

Environment

Its need for a suitable environment

This section offers guidance on providing your equine with a suitable place to live.

Shelter

Not all horses will need a stable/housing. Some hardy breeds with thick coats are capable of living outdoors throughout the year, provided they can obtain shelter from the prevailing winds, summer sun and flies.

Shelter can be natural (for example trees or hedges) or man-made (such as a field shelter) depending on the field environment and type of horse. However, where horses are of less hardy breeding (e.g. thoroughbreds), clipped, very young or elderly they may require stable accommodation/housing or other shelter to protect them from the cold and damp or very hot weather.

Stable Accommodation/Housing

Welfare aspects should be considered when constructing or altering buildings to provide housing for horses. The main considerations are the safety and comfort of the horses, ease of access and adequate drainage and ventilation. If poorly designed or managed, stabling can contribute to the rapid spread of disease, cause injury and pose significant fire risks.

The following comments apply equally to all forms of housing including individual stables, stalls and communal barns.

- **Construction:** the building should be constructed soundly, with no exposed surfaces or projections likely to cause injury. All surfaces should be capable of being cleaned and disinfected. If surfaces are treated, non-toxic paints or wood preservatives should be used.
- **Fixtures and fittings** such as tie rings, hay racks and water bowls should be free of sharp edges and positioned so as to avoid injury, particularly to the eyes. If used, hay nets should be fixed at the horse's head height, allowing the horse to eat comfortably yet avoiding the risk of the horse getting its feet or head collar caught in the net when empty.
- **Floors** should be reasonably even, non-slip and designed to give good drainage, taking stable waste away from the horse.
- **Doors** should be a minimum of 4ft wide, and comprise of a top and bottom door. Doors must open outwards and the bottom door should be of a height that allows the horse or pony to look out with the head comfortably over the door.

They should be capable of being securely fastened with top and bottom bolts.

- **Roofs** should be high enough to provide adequate ventilation including good air circulation. There should be a minimum clear space to the eaves of 60-90cm (2-3ft) above the ears of the horse in its normal standing position.

- **Light:** sufficient light is essential within all stabling both for the horse to see adequately and also to enable inspection and safe handling of horses at all times. This can include portable lighting. Light bulbs should be enclosed in safety fittings with cabling secured well out of reach.

- **Windows and ventilation slats** should provide adequate air circulation without creating draughts. Perspex or safety glass (with grilles fitted between the horse and the glass) is advisable. One window or top door should normally be open at all times.

As horses and ponies vary so greatly in size it is difficult to set an ideal size for loose boxes, barns or stables. However, as a minimum, each horse should have sufficient room to lie down, readily rise and turn around in comfort.

Boxes for foaling and for mares with a foal at foot will require additional space. All passageways should be sufficiently wide to enable horses to be led safely past other horses. A foaling box should measure at least 4.25m x 4.25m (14ft by 14ft) for a horse.

The recommended minimum stable sizes are as follows:

- Horses - 3.65m x 3.65m (12ft x 12ft)
- Large horses - 3.65m x 4.25m (12ft x 14ft)
- Ponies - 3.05m x 3.05m (10ft x 10ft)
- Large ponies - 3.05m x 3.65m (10ft x 12ft)

Groups of horses can be kept together in communal barns but care should be taken to ensure that all horses get adequate access to hay, feed and water.

Sufficient space should be provided to allow free movement and to allow all the horses to lie down at the same time. Care should be taken to select groups that are compatible and particularly aggressive horses should be segregated.

Adequate and suitable bedding material is necessary in all equine accommodation to provide warmth, protection against injury and to enable the horse to lie down in comfort. Bedding material should be non-toxic, free of dust and mould and allow effective drainage, or be absorbent enough to maintain a dry bed and assist in keeping the air fresh. Where rubber matting is used, a small amount of disposable bedding should be added to absorb urine. Whatever bedding is used (e.g. straw, shavings, rubber stable mats etc.), it should be well managed and changed or cleaned regularly.

Fire is always a risk in stable areas. All equipment and services (lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems) should be kept clean, inspected annually by an appropriately qualified person and kept in good working order. All electrical installations

at mains voltage must be installed, maintained and periodically inspected and tested by a competent electrician.

Wiring and fittings must be inaccessible to horses, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents and properly earthed. All metal pipe work and structural steelwork must be properly earthed. The risk of fire and electrocution can be reduced by having the whole installation protected by a residual current device (RCD).

Highly inflammable liquid material or combustible material should not be stored in or close to stables where horses are housed. Roof beams and other ledges should be cleaned regularly. Smoking in stable areas should be prohibited.

Stabled horses should be capable of being released quickly in the event of fire or other emergencies in accordance with a pre-agreed emergency turnout plan.

Pastures

As a general rule, each horse requires a minimum of 0.4 to 0.6 hectares (one to one and a half acres) of good grazing if no supplementary feeding is being provided. However this will depend on the ground conditions, the time of year, type of horse and degree of pasture management employed. A smaller area may be appropriate where a horse is principally housed and grazing areas are used only for occasional turnout.

It is not always practical or possible to remove horses from fields or pastures which become muddy, however, it is essential that the horse does have a comfortable, well drained area on which to stand and lie down, and on which to be fed and watered.

Fences should be strong enough and of sufficient height to prevent horses from escaping (for example higher fences may be required for stallions) and designed, constructed and maintained to avoid the risk of injury with no sharp projections.

Gateways should be designed to allow for the easy and safe passage of horses, and gates should be fastened securely to prevent injury and escape. In some situations gates may need to be padlocked. Barbed wire/sheep wire should not be used in fields used by horses and where plain wire is used measures should be taken to ensure it is sufficiently visible to the horse.

It is generally recommended that fences should be 1.25m (4ft) tall, however more specific recommendations are as follows:

- Horses - 1.08m to 1.38m (3ft 6" - 4ft 6")
- Ponies - 1m to 1.3m (3ft 3" - 4ft 3")
- Lower rail (in both cases) 0.5m (1ft 6") above ground
- Stallions 1.38m to 1.8m (4ft 6" to 6ft)

Stallions may require a double fence line and possibly an electric fence line along the top of the paddock rail. This is to prevent aggression and amorous behaviour between paddocks, as well as containing the stallion within the allocated area.

Electric fences should be designed, installed and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the horse; all power units should be correctly earthed. Horses contained by electric fencing need extra supervision until they become accustomed to it. Temporary internal subdivisions created out of electrified tape and plastic posts or the use of tape provides an effective internal barrier, but these should not be used as the sole boundary fence.

A good pasture management programme is advisable to avoid over-grazing, to aid worm control, maintain good drainage and control weeds. This may include, for example, picking up droppings, rotating grazing areas and where possible removing horses when the ground is very wet to prevent poaching (where the pasture breaks into wet muddy patches) and health problems.

Fields should be kept clear of dangerous objects and poisonous plants. All ragwort species are toxic to equines and should be removed and disposed of carefully wherever found. All parts of the plant are toxic and protective gloves must be worn when handling ragwort. All ragwort species should be disposed of by incineration, controlled burning or landfill. Cut ragwort should not be left where horses could have access to it, as it remains toxic after being cut.

Other plants such as yew and laburnum are also extremely toxic to horses therefore horses should not have access to these (or their clippings) at any time. Where fields back on to housing, care should be taken to ensure that horses do not gain access to garden waste including lawn cuttings.

Tethering

Tethering can be defined as securing an animal by an appropriately attached chain, to a centre point or anchorage, causing it to be confined to a desired area.

Tethering is not a suitable method of long-term management of an animal, as it restricts that animal's freedom to exercise itself, to find food and water, or to escape from attacks by dogs or the extremes of hot and cold weather. It also risks an animal becoming entangled, or injuring itself, on tethering equipment. Tethering may be useful as an exceptional short-term method of animal management during brief stops during a journey, to prevent danger to the animal, or to humans, whilst proper long-term arrangements are made, or in medical cases where short-term restriction of food intake is required under veterinary advice.

The need for regular supervision is paramount. More details on the conditions that should be met when horses are tethered are set out on page 16. The term 'tethering' as it is used in the Code does not apply to horses that are stall-tied (a common method of stabling horses). Any horse that is stall-tied should receive regular exercise, unless this method is used under veterinary guidance (e.g. as part of the management of an orthopaedic condition).

Rugs

Not all horses will need a rug in inclement weather as some hardy breeds with thick coats are capable of living outdoors throughout the year without rugs.

Some of these hardy breeds often thrive better without rugs, as rugs can sometimes be a cause of skin irritation. However, where horses are of less hardy breeding, clipped or elderly they may require a rug to help keep them warm and dry during cold, wet weather or provide protection from flies. Turnout rugs will need to be removed when the weather (particularly temperature) improves.

Rugs and hoods should be of the correct size to suit the horse, of the correct type (i.e. designed for the use to which it is being put), of the correct weight to suit the horse and the weather conditions, and correctly fitted to prevent rubbing, hair loss and abrasions. Rugs should be regularly removed so the horse's body condition and general health can be checked. Ideally this should be done daily.

Rugs should be cleaned and, if necessary, repaired regularly and all fastenings kept in good working order. A spare rug should be available to allow a very wet rug to be dried out.

Supervision

Horses at grass should be inspected at least once a day, preferably more often. Stabled or group-housed horses should be inspected at least twice a day, again preferably more frequently. Particular attention should be paid to their gait, demeanour, feet, body condition and appetite so that early signs of disease, injury, illness or signs of parasites can be noticed and appropriate treatment promptly provided. Close examinations should also be conducted at regular intervals in order to identify any problems (e.g. skin conditions) that may not be apparent from a distance.

Hooves of horses should be picked out daily and at the same time examined for signs of pain, wounds, injury, loose shoes, impacted foreign material or anything else unusual.

Apart from those on turnout and only undertaking very light work, horses should be groomed regularly, but not excessively (which could remove the protective grease from the coat), to ensure that the coat is clean, free from wounds or parasites and to detect rug, tack or harness rubbing.

Diet

Its need for a suitable diet

This section offers guidance on providing your equine with a suitable diet.

Feed

Horses are naturally “trickle” feeders, who eat little and often, whose diet is mainly grasses, which have a high roughage and low energy content. Horses should be provided with a balanced, predominately fibre-based diet: either grass, hay, haylage or a hay replacement in order to mimic their natural feeding pattern as closely as possible.

Horses should be fed an appropriate diet that reflects their needs and maintains good condition. Consideration should include the age, type, weight, condition, health and level of work of the individual.

Good grazing should ensure an adequate intake of roughage and minerals; if grazing is poor supplementary feeding may be required. One way to limit grazing in large areas of grazing land is to divide the land into strips by using electric fencing.

All conserved forage (hay, haylage etc.) should be of good quality; it should be clean (free from soil, debris and poisonous plants), smell fresh and be free from dust and mould. Feeding forage at floor level is good for horses’ respiratory health, provided the underlying ground is kept reasonably clean. It also means that the horse eats in a similar position to that when grazing naturally.

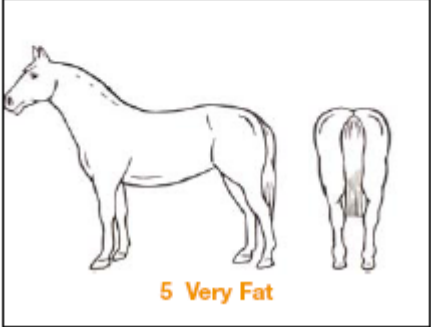
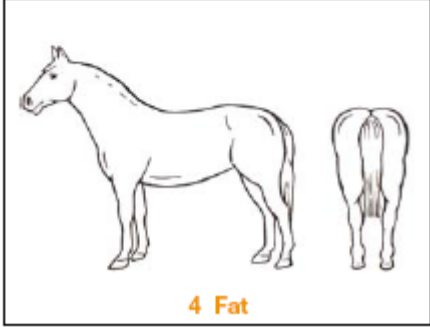
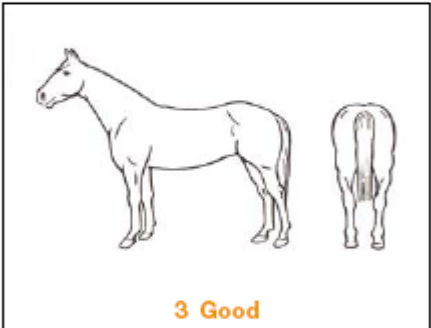
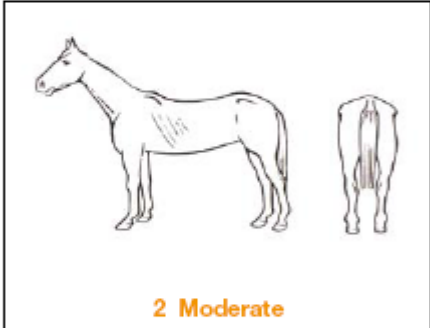
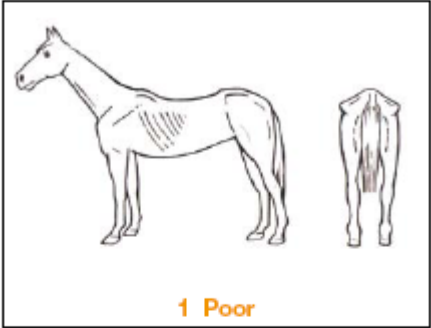
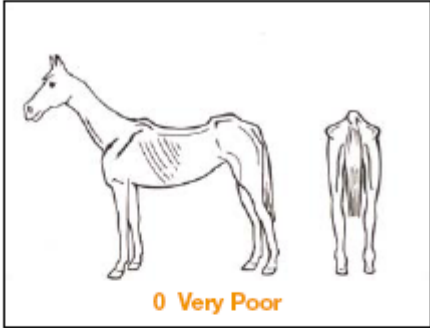
The quantity of concentrates (this does not include feedstuffs such as chaffs and sugarbeet) fed to a horse as supplementary feed in addition to any grazing or similar fodder should be no more than that necessary to provide the required energy for the type of work done and body condition of the horse. Each feed should be well mixed and freshly prepared. Horses should not be asked to perform hard or fast work on a full stomach.

Feed should be correctly processed, stored in vermin-proof containers, and carefully handled to prevent spoiling and to ensure the nutritional value is maintained. Feed containers and utensils should be kept clean to discourage rodents. Contaminated, mouldy or stale leftover food and forage should not be fed to the horse and should be removed daily.

Where loose horses are fed in groups there should be one feeder per horse plus an extra feeding point. Two horses’ lengths should be allowed between feeders to minimise the risk of injury to horses through competition for food.

The weight and condition of every horse should be monitored regularly to avoid welfare problems and feeding adjusted as necessary for animals that are too fat or too thin. It is important when feeding that horses are treated as individuals and provided with a tailor-made diet. Obesity and over-eating remains the major cause of laminitis. At any time of the year fat animals will fall into the high-risk category for developing laminitis. Fat animals heading towards spring when the lush spring grass with its high energy content is freely available are particularly at risk. Grazing may therefore need to be restricted at this time.

Body Condition Scoring - Horses



Body Condition Scoring - Horses

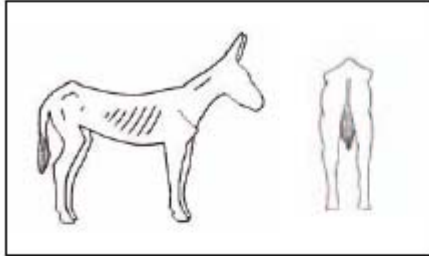
C/S	Pelvis	Back and Ribs	Neck
0 Very Poor	Angular, skin tight. Very sunken rump. Deep cavity under tail.	Skin tight over ribs. Very prominent and sharp backbone.	Marked ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.
1 Poor	Prominent pelvis and croup. Sunken rump but skin supple. Deep cavity under tail.	Ribs easily visible. Prominent back-bone with sunken skin on either side.	Ewe neck, narrow and slack base.
2 Moderate	Rump flat either side of back bone. Croup well defined, some fat. Slight cavity under tail.	Ribs just visible. Backbone covered but spines can be felt.	Narrow but firm.
3 Good	Covered by fat and rounded. No gutter. Pelvis easily felt.	Ribs just covered and easily felt. No gutter along the back. Backbone well covered but spines can be felt.	No crest (except for stallions) firm neck.
4 Fat	Gutter to root of tail. Pelvis covered by fat. Need firm pressure to feel.	Ribs well covered - need pressure to feel.	Slight crest. Wide and firm.
5 Very Fat	Deep gutter to root of tail. Skin distended. Pelvis buried, cannot be felt.	Ribs buried, cannot be felt. Deep gutter along back. Back broad and flat.	Marked crest very wide and firm. Fold of fat.

(Based on the Carroll and Huntington Method)

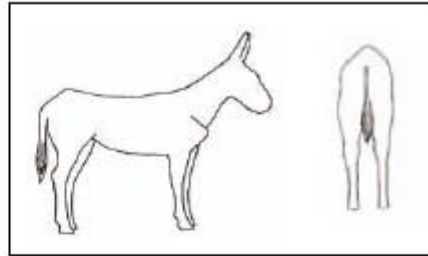
To obtain a body score, score the pelvis first, then adjust by half a point if it differs by one point or more to the back or neck.

Body Condition Scoring - Donkeys

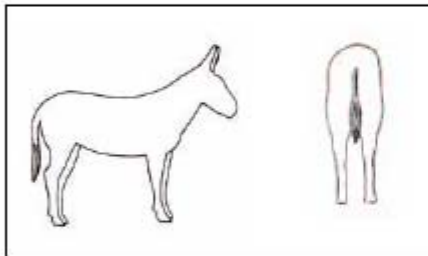
Reproduced with the permission of the Donkey Sanctuary



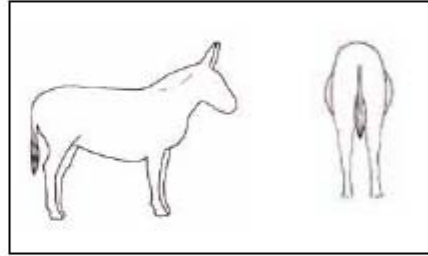
1 Poor



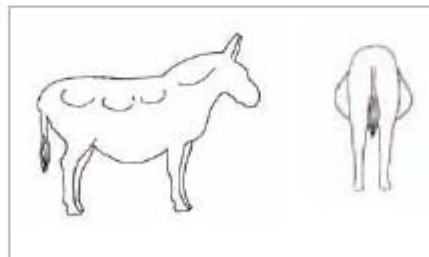
2 Moderate



3 Ideal



4 Fat



5 Obese

Fat deposits may be unevenly distributed especially over the neck and hindquarters. Some resistant fat deposits may be retained in the event of weight loss and/or may calcify (harden). Careful assessment of all areas should be made and combined to give an overall score.

Body Condition Scoring - Donkeys

C/S	Neck and Shoulders	Withers	Ribs and Belly	Back and Loins	Hind-Quarters
1 Poor	Neck thin, all bones easily felt. Neck meets shoulder abruptly, shoulder bones easily felt, angular.	Dorsal spine of withers prominent and easily felt.	Ribs can be seen from a distance and felt with ease. Belly tucked up.	Backbone prominent, can feel dorsal and transverse processes easily.	Hip bones visible and felt easily (hock and pin bones). Little muscle cover. May be cavity under tail.
2 Moderate	Some muscle development overlying bones. Slight step where neck meets shoulders.	Some cover over dorsal withers. Spinous processes felt but not prominent.	Ribs not visible but can be felt with ease.	Dorsal and transverse processes felt with light pressure. Poor muscle development either side of midline.	Poor muscle cover on hindquarters, hip bones felt with ease.
3 Ideal	Good muscle development, bones felt under light cover of muscle/fat. Neck flows smoothly into shoulder, which is rounded.	Good cover of muscle/fat over dorsal spinous processes, withers flow smoothly into back.	Ribs just covered by light layer of fat/muscle, ribs can be felt with light pressure. Belly firm with good muscle tone and flattish outline.	Cannot feel individual spinous or transverse processes. Muscle development either side of midline is good.	Good muscle cover in hindquarters, hip bones rounded in appearance, can be felt with light pressure.
4 Fat	Neck thick, crest hard, shoulder covered in even fat layer.	Withers broad, bones felt with firm pressure.	Ribs dorsally only felt with firm pressure, ventral ribs may be felt more easily. Overdeveloped belly.	Can only feel dorsal and transverse processes with firm pressure. Slight crease along midline.	Hindquarters rounded, bones felt only with firm pressure. Fat deposits evenly placed.

C/S	Neck and Shoulders	Withers	Ribs and Belly	Back and Loins	Hind-Quarters
5 Obese	Neck thick, crest bulging with fat and may fall to one side. Shoulder rounded and bulging with fat.	Withers broad, unable to feel bones.	Large, often uneven fat deposits covering dorsal and possibly ventral aspect of ribs. Ribs not palpable. Belly pendulous in depth and width.	Back broad, unable to feel spinous or transverse processes. Deep crease along midline bulging fat either side.	Cannot feel hip bones, fat may overhang either side of tail head, fat often uneven and bulging.

Half scores can be assigned where donkeys fall between scores. Aged donkeys can be hard to condition score due to lack of muscle bulk and tone giving thin appearance dorsally with dropped belly ventrally, while overall condition may be reasonable.

Water

It is essential that all horses have continuous access to a clean supply of fresh water, or that adequate clean water is made available to them on a frequent and regular basis throughout the day. Natural water sources such as streams are not always satisfactory, as they may be contaminated, so an alternative supply may be required unless natural water sources are clean, copious, have easy access and do not have a sandy base which may cause problems if disturbed when the horses drink. Extra care should be taken during hot or icy weather to ensure the water supply is maintained and sufficient, for example, by regularly breaking the ice during cold spells or providing an additional water source during hot weather. Additional water may need to be provided after exercise.

The trough should be securely fixed at a convenient height to allow, if necessary, horses of different size to drink comfortably and it should not be possible for the horse to paw the water or dislodge the trough and knock it over. There should be no sharp edges, protruding corners or exposed taps - they should be boxed in. Water troughs and containers should be cleaned regularly to prevent the build up of algae. Troughs should be positioned in a way so that it would not be possible for a horse to be trapped or cornered in the area of the trough. Where buckets are used, they should be checked regularly to ensure that the horse has water.

Behaviour

Its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

This section offers guidance on your equine's behaviour.

Exercise

Horses and ponies require adequate exercise, or freedom to exercise, and this will require time and effort from the horse owner or keeper. Horses that are continuously stabled should be either exercised (ridden or in-hand) or be given space in which to exercise themselves each day, unless under veterinary advice to do otherwise.

Working equines should be given an exercise ratio of 1 hour in 6 to be able to express normal behaviour.

Training

Horses require calm, consistent and sympathetic handling by competent people. Horses respond best to a firm but gentle approach and to rewards for correct responses.

Company

Any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals

This section offers guidance on providing your equine with suitable company.

Socialisation

Being gregarious animals horses prefer to live in social groups. Ideally they should be socialised with members of their own species but, where this is not possible, other animals may be used to provide company. They also enjoy human company so, if kept on their own, they require more frequent human contact and supervision. Donkeys have particular socialisation needs and can, for example, become ill if separated from a companion.

Horses should always be treated as individuals even when kept in large groups. When forming new groups care should be taken to avoid fighting and stress, particularly if they are to be mixed together. This risk can be reduced by increasing the space allowance or by penning the new animal close to the existing group for a short period and or removing back shoes of all animals during the introduction period. Separation of incompatible animals is particularly important in this system; horses should not be mixed in fields or communal barns if any one individual is aggressive. Incompatible individuals, such as entire males (colts, stallions) and “rigs” (a stallion with undescended testicles or a horse which has been incompletely castrated) should be separated. In communal barns mares heavily in-foal or with foal at foot should also be separated from other horses. When living in groups, horses always develop a pecking order, so it is important to be aware of bullying and it is important that the correct amount of feed and water is provided for all the horses in the group. Care needs to be taken to ensure that those lower down the pecking order are getting the feed and water they require.

As a general rule the more horses kept, the more time, effort and resources are required to safeguard the welfare of the horses. The size of the group is also important. Individuals in larger groups are likely to encounter more competition for food and water, shelter and social position.

Health & Welfare

Its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

This section offers guidance on the health and welfare of your equine.

Discipline and restraint

Any discipline should be appropriate, timely, reasonable and proportionate. Similarly any restraint method used to assist normal management or treatment of the horse should be the most mild and effective method available and should be applied by a competent person only for the minimum period necessary. Sedatives must only be used under veterinary advice. Round-pens and electrified fence areas should not be used to keep horses in for long periods of time and should not be used for disciplinary purposes.

Illness

Everyone responsible for the supervision of horses should be able to recognise signs of ill-health and have a basic knowledge of equine first aid. It is also important that owners and keepers have access to a veterinary surgeon to diagnose or treat any illness, injury or disease and have their contact details easily available, including out of hours details. European law requires that horse passports should be easily accessible.

Owners and keepers of horses should be able to recognise the normal behaviour of their horses and recognise the signs that indicate poor health. These include:

- change in appetite (for food and water);
- change in droppings;
- change in demeanour or behaviour;
- losing body and coat condition; and
- any signs of pain or the presence of any injury or lameness.

When a horse becomes unwell, the cause of this deterioration should be identified and immediate remedial action taken. Veterinary advice should be obtained if the horse appears to be ill or in pain and the cause is not clear or if initial first aid treatment is not effective. In the case of foot problems, advice should be obtained from a trained farrier (for example, one who has attended World Horse Welfare's farriery courses) or veterinary surgeon. Advice from the veterinary surgeon or farrier should be followed diligently.

Veterinary advice should be sought immediately if the horse is suffering from severe lameness, is recumbent, has signs of acute pain, respiratory distress, large open wounds or deep puncture wounds.

Routine health care

A parasite control programme should be put in place following consultation with a veterinary surgeon or other suitably qualified person; this may include the use of wormers, and appropriate faecal worm egg counts. Horses infested with parasites will lose condition, be less able to work, and may become severely ill so a parasite control programme is essential. Careful pasture management including the rotation of grazing and dung collection is an important part of an effective parasite control programme.

Where groups of horses are kept together, worming programmes are most effective if all horses are treated simultaneously with the same product (or at the very least different products with the same active ingredient).

There should be adequate control of infectious and contagious disease by a programme agreed with a veterinary surgeon, which will include appropriate hygiene and isolation procedures and vaccination.

Teeth should be inspected by a veterinary surgeon at least once a year, and rasped or otherwise treated if necessary.

Horses with worn or abnormal teeth are unable to chew their food properly which leads to poor digestion. Owners and keepers should look out for signs of this problem, such as: half-chewed food dropping out of the mouth; poor condition and lack of energy; and abnormal mouth movements when ridden.

Every horse owner and keeper should have some understanding of the care of a horse's feet, which grow continuously and the need to treat lameness promptly and effectively. Feet should be trimmed by a competent person and attention should be paid to their growth and balance. A horse should not be expected to work at a level above that which the hooves are capable of, whether shod or unshod. In the main, horses ridden or driven on roads or hard, rough surfaces will need to be regularly shod by a trained farrier. However, if horses are used unshod they will need to be carefully managed, and receive regular hoof care which ensures their use on difficult surfaces does not cause them to become sore. Loose shoes and those with risen clenches should receive prompt attention from a farrier to prevent possible injury. Hooves should be trimmed or re-shod as advised by the farrier, which should usually be every 4-8 weeks. Shoes should be appropriate to the work that the horse is doing, the ground that the horse will be walking on, and should fit the foot properly. It is not appropriate to use shoes with excessively large calkins.

Flies can cause a great deal of irritation to horses, particularly during the summer, and can introduce infection to wounds so an appropriate treatment from a veterinary surgeon should be used. Midges can also be a source of irritation during the spring and

summer and can cause sweet itch (an allergic skin condition). Consideration should be given to preventative fly and midge control through the use of fly repellents, fly rugs or masks and, for horses sensitive to fly or midge bites, stabling at dawn and dusk when flies and particularly midges are most active.

Working horses need an annual vet inspection to certify that they are fit for purpose. Special regard should be given to work-related health issues.

Saddlery and Harness

Saddlery and harness should be suitable for the purpose, being appropriate to the needs and abilities of both horse and rider. They should be correctly fitted, preferably by a trained saddler (for example, one who has attended World Horse Welfare's saddlery training courses) and the fit should be checked when the animal changes condition. Equipment should be regularly cleaned and maintained in good order to ensure comfort, safety and effectiveness.

Working horses have special needs when it comes to a working harness. They should be designed and fitted only by a qualified person.

Boots and bandages: if used, these should be suitable for the purpose, correctly fitted to avoid discomfort or injury and only left on for the minimum time necessary.

Transporting Horses

The transportation of horses and ponies should always be as safe and stress free as possible and in accordance with current rules and regulations (see EU Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005).

Care of Older or Ill Horses

It may be necessary, in the event of incurable illness, old age or permanent unsoundness or, more suddenly, in the event of an accident, to arrange the humane destruction of a horse. The horse's welfare must always come first. Therefore, in the interests of the horse, owners should give the issue their full consideration well before the time comes to make a decision to prevent the horse suffering unnecessary pain and distress.

Where, in the opinion of a veterinary surgeon, a horse is significantly suffering, has not responded to treatment for a serious injury or condition involving significant pain, has a disease or injury from which there is no prospect of recovery and for which no treatment is available, or where a horse is in such a condition that it would be inhumane to keep it alive, the animal should be humanely destroyed without delay by a veterinary surgeon.

In a non-emergency situation, where a horse is permanently unsound or has a recurring or permanent and steadily worsening condition, a rational decision should be made with due regard for the horse's future and welfare.

As horses become older their needs may become greater, they may well require increased supervision and additional veterinary care. When a horse reaches the end of its active working life, or is very elderly, consideration should be given to whether the horse can be provided with a good quality of life in retirement. Owners have a responsibility to ensure that they or whoever is entrusted with the care of such an animal is fully aware of the needs of that animal otherwise consideration should be given as to whether it would be kinder to have the horse painlessly destroyed.

Tethering

Suitability of the Animal

1. Not all animals are suitable for tethering.
2. Young animals; horses under two years old should not be tethered.
3. Pregnant animals should not be tethered in the last third of pregnancy.
4. Nursing mothers should not be tethered.
5. Mares should not be tethered near stallions.
6. The tethering of stallions should be undertaken only with great care and as a temporary measure.
7. Sick animals should not be tethered.
8. Old and infirm (disabled as opposed to injured or sick) animals should not be tethered.
9. Tethered animals should not be tethered around free-roaming animals.

Site (the area to which the tethered animal has access)

1. The site should be reasonably level, have good grass cover, and be free of any objects, natural or man-made, which could ensnare the tether.
2. The site should not allow the horse access to a public highway.
3. A site in which a high proportion of the herbage consists of weeds is not suitable.
4. The site should not be waterlogged.
5. The site should not be crossed by any public right of way.
6. The site should not have anything on it, which might injure an animal.
7. An adequate area for tethering should allow access by any part of the horse's body and with an extra 4 metres between the hind quarters of one horse and another.

Tethering Equipment

1. Either a well-fitting leather head collar, or a broad leather neck strap must be used. These should be fitted with a 360° swivel device where the chain is attached.
2. The chain should be approximately 20ft in length, and must be strong enough to prevent breakage, but light enough to prevent pressure sores from the tethering equipment. Rope or nylon should not be used.
3. The ground stake must not protrude above ground level, and must be fitted with a 360° swivel.

Food and water

1. In many cases the site will provide adequate food in the form of grass; where this is the case the tether site should be changed at least once daily to ensure the quality of the pasture.
2. If the grass is not sufficient for the animal's need, sufficient forage food should be available throughout each day.
3. Water should be made available on a frequent and regular basis throughout the day in a spill-proof container.
4. Containers for concentrate food should be kept in a clean and safe condition.

Shelter

1. Animals should not be exposed to the full heat of the sun, to heavy rain, snow or hail, or to strong winds for other than very short periods. In extremes of weather shelter should be provided.
2. Shelter should, at a minimum, provide shade from the sun and from severe wind. In prolonged rain, a well drained area must be available.

Exercise

1. Animals must be given freedom to exercise off the tether for a reasonable period at least once a day.

Supervision

1. Tethered animals require a high level of supervision, and should be inspected no less frequently than six hourly intervals during normal waking hours.
2. Provision should be made to deal with situations where extremes of weather or other circumstances occur.

Other requirements

1. They may need protection from ill-intentioned persons.