Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines

Following the Code



ISBN 978 0 7504 4986 1

© Crown copyright October 2008
CMK-22-01-144
D0870809

Preface

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 ("the Act"), if you own or are responsible for an animal you have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare needs are met. This Code explains what you need to do to meet the standard of care the law requires. If you are a parent or guardian of a child less than 16 years old, you are responsible for any animal that child is in charge of or owns.

Breach of a provision of this Code is not an offence in itself but, if proceedings are brought against you for a welfare offence under the Act, the court may take into account the extent to which you have complied with the Code in deciding whether you have committed an offence or have met the required standard of care. You should not cause any unnecessary suffering to your animal; this could constitute a serious offence under the Act.

To find out more about the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and details of your responsibilities under it, see Appendix 2 at the end of this Code. For further sources of information, see Appendix 3.

You should be aware that the legislation cited in the Code and in Appendix 2 is correct at the date of issue but may be subject to subsequent change.

This preface is not part of the Code but is intended to explain its purpose and broad aims. Similarly Appendix 2, which highlights the relevant legal requirements and Appendix 3, which lists some additional sources of information, are not part of the Code.

Contents

7 **Introduction**

8 **Horse Passports**

9 **The Duty of Care**

13 **Section 1: Environment**
Its need for a suitable environment

23 **Section 2: Diet**
Its need for a suitable diet

33 **Section 3: Behaviour**
Its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

37 **Section 4: Company**
Any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals

41 **Section 5: Health & Welfare**
Its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

49 **Appendix 1**
Tethering

55 **Appendix 2**
The Law

61 **Appendix 3**
Sources of Information



Introduction

Owning and caring for an equine is great fun and very rewarding, but it is also a big responsibility and a long-term financial and caring commitment. You control your equine's lifestyle; it is your responsibility to make sure that its needs are met, whatever the circumstances. The law requires that you must take reasonable steps to ensure that it:

- Has a suitable environment to live in;
- Has a healthy diet;
- Is able to behave normally;
- Has appropriate company;
- Is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

These are explained in more detail in sections 1-5 of this Code. For further advice, speak to your vet or a pet care specialist (e.g. a veterinary nurse, behaviourist or animal welfare organisation). Other sources of information are listed in Appendix 3.

Every animal is different and as you get to know your equine, you will recognise familiar characteristics. It is important that you are able to notice any changes in behaviour, as these might indicate that your equine is distressed, ill, or is not having its needs met in some other way.

This Code of Practice is issued under Section 14 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (the "Act"). This Code of Practice applies in Wales only, is issued by the Welsh Ministers and comes into force on 28th November 2008. It covers all equines for which a person is responsible.

In this Code "Equines" is intended to cover all domestic horses, ponies, donkeys, and hybrids including mules. Where the word "horse" is used in this Code, that reference applies to all equines.

For the purpose of this Code, a "keeper" means a person appointed by the owner to have day-to-day charge of the horse. An equine being treated by a veterinary surgeon may have additional or special needs specified by the vet which will supersede the requirements of this Code.

For the purpose of this Code, the definition of a "working equine" is any equine used for hire, reward or to ease the work load during human endeavour.

Horse Passport

Since 28th February 2005 it has been a legal requirement for all horses and ponies in Wales to have a passport (the Horse Passport (Wales) Regulations 2005). All equines, regardless of age or status, must be accompanied by a passport. All horse owners must obtain individual passports for each horse owned. Passports can be held by the horse owner or keeper but must be held with the horse at all times. Horses without passports cannot:

- be moved for the purpose of being entered in a competition;
- be moved for the purpose of being used for breeding;
- be moved out of the United Kingdom;
- be moved to the premises of a new keeper;
- be sold or have ownership transferred; nor
- be sent to slaughter for human consumption.

The Duty of Care

Before buying a horse potential owners need to consider a number of important issues:

- Do you actually want to buy a horse or would you consider other options such as taking a horse on a short-term or long-term loan: this can have potential benefits if you are unsure about whether you can afford to keep a horse. It would also provide experience for you in caring for/riding a horse. Remember that a horse can live for around 40 years and is a long term commitment!
- The cost of keeping a horse, since the purchase cost may be minimal compared to the ongoing costs. The ongoing costs will vary depending on the needs of the individual horse, where it is kept and what it is used for. Potential owners should draw up a budget based on their own circumstances. This is necessary in order to decide whether the ongoing costs are affordable.
- In drawing up a budget, the owner should remember that along with the day to day costs for keep there is likely to be additional expenditure for items such as supplementary feeding, worming, insurance, veterinary fees (including regular vaccinations and dentistry), farriery, equipment, transport and training costs etc. It is important to find the right animal when purchasing a horse as this can prevent many problems in the future. There is no way of guaranteeing success but there are a number of steps that can increase the likelihood of purchasing a suitable animal. It is useful to try a number of different horses for the purposes of comparison and the advice of an experienced horseperson should always be sought. Prior to purchase it is essential to try the horse in each aspect of work that he is likely to be asked to perform, for example hacking, jumping and flatwork, and it is advisable to try out favoured horses at least twice. A full five stage vetting by an independent veterinary surgeon is highly recommended.
- How much time will need to be spent in looking after the horse and will the owner have the time to both look after and exercise the horse;
- The skills and knowledge of horse care which they possess;
- Consideration should be given to gaining prior experience with horses via riding stables or through undertaking voluntary work.
- Choose the right breed and nature of horse to suit your needs and ability i.e.
  - are you buying a horse for riding, competing, driving or to keep as a pet?
  - are you experienced or a novice?
  - seek advice from knowledgeable horse owners or from a reputable horse establishment/stables
  - consider carefully where you should buy your horse from. If you go to a market or horse dealer then you need to look carefully at the terms and conditions of sale and get a receipt of purchase every time.



- any horse you buy must be sold with a horse passport. This is a legal requirement. Make sure you have sight of the passport before purchase and check the details of the passport e.g. the silhouette (diagram providing markings/colouring) against the animal you are looking at. Ring the organisation that has provided the passport to ensure that it has in fact been issued by them. A list of authorised organisations is available on the Welsh Assembly Government website at http://www.wales.gov.uk/animalhealth
- when buying a horse the gender and age of the animal will have a great effect on how the horse is to be reared, stabled, fed and/or exercised. Seek advice before making a decision.

- How and where the horse will be kept.

A potential owner also needs to consider what contingency plans they should put in place. For example, the provision for stabling and transport for grass-kept horses should emergency veterinary treatment be required; having isolation facilities available and alternative arrangements for the care of the horse should the keeper become incapacitated for any reason. These contingency arrangements should be reviewed when there is any change in the owner, keeper or horse's circumstances.

Under Section 9 of the Act animal owners and keepers are under a legal duty of care for the animals for which they are responsible. Further, Section 3 of the Act imposes that a person may be responsible for an animal on a permanent or temporary basis. A person could therefore be responsible for an animal if they own it **or** are in charge of it whilst an owner has ongoing responsibility for their animal even if another person is in charge of it. A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years old is responsible for any animal that is owned or cared for by the child. This ensures that an adult can normally be identified as a person responsible for an animal. If an owner leaves an animal in the care of another person, it is the owner's duty to ensure the keeper is competent and has the necessary authority to act in an emergency.

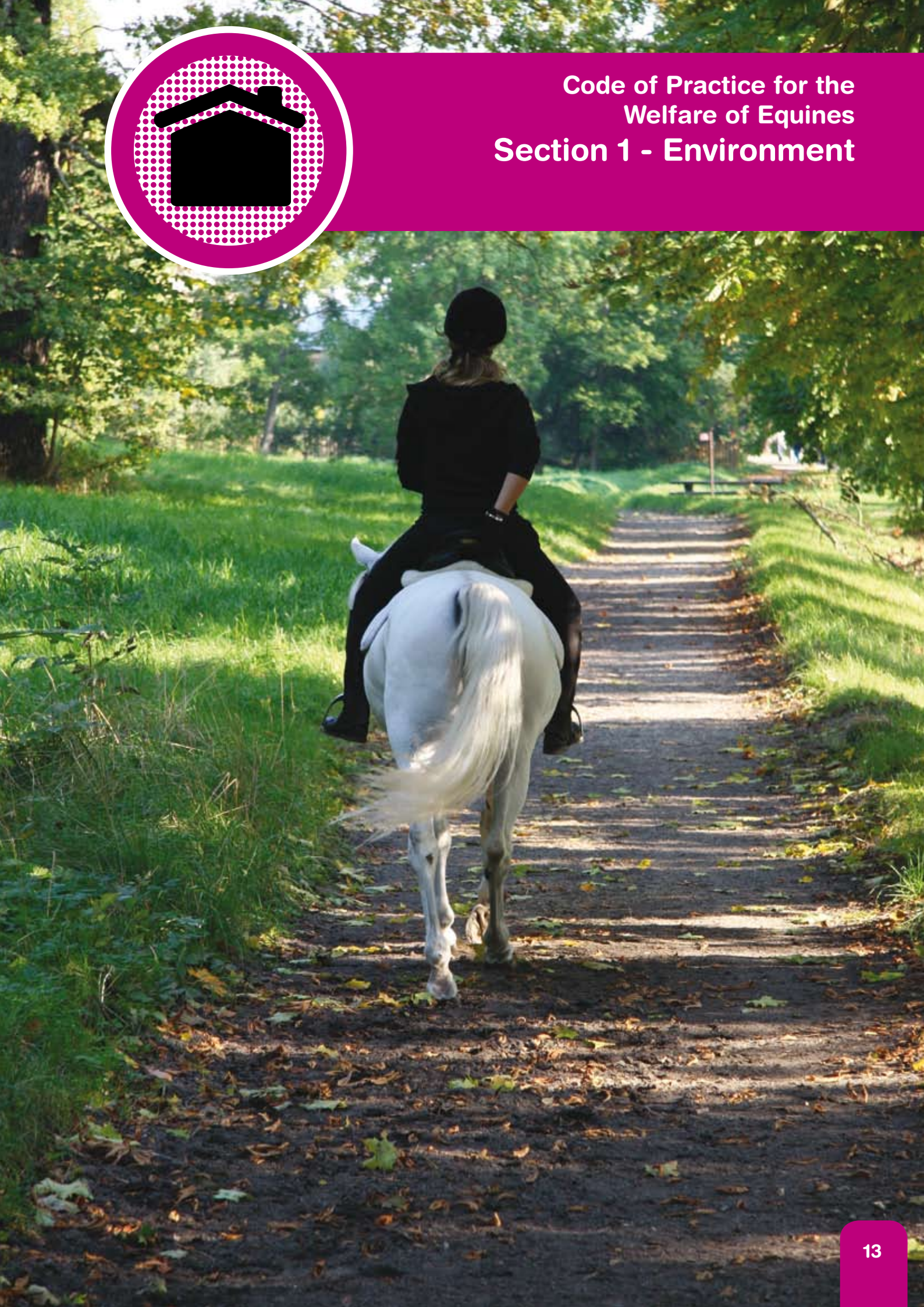
Responsibility for an animal includes having an understanding of the specific health and welfare needs of the animal and having the appropriate knowledge and skills to care for the animal. Those responsible for animals will also have to comply with the legislation and should be aware of the appropriate Codes of Practice, and to know when to seek qualified advice and help and who to approach, e.g. a farrier, horse dentist or a veterinary surgeon.

Working equines have special needs that may not apply to equines that are kept as pets; these additional needs should be taken into consideration by keepers.

More information about the welfare provisions of the Act, and more details of the responsibilities of a horse owner or keeper, can be found by referring to the documents detailed in the “Sources of Information” at the end of this Code of Practice.

These needs are explained in more detail in this Code; however, an individual horse may have other needs that need to be met to ensure its wellbeing. **If an owner or keeper is unsure what these might be it is important that they seek advice from a veterinary surgeon or an organisation such as the British Horse Society, the World Horse Welfare, or the RSPCA**. Contact details for these organisations can be found in the “Sources of Information” at the end of the Code of Practice. Specific welfare advice in relation to competition horses can be sought from the relevant competition discipline.

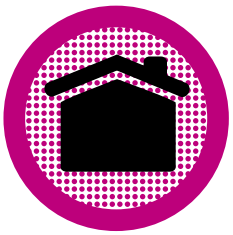




Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines

Section 1 - Environment





Environment

Its need for a suitable environment

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

Shelter

1.2 Not all horses will need a stable/housing. Some hardy breeds (such as native ponies) 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 (i.e. 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

1.3 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 premises should be designed to incorporate the fire safety recommendations set out in the Community and Local Government's "Guide to Fire Safety in Animal Establishments and Stables". 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.

1.4 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. The minimum recommended box size for horses is 12ft by 12ft, and 10ft by 10ft for ponies. A foaling box should measure at least 14ft by 14ft for a horse. The British Horse Society minimum stable size recommendations are as follows:

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

1.5 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.

1.6 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.

1.7 Fire is always a risk in stable areas. Advice should be sought from the local Fire Prevention Officer in relation to statutory requirements. 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 in accordance with the latest edition of the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) wiring regulations. 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.

1.8 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

1.9 As a general rule, each horse requires a minimum of one to one and a half acres (or 0.4047 to 0.6 hectares) 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.

1.10 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.

1.11 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.

1.12 The British Horse Society (BHS) generally recommend that fences should be 4ft (1.25m) tall, however more specific recommendations are as follows:

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

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.

1.13 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.

1.14 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.

1.15 Fields should be kept clear of dangerous objects and poisonous plants. The Common Ragwort is one of the plants covered under the Weeds Act 1959, and 'The Code of Practice to Prevent and Control the Spread of Ragwort' was published in 2006. All Ragwort species (Hoary, Marsh and Oxford Ragwort may also be found in Wales) is 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.

1.16 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

1.17 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 a 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 in Appendix 1. The term 'tethering' as it is used in the Code does not apply to horses that are stall-tied (a common method of stabling cavalry 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

1.18 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.

1.19 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.

1.20 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

1.21 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.

1.22 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.

1.23 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.



Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines
Section 2 - Diet





Diet

Its need for a suitable diet

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

Feed

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

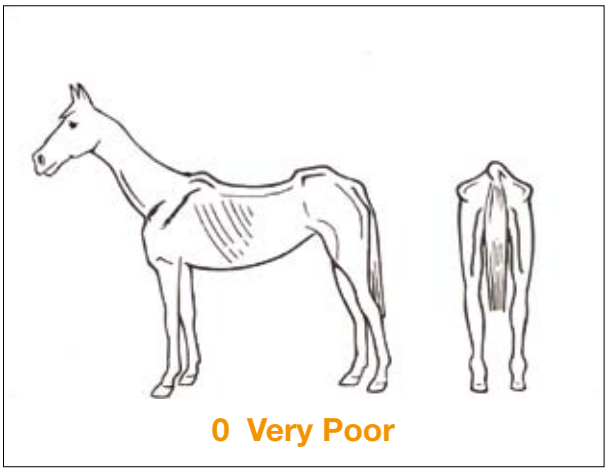
2.6 Feed should be correctly processed, stored in vermin-proof containers, and carefully handled to prevent spoiling and to ensure the nutritional value is maintained. Feed containers and utensils should be kept clean to discourage rodents. Contaminated, mouldy or stale leftover food and forage should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



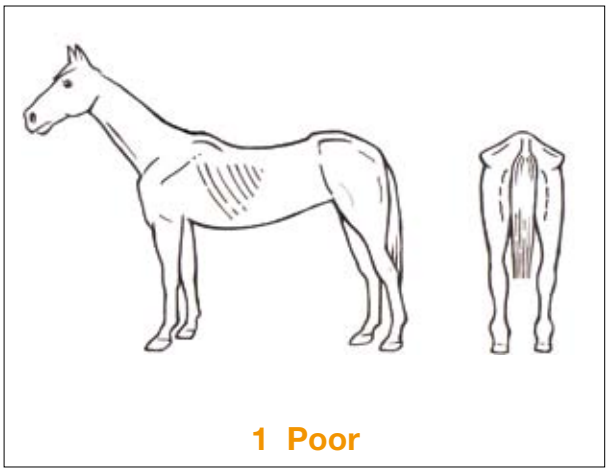
2.7 Where loose horses are fed in groups there should be one feeder per horse plus an extra feeding point. Two horses' lengths should be allowed between feeders to minimise the risk of injury to horses through competition for food.

2.8 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.

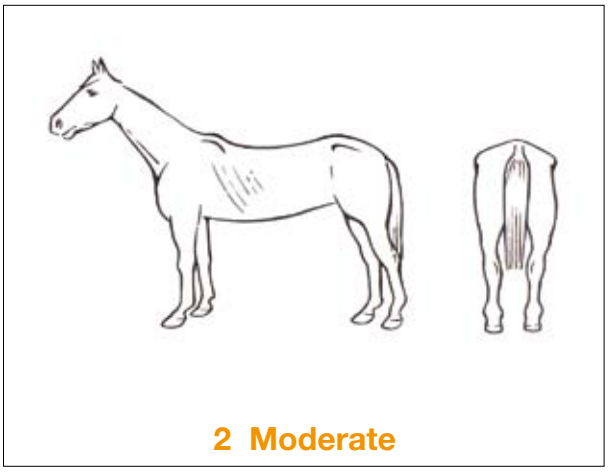
Body Condition Scoring - Horses



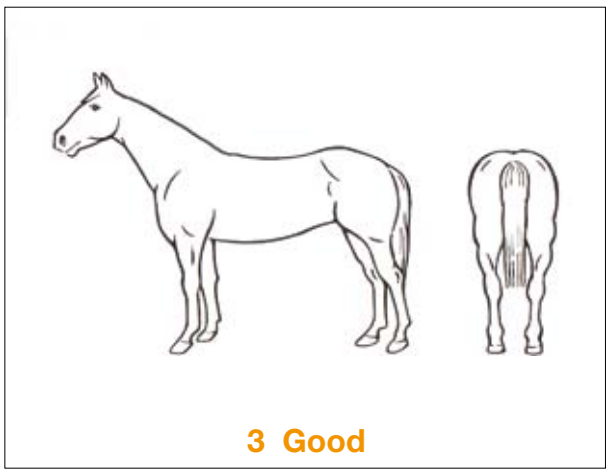
0 Very Poor



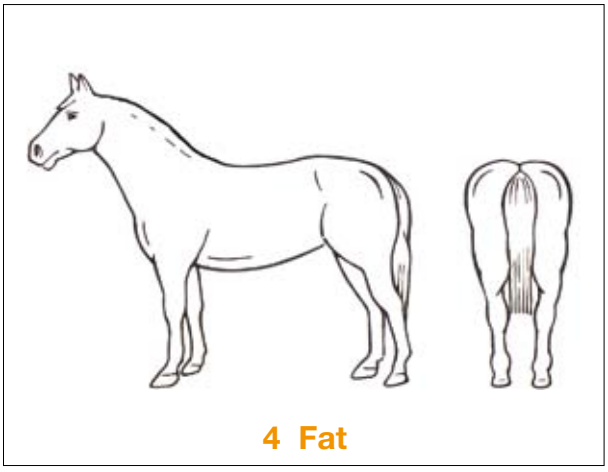
1 Poor



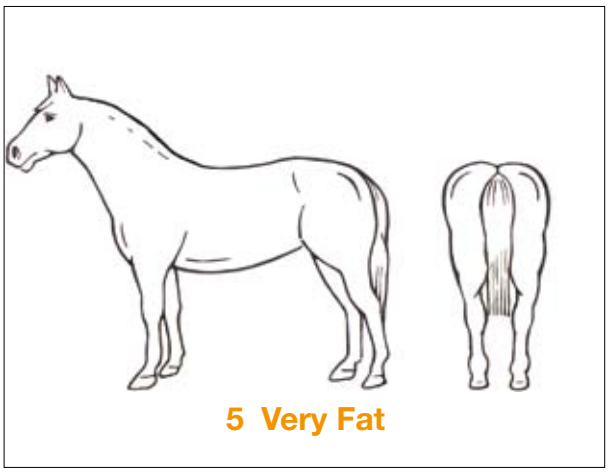
2 Moderate



3 Good



4 Fat



5 Very Fat

© Copyright NEWC April 2005

Body Condition Scoring - Horses

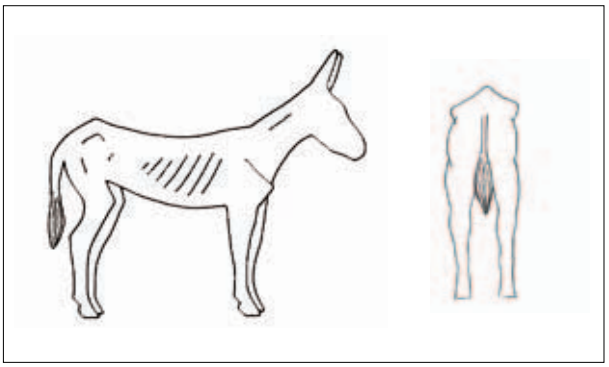
C/S	Pelvis	Back and Ribs	Neck
0 Very Poor	Angular, skin tight. Very sunken rump. Deep cavity under tail.	Skin tight over ribs. Very prominent and sharp backbone.	Marked ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.
1 Poor	Prominent pelvis and croup. Sunken rump but skin supple. Deep cavity under tail.	Ribs easily 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.

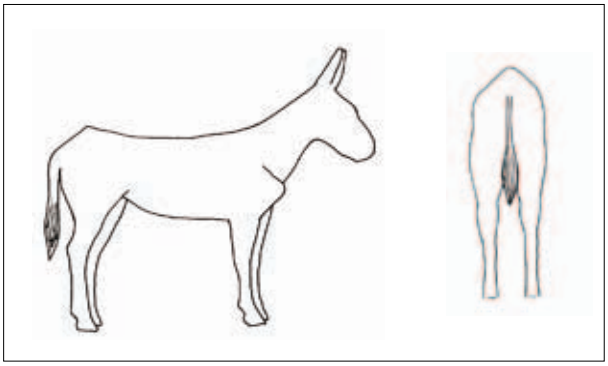
© Copyright NEWC April 2005

Body Condition Scoring - Donkeys

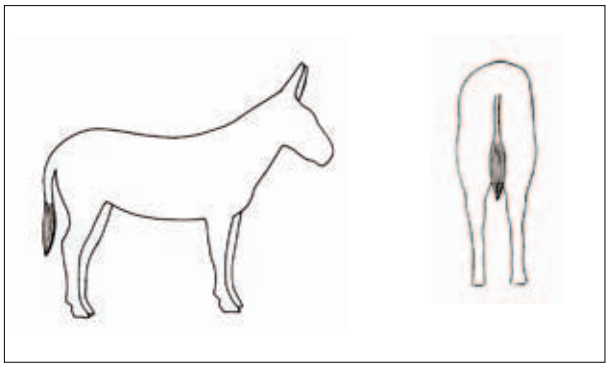
Reproduced with the permission of the Donkey Sanctuary



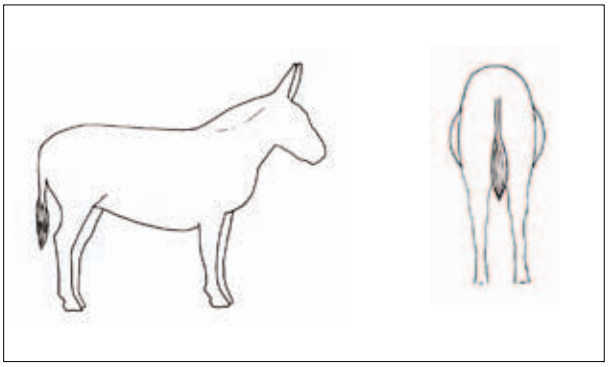
1 Poor



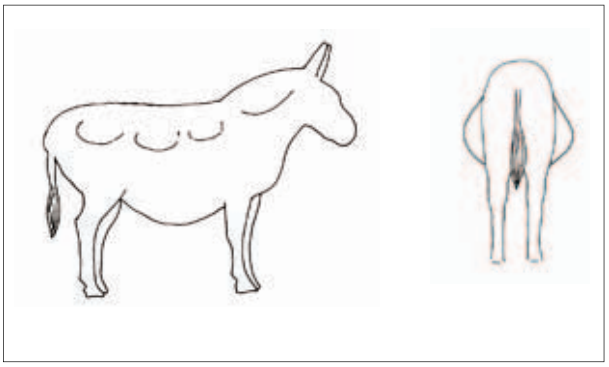
2 Moderate



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.

© Copyright NEWC April 2005

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 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.

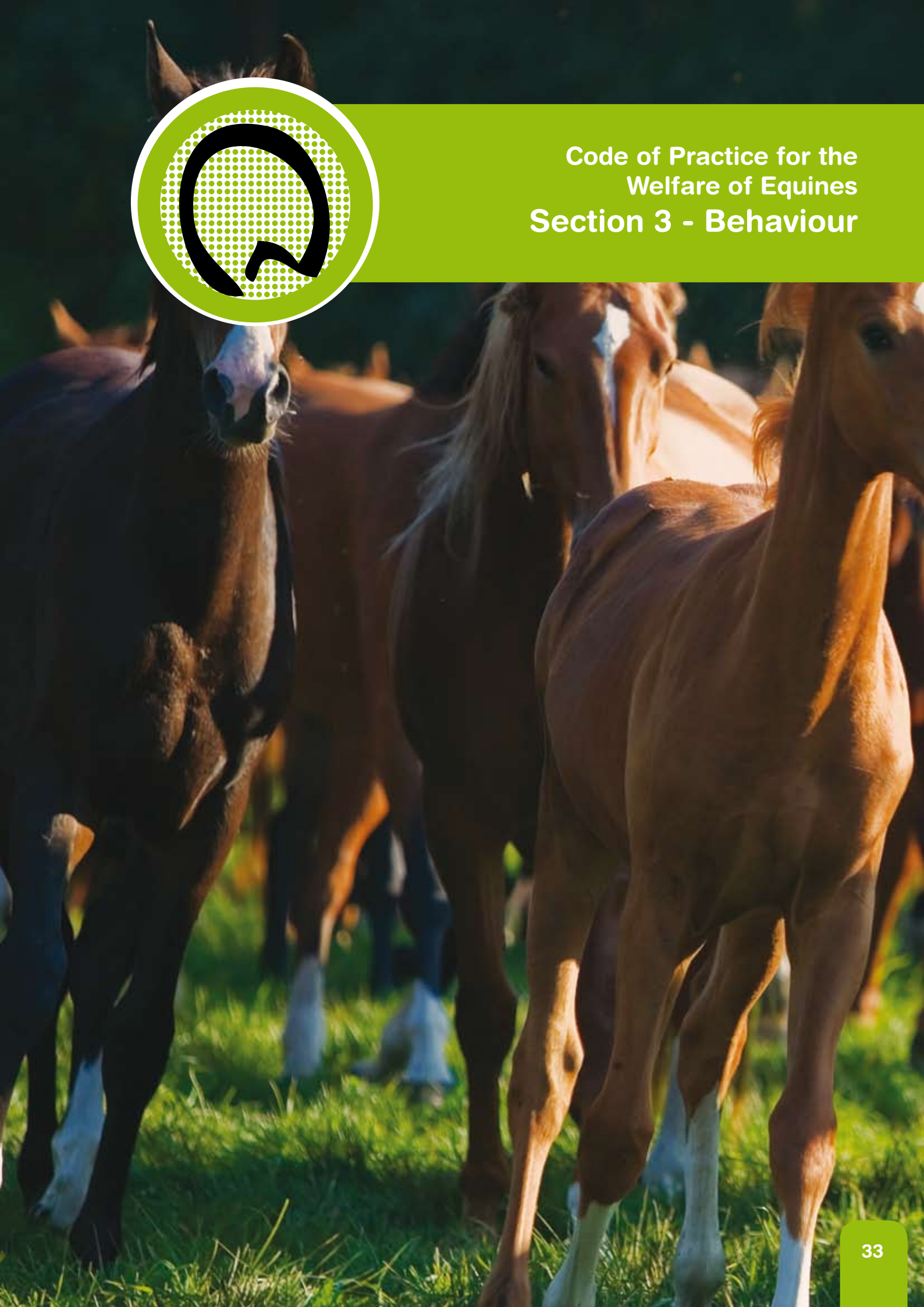
C/S	Neck and Shoulders	Withers	Ribs and Belly	Back and Loins	Hind-Quarters
5 Obese	Neck thick, crest bulging with fat and may fall to one side. Shoulder rounded and bulging with fat.	Withers broad, unable to feel bones.	Large, often uneven fat deposits covering dorsal and possibly ventral aspect of ribs. 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

2.9 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.

2.10 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.



Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines

Section 3 - Behaviour





Behaviour

Its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

3.1 This section offers guidance on your equine's behaviour.

Exercise

3.2 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.

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

Training

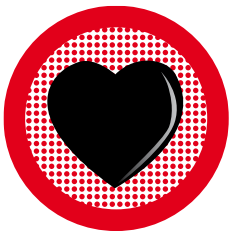
3.4 Horses require calm, consistent and sympathetic handling by competent people. Horses respond best to a firm but gentle approach and to rewards for correct responses.





Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines
Section 4 - Company





Company

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

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

Socialisation

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.



Code of Practice for the
Welfare of Equines

Section 5 - Health & Welfare





Health & Welfare

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

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

Discipline and restraint

5.2 It is an offence to cause an animal unnecessary suffering therefore 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

5.3 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. Horse passports should be easily accessible; otherwise some treatments may not be available.

5.4 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.



5.5 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 registered farrier or veterinary surgeon. Advice from the veterinary surgeon or farrier should be followed diligently.

5.6 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

5.7 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. Careful pasture management including the rotation of grazing and dung collection is an important part of an effective parasite control programme.

5.8 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).

5.9 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.

5.10 Teeth should be inspected by a veterinary surgeon or qualified equine dental technician 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.

5.11 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 registered 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. The Farriers Registration Act 1975 requires anyone shoeing horses to register each year with the Farriers Registration Council. This includes those people who only shoe their own horses. 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.



5.12 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.



5.13 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

5.14 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 qualified saddler 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.

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



5.16 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

5.17 The transportation of horses and ponies should always be as safe and stress free as possible and in accordance with current rules and regulations.

Care of Older or Ill Horses

5.18 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.



5.19 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 veterinary surgeon.

5.20 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.

5.21 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.

Appendix 1
Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines
Tethering





A 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.

B 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. The site should not be used without the written permission of the landowner. Written permission should include a requirement to abide by this Code.
8. 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.

C 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.

D 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.

E 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.

F Exercise

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

G 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.

H Identification

1. All tethered animals should be marked in such a way as to be permanently identifiable, and from this identification the keeper or owner should be able to be readily contacted.
2. This could be achieved by use of a freeze-brand or microchip registered with a 24-hour access database.
3. Alternatively the animal could have some form of identification attached to the head collar or neck strap giving full details of the keeper or owner.
4. It will be a requirement that all animals born after 1st July 2009 will have to be microchipped. All details will appear on the National Equine Database.

I Other requirements

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





Appendix 2
Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines
The Law

The Animal Welfare Act 2006

The following sections of the Act are referred to in the Code and are set out here for ease of reference:

The boxes below contain extracts from the relevant sections of the Act.

The box shaded grey summarises the relevant offences and penalties in the Act.

Section 3 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 states:

(1) In this Act, references to a person responsible for an animal are to a person responsible for an animal whether on a permanent or temporary basis.

(2) In this Act, references to being responsible for an animal include being in charge of it.

(3) For the purpose of this Act, a person who owns an animal shall always be regarded as being a person who is responsible for it.

(4) For the purpose of this Act, a person shall be treated as responsible for any animal for which a person under the age of 16 years of whom he has actual care and control is responsible.

Section 4 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 states:

(1) A person commits an offence if:

(a) an act of his, or a failure of his to act, causes an animal to suffer,

(b) he knew, or ought reasonably to have known, that the act, or failure to act, would have that effect or be likely to do so

(c) the animal is a protected animal, and

(d) the suffering is unnecessary

(2) A person commits an offence if:

(a) he is responsible for an animal

(b) an act, or failure to act, of another person causes the animal to suffer,

(c) he permitted that to happen or failed to take such steps (whether by way of supervising the other person or otherwise) as were reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent that happening, and

(d) the suffering is unnecessary

Section 9 of the Act states:

(1) A person commits an offence if he does not take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure that the needs of an animal for which he is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice.

(2) For the purposes of this Act, an animal's needs shall be taken to include:

(a) its need for a suitable environment

(b) its need for a suitable diet

(c) its need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

(d) any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals

(e) its need to be protected from suffering, injury and disease.

(3) The circumstances to which it is relevant to have regard when applying subsection (1) include, in particular:

(a) any lawful purpose for which the animal is kept, and

(b) any lawful activity undertaken in relation to the animal.

(4) Nothing in this section applies to the destruction of an animal in an appropriate and humane manner.

Section 14 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 provides:

Codes of Practice

(3) A person's failure to comply with a provision of a Code of Practice issued under this section shall not of itself render him liable to proceedings of any kind.

(4) In any proceedings against a person for an offence under this Act or an offence under regulations under section 12 or 13:

(a) a failure to comply with a relevant provision of a Code of Practice issued under this section may be relied upon as tending to establish liability, and

(b) compliance with a relevant provision of such a Code of Practice may be relied upon as tending to negative liability.

Offences and Penalties

1. **A person who is convicted of an offence under section 4 of the Act may be imprisoned for a maximum period of 51 weeks* and/or fined up to £20,000. If they are convicted of an offence under section 9 (failing to ensure the animal's welfare) they can be imprisoned for the same maximum period and fined up to level 5 on the standard scale.**
2. **Proceedings may be brought up to 3 years after the offence was committed. Prosecutions under the Act are brought by the local authority in the Magistrates Court.**

* **The maximum period of imprisonment will be 51 weeks when section 281 (5) of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 comes into force.**

Other legislation affecting equines

As well as the Animal Welfare Act 2006 there are a number of other laws that affect the way you keep your equine. The ones most likely to affect the owner or keeper of an equine are summarised below.

Under the Weeds Act 1959 the Welsh Ministers can, if satisfied that specified weeds, including Common Ragwort, are growing upon any land, serve a notice requiring the occupier to take action to prevent the spread of those weeds. An unreasonable failure to comply with a notice is an offence.

The Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 states:

Under this Act it is an offence for an unregistered person to carry out an act of farriery. An act of farriery is described as "any work in connection with the preparation of treatment of the foot of a horse for the immediate reception of a shoe thereon, the fitting by nailing or otherwise of a shoe to the foot or the finishing off of such work to the foot".

The Welfare of Animals in Transport (Wales) Order 2007 No. 1047 (W.105) (WATO) requires everyone transporting animals on any journey to ensure that:

- No one shall transport animals, or cause them to be transported, in a way likely to cause them injury or undue suffering
- Journey times are kept to a minimum
- The animals are fit to travel
- The vehicle and its loading and unloading facilities are designed, constructed and maintained to avoid injury and suffering to ensure the safety of the animals
- Water, feed and rest are given to the animals as needed and sufficient floor space and height is available in the transport
- Horses older than 8 months must wear halters during transport - unless they are unbroken horses
- If horses or ponies are transported on a multi-deck vehicle they must only be carried on the lowest deck, with no other animals above them. In this circumstance, the compartment height must be at least 75cm higher than the height of the withers of the highest animal
- Horses and ponies must be transported in individual stalls when the vehicle is on a RO-RO vessel, with the exception that a mare may travel with her foal.
- Unbroken horses and ponies must not be transported in groups of more than four animals
- Unbroken horses and ponies must not be transported for more than eight hours





Appendix 3
Sources of Information



Legislation

- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations.
- The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007
- The Weeds Act 1959
- The Farriers (Registration) Act 1975

Websites of relevant organisations

- www.bhscymru.co.uk
- www.worldhorsewelfare.org
- www.bhs.org.uk
- www.newc.co.uk
- www.pcuk.org
- www.bva.uk
- www.beva.org.uk
- www.wef.org.uk
- www.farrier-reg.gov.uk
- www.wales.gov.uk
- www.hsa.org.uk
- www.rspca.org.uk
- www.ragwort.jakobskruiskruid.com/
- www.t-c-m-rd.co.uk/invasive-weeds/ragwort/

Publications relevant to topics covered by Code

- British Horse Society Publications:
  - The Complete Horse & Pony Care
  - BHS Guide to Grassland management
  - The BHS Complete Manuel of Stable Management
  - The BHS Veterinary Manual
  - The BHS First Horse Owner Pack
  - BHS Welfare leaflets cover a wide range of topics and can be downloaded via the BHS website at:
    www.bhs.org.uk - follow the links to Welfare and then leaflets.

- Pony Club Publications:
  - Manual of Horsemanship
  - Keeping a Pony at Grass
- National Equine Welfare Council publications:
  - Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium
  - Code of Practice for Markets and Sales involved with the selling of Horses, Ponies and Donkeys
  - Code of Practice for the Tethering of Horses, Ponies and Donkeys
  - Code of Practice for Welfare Organisations involved in the keeping of Horses, Ponies and Donkeys
- British Equine Veterinary Association
  - Horse Care Guide

