus** causes clinical signs of depression including fever, severe coughing and nasal discharge due to additional infection with bacteria. It may occasionally be fatal. All horses are at risk from Equine Influenza and should receive a primary course of two vaccinations 4-6 weeks apart and a booster 6 months after the primary course and at least every 12 months thereafter.

Equine Herpes Virus affects all ages and types of horses but causes problems especially in breeding mares. Equine herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1) can cause serious disease of newborn foals, abortion in pregnant mares, respiratory disease and paralysis that frequently results in affected horses having to be destroyed. Infection with another strain, EHV-4, commonly causes respiratory disease in young horses and, less frequently than EHV-1, can be the cause of abortion. EHV vaccination is an important consideration as a disease control measure, particularly in groups of competition or breeding horses. Veterinary advice should be sought regarding the need for and benefits of vaccination. Vaccination regime consists of a primary course of 2 injections, 4-5 weeks apart; thereafter 6 monthly booster vaccinations should be administered.

Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA) can cause fever, depression, inflammation in and around the eyes ('pink eye'), swelling of the legs, head and genitals, and abortion and disease of new-born foals. The EVA vaccination is targeted at stallions to prevent them becoming shedders (a potential source of infection whilst showing no clinical symptoms).

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

If it is suspected that any animal may be suffering from a Notifiable Disease, then there is a legal requirement to notify the District Veterinary Office. (See Appendix 5, List of Notifiable Diseases in Equines).

The "Common Codes of Practice for the Control of Equine Diseases" is updated annually and the current version can be obtained from Animal Health Division, Department of Agriculture & Food, (Telephone 01-6072466). This document contains the following information:

- Code of Practice for venereally transmitted diseases, e.g. Contagious Equine Metritis (C.E.M.)
- Code of Practice for Equine Viral Arteritis (E.V.A.)

- Code of Practice for Equine Herpes Virus (E.H.V.)
- Guidelines on Strangles

Any of the above diseases can compromise horse and pony welfare. The recommendations in these Codes of Practice are common to France, Germany, Britain, Italy and Ireland.

BREEDING/PREGNANCY AND FOALING

Breeding of horses requires specialist knowledge. Advice and training should be sought before embarking on a breeding programme.

HUMANE DESTRUCTION/CASUALTIES

Humane destruction may be necessary due to old age and infirmity or because of suffering from an ailment or condition where it is no longer humane to keep the animal alive. A veterinary surgeon may be consulted and can advise when the time has come and on the most appropriate method of euthanasia.

An injured/ill horse may be transported only if it is being taken for veterinary treatment/diagnosis and then only provided it is transported in a way which is not going to cause it further suffering, under veterinary supervision. (See Appendix 2: The Diseases of Animals (Protection of Animals During Transport) Order, 1995 (S.I. 98 of 1995) states:

- Section 4 (3) No person shall cause or permit the transport of any animal that is unfit by reason of it being newborn, aged, diseased, infirm, ill, injured or fatigued or that has given birth within the preceding 48 hours or likely to give birth during transport. However, this provision shall not apply to:
- (i) animals that are slightly injured or ill whose transport would not cause unnecessary suffering.



APPENDIX 1:

BODY CONDITION SCORING OF HORSES

(Based on the Carroll and Huntington Method)

Method:

To obtain the condition score for any horse, first score the pelvis, then adjust the pelvis score up or down by 0.5 if it differs by 1 or more points from the back or neck score.

BODY CONDITION SCORING OF HORSES

0 Very Poor

Pelvis

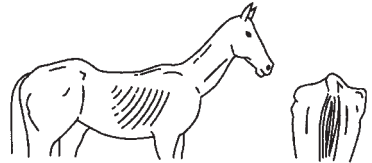
Angular, skin tight
Very sunken rump
Deep cavity under tail

Back and Ribs

Skin tight over ribs
Very prominent and sharp backbone

Neck

Marked ewe neck
Narrow and slack at base



1 Poor

Pelvis

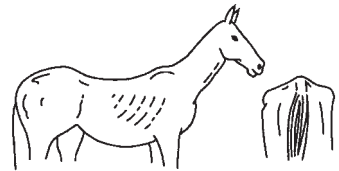
Prominent pelvis & croup
Sunken rump but skin supple
Deep cavity under tail

Back and Ribs

Ribs easily visible
Prominent backbone with skin
sunken on either side

Neck

Ewe neck, narrow & slack at base



2 Moderate

Pelvis

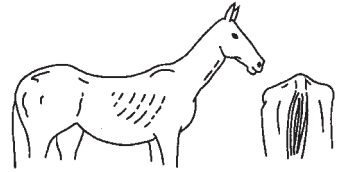
Rump flat either side of backbone
Croup well-defined, some fat
Slight cavity under tail

Back and Ribs

Ribs just visible
Backbone covered but spines can be felt

Neck

Narrow but firm



3 Good

Pelvis

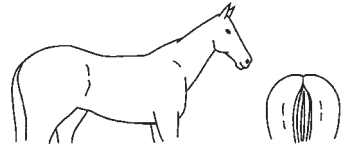
Covered by fat and rounded
No gutter
Pelvis easily felt

Back and Ribs

Ribs just covered & easily felt
No gutter along back
Backbone well covered but spines can be felt

Neck

No crest (except for stallions) firm neck



4 Fat

Pelvis

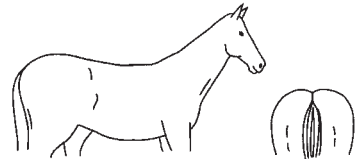
Gutter to root of tail
Pelvis covered by soft fat
Need firm pressure to feel

Back and Ribs

Ribs well covered – need pressure to feel

Neck

Slight crest
Wide & firm



5 Very fat

Pelvis

Deep gutter to root of tail
Skin distended
Pelvis buried, cannot be felt

Back and Ribs

Ribs buried, cannot be felt
Deep gutter along back
Back broad & flat

Neck

Marked crest
Very wide & firm
Folds of fat



BODY CONDITION SCORING OF DONKEYS

Basic Donkey Health Care Manual (The Donkey Sanctuary)

0 Very Poor

Pelvis

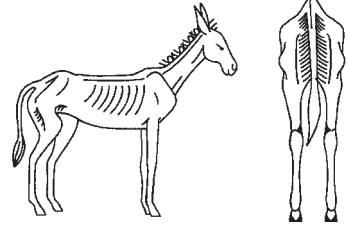
Very sunken rump
Deep cavity under tail
Skin tight over bones
Very prominent pelvis

Back and Ribs

Very prominent backbone

Neck

Marked ewe (thin, concave) neck



1 Poor

Pelvis

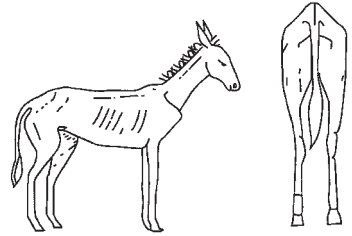
Sunken rump
Cavity under tail

Back and Ribs

Ribs easily visible
Prominent backbone and croup

Neck

Ewe (thin, concave) neck, narrow & slack



2 Moderate

Pelvis

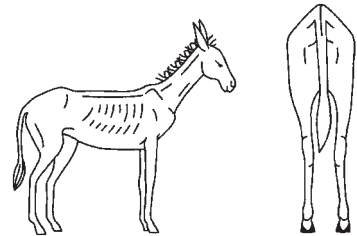
Rump flat either side of the backbone

Back and Ribs

Ribs just visible
Backbone well covered

Neck

Narrow but firm neck



3 Good

Pelvis

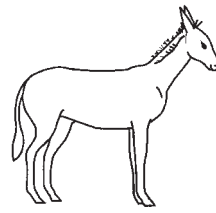
Rounder rump

Back and Ribs

Ribs covered but easily felt

Neck

Slight crest, neck firm



4 Fat

Pelvis

Rump well-rounded

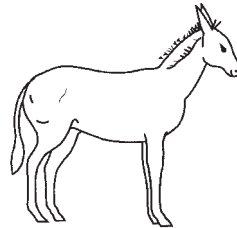
Back and Ribs

Gutter along back

Ribs hard to feel

Neck

Neck thick with hard crest



5 Very Fat

Pelvis

Very bulging rump with tail set between buttocks

Back and Ribs

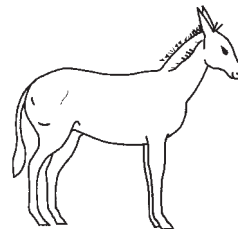
Deep gutter along back

Ribs buried

Neck

Heavy neck with thick crest probably fallen to one side

Folds and lumps of fat on body



APPENDIX 2:

LEGISLATION ASSOCIATED WITH EQUINE WELFARE

There is a considerable body of National and EU Regulations governing equine health, husbandry and welfare issues. A current list of relevant legislation is available from the Animal Health and Welfare Division of the Department of Agriculture and Food, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, Tel: 01-607 2000, Lo-call: 1890 200 510.

APPENDIX 3:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD GUIDELINES

References to Department specifications can be found on the following website: www.agriculture.gov.ie under the heading 'farm buildings'.

- S156 MINIMUM SPECIFICATION FOR HORSE FACILITIES AND FENCING
- S157 ACCEPTED PROPRIETARY HORSE FACILITIES

The following diagrams are inserted here as visual aid, further details of which are detailed in the above specifications.

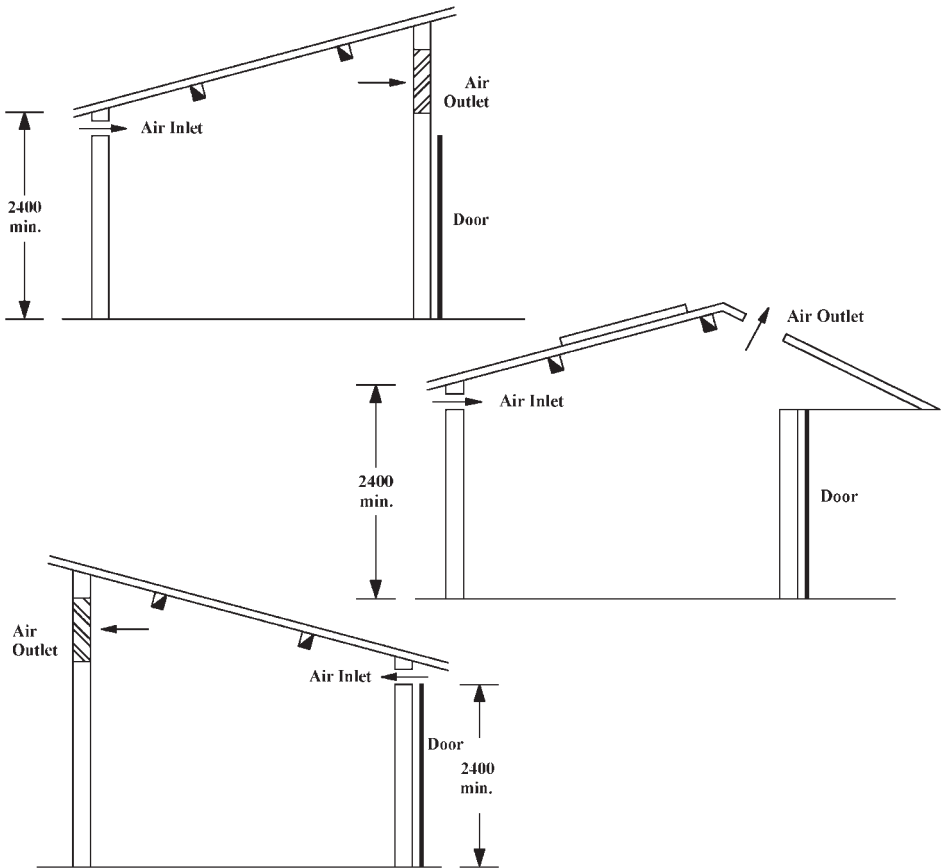


Figure 1 Cross-Sections of Typical Boxes

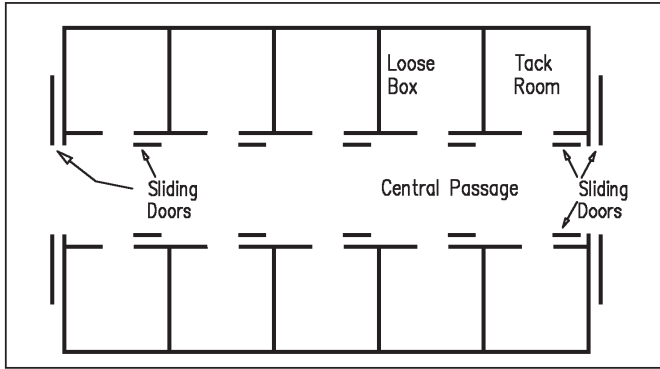


Figure 2 American Barn – Plan

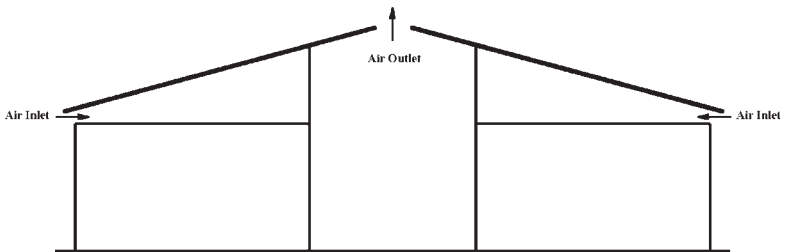


Figure 3 American Barn - Section

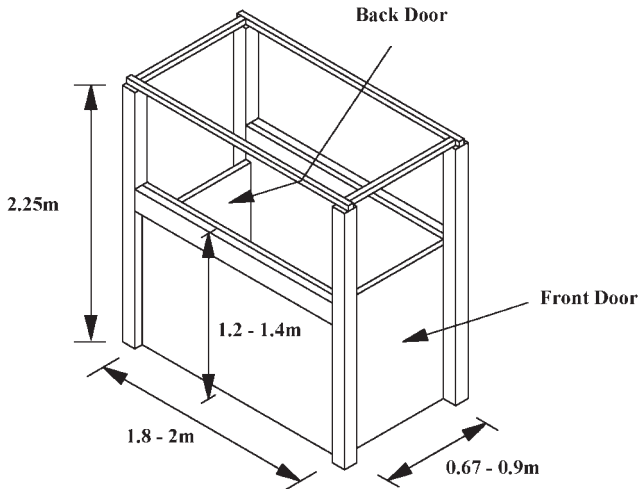


Figure 4 Horse Stock

APPENDIX 4:

REGISTERED FARRIERS

The Irish Farriery Authority maintains an up to date register of Farriers, which can be found at www.irishfarrieryauthority.com/register/search.htm

Telephone: 045-520765

APPENDIX 5:

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES IN EQUINES

CLASS A

- Epizootic Lymphangitis
- Rabies
- Glanders
- Anthrax
- African Horse Sickness
- Dourine
- Equine Encephalomyelitis
- Infectious Equine Anaemia
- Vesicular Stomatitis
- Contagious Equine Metritis
- Equine Viral Arteritis