

Equine Health and Welfare Strategy

for Great Britain



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British Horse Industry Confederation



THE BRITISH HORSERACING BOARD



EQUINE HEALTH AND WELFARE STRATEGY FOR GREAT BRITAIN

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FOREWORD

1. The health and welfare of all horses and ponies in Britain is vital, but not just because we owe them a duty of care as responsible owners, keepers and users; it is also fundamental to the long term future and viability of the British equine industry.
2. For thousands of years, equines have been closely associated with the development of human society. Their domestication by early nomadic peoples led to a dependence on equines for farming, industry and transportation lasting well into the 20th Century.
3. In Britain today equines are used primarily for sport and recreation. The use to which they are put, and the way in which they are managed, determines the risks to which they are exposed. This directly influences their health and welfare.
4. High standards of health and welfare are essential to the animals themselves, and are also fundamental to the success of all equine businesses. Investing in equine health and welfare not only reduces costs in the longer term, but also improves the quality of life of the animals and enhances the enjoyment and safety of everyone engaged with them.
5. People looking after equines quickly become aware of the commitment, time and cost involved. Many, but not all, are also aware of the high level of knowledge and expertise needed to safeguard their horses' health and welfare - even caring owners or keepers can inadvertently cause animals to suffer. While the common view is that standards of health and welfare are generally high in Britain, evidence is far from complete and a number of animals suffer cruelty, abuse, neglect and mismanagement every year.
6. There has been a significant increase in equine ownership across Britain in the past two decades, and, while this growing interest can only be good for the equine industry and society as a whole, it has to be acknowledged that newcomers may not have the appropriate knowledge, leading, therefore, to an increased risk of mistreatment. Also, the international nature of the industry and the fact that climate change is leading to an increased risk of the spread of exotic diseases, some representing serious threats to human as well as equine health, means that no-one can afford to be complacent.
7. The 10 year Vision of this Strategy is to achieve high standards of health and welfare of equines in Britain and to ensure that everyone responsible for equine health and welfare understands and fulfils their duty of care. This involves defining standards; ongoing monitoring and assessment; and improving standards where necessary. But the facts are lacking in some areas, and opinion is sometimes divided on how equines should be managed and how the risks associated with equine pursuits should be mitigated.
8. It is firmly believed that, for the Strategy to succeed, everyone involved with equines needs to engage with the issues identified in this document and work together in a pragmatic and constructive way to achieve the aims. Without this, the Strategy will fail and a real opportunity will be lost.

9. The publication of the Strategy represents a landmark, but it is only the starting point; the more demanding task is to achieve its Vision for the future. The Strategy and its supporting Action Plan are intended to be living documents, regularly reviewed and revised to ensure the Strategy remains effective and relevant. This will require an ongoing commitment from all concerned.
10. However, the fact that the Strategy was proposed and developed by representatives from across the equine spectrum, with the full backing of Government, bodes well for the future.
11. A debt of gratitude goes to all those who have contributed to the development of the Strategy. This includes all those responding to the consultation on the draft Strategy. Your time, effort, depth of knowledge and respect for equines has enabled the Strategy to be a robust and well-informed document. With your continued support, we are sure that the Strategy can make a real difference to equines across Great Britain.

Signed:

British Equine Veterinary Association



BRITISH EQUINE VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

British Horse Industry Confederation

British Horse Industry Confederation

National Equine Welfare Council



Defra



Scottish Executive



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Welsh Assembly Government



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Strategy

1. The equine industry is increasingly recognising the importance of high standards of equine health and welfare to its success and financial viability. Following the 2004 publication of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain, the industry decided it needed a Health and Welfare Strategy aimed specifically at equines. A Working Group was established to take the initiative forward. Led by the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA), the Group included representatives from veterinary, welfare and industry bodies, and central and devolved Government. The England Implementation Group, an independent advisory group appointed by the Government to drive forward delivery of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy in England, subsequently encouraged the development of sub-species strategies to support the aims of the wider Animal Health and Welfare Strategy¹.
2. A draft Equine Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain was completed in August 2005 and was sent to over 400 individuals and organisations for consultation. All respondents supported the development of the Strategy, its Vision and its broad aims. The responses were used by the Working Group further to develop and refine the Strategy.
3. The Strategy encompasses horses, ponies, donkeys, mules and hinnies. However, for the purposes of this document, 'horse' or 'equine' are used as collective terms.

Preparation of the Strategy

4. The health and welfare of horses is fundamental to the equine industry's future health, wellbeing and growth and is vital to all eight of the aims of the Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales². Indeed, achieving high standards of horse health and welfare is the first, overarching, Action Point of that document. The Equine Health and Welfare Strategy is a significant step towards achieving that objective. The horse industry must continue to acknowledge that good health and welfare are intrinsic to all aspects of its activities and ensure that health and welfare considerations are core to any training or education in the industry.
5. The Strategy is applicable to all breeds, types and usages of horse. However, the use of horses defines many aspects of their management and many of the risks to which they are exposed, and hence influences their health and welfare status. The Strategy therefore recognises that usage is a fundamental determinant and that it is important in identifying how health and welfare issues should be addressed for particular horses or groups of horses. The Strategy fully encourages each of the sporting disciplines to develop their own method of reviewing and improving any specific welfare concerns as is already carried out in some sectors.

¹ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/>

² <http://www.bhic.co.uk/downloads/full-strategy-report.pdf>

Structure

6. The Strategy sets out a vision for equine health and welfare in Britain, with the supporting rationale. Eight Aims support the achievement of the Vision and key health and welfare issues are identified under the Aims. Each Aim is supported by Actions that will deliver the Strategy. Actions are listed at Annex A.
7. Each Aim has a named Champion body, responsible for ensuring that the Actions underpinning that Aim are delivered. The British Horse Industry Confederation has taken responsibility for co-ordinating delivery of the Strategy.

Strategy Working Group

8. The Working Group that developed this Strategy and dedicated considerable time and resources to its completion involved:

British Equine Veterinary Association:

Lesley Barwise Munro
Professor Josh Slater
Professor Alistair Barr
Dr James Wood

Equine Industry:

British Equestrian Federation (BEF)
British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA)
British Horseracing Board (BHB)
British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC)
British Horse Society (BHS)
Brooke Hospital for Animals
The Donkey Sanctuary
Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB)
Horseracing Regulatory Authority (HRA)
The Horse Trust (formerly The Home of Rest for Horses)
International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH)
National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC)
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
South Essex Insurance Brokers (SEIB)

Government:

Alison Reeves, Mike Warnes and Tony Williamson (Defra)
Fiona Leadbitter (National Assembly for Wales)
Mary Bradley (Scottish Executive)
Lisa Jarvis (Lantra)

VISION

Overview

9. This Strategy aims to achieve high standards of health and welfare for all horses in Britain, whatever their breed, type or usage. This is of paramount importance for the horses and in terms of the value our society places on them. Good horse health and welfare is of concern to everyone. It is vital to horse owners and riders, for without it their animals will not give their best and safety may be compromised. It secures the many benefits to human health and well-being that participation in equestrianism brings. It protects against outbreaks of disease, some of which may have serious public health consequences, and high economic and social costs. It is fundamental to the horse industry's success. It underpins the industry's major contribution, not only to sport, recreation and well-being, but also to the economy, employment, community and rural development, education and environmental protection.
10. The general view is that most owners and keepers look after their horses well and have the appropriate knowledge to do so. However, evidence is far from complete. A recent study commissioned by the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) indicates that horse ownership is growing. This is welcome and to be encouraged but, because new owners may have little background in horse care, there may be an increase in unintentional mistreatment. Also, infectious disease outbreaks occur frequently, other diseases and injuries continuously affect the horse population, dozens of people are convicted of cruelty each year, and thousands of horses are in rescue centres and sanctuaries. For these reasons, there is no room for complacency. Risks need to be managed effectively, traditional methods of horse care need to be continually reviewed and improved, and educational opportunities need to be available to both newer and more experienced horse owners and managers.
11. This Strategy considers how far we have progressed towards achieving the aspirations in the Vision. It sets out initial priorities for action to get closer to doing so, taking account of risks, costs and benefits. It aims within three years to:
 1. Establish a sound baseline for assessing the achievement of components 1, 2 and 3 of the Vision;
 1. Set measurable, timed targets for improving on the baseline; and
 1. Identify further actions, in addition to those in this document, required to achieve the targets and to get closer to achieving components 3 and 4.

Vision for Horse Health and Welfare

1. All horses are healthy and are treated humanely.
2. Everyone responsible for horse health and welfare fulfils their duty of care.

To enable this:

3. Owners, keepers, users and others concerned with horse health and welfare must understand their responsibilities, know how to meet them and take steps to do so.
4. Everybody involved with horses, including Government, must collectively ensure that:
 - a. Health and welfare standards, and other information necessary to support each individual's duty of care, are appropriate, up to date and accessible.
 - b. The risks of infectious diseases, including those entering Britain from abroad, are addressed and managed effectively.
 - c. The health and welfare status of the horse population is adequately monitored.
 - d. Significant health and welfare problems are identified and addressed.

12. The Strategy complements other initiatives to improve horse health and welfare (see Annex B and summary below).

Initiative	Issue
Animal Welfare Act 2006 and Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Duty of Care 1 Livery yards 1 Riding schools 1 Tethering 1 Animal sanctuaries 1 Performing animals
Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Improvement of skills 1 Breeding 1 Off road riding access 1 Safety education for motorists and riders 1 Land management 1 Conservation grazing
EU Council Regulation 1/2005 and Directives 90/426 and 427	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Welfare in transport 1 Permanent identification of horses

Responsibilities

13. **Owners and keepers** have a moral and statutory duty of care for the horses they own and manage and are responsible for their horses' health and welfare. The owner has an ongoing responsibility for an animal, even when another person is in day to day charge of it.

Health and Welfare Responsibilities of Owners and Keepers

- 1 To understand and provide for the specific health and welfare needs of their animals.
- 1 To maintain healthy animals.
- 1 To take steps to prevent and control disease and injury.
- 1 To have and adhere to a veterinary health care plan for each horse.
- 1 To play a part in recognising and reporting symptoms of notifiable diseases.³
- 1 To maintain appropriate standards of welfare through compliance with welfare legislation and codes.
- 1 To ensure their skills and competence levels are appropriate to the above.
- 1 To seek veterinary and other qualified advice to help discharge these responsibilities.

14. Every other member of **the horse industry** also has a responsibility to safeguard health and welfare. This includes all riders, trainers and suppliers of goods and services such as veterinary surgeons, farriers, saddlers, feed merchants, tack shop proprietors, live animal transporters, insurers, educators, journalists and members of the many horse associations and societies in Britain.

Health and Welfare Responsibilities of all Members of the Horse Industry

- 1 To support owners and keepers in their duty of care by providing appropriate education and information and accurate, current and impartial advice.
- 1 To report concerns over neglect or maltreatment to the appropriate welfare organisation or Local Authority.
- 1 To report concerns relating to any of the horse competition disciplines to the relevant regulatory body.

15. **Veterinary surgeons** are responsible for the provision of adequate care for horses under their care. This should include, where possible, the encouragement of horse owners to plan and implement preventative health care programmes. Veterinary surgeons in practice should engage in Continuing Professional Development as required by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

³ Serious diseases not normally found in this country ('exotic' diseases) are generally 'notifiable'. This means they must be notified to Defra and investigated. See Defra website. Owners should always seek veterinary advice if in doubt. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/default.htm>.

16. The many **horse welfare charities**, including the sixty members of the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC), are representative both of our nation's love of the horse and of the sad fact that ignorance, abuse and neglect persist. Many work closely with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which acts as the main prosecuting organisation in England and Wales in cases of serious neglect and abuse. In Scotland this role is taken by the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA). A list of NEWC members can be found at (www.newc.co.uk/members).

The Work of Horse Welfare Charities	
Rescue & rehabilitation	Taking in welfare cases, including cases of cruelty and neglect, and rehabilitating and re-homing them in selected loan homes, but remaining the property of the charity for the rest of their lives.
Sanctuary	Taking in welfare cases and giftings, rehabilitating them and keeping them safe for the rest of their lives.
Retirement home	Taking in and keeping a limited number of animals that have reached the end of their working life due to age or injury.
Research	Researching issues affecting horse health and welfare.
Education	Promoting high welfare standards by improving knowledge and understanding.
Campaigning	Campaigning to raise awareness of welfare issues and effect improvements.
Grant making	Funding research or educational activities that will help improve welfare. Funding specific projects for smaller charities, thus improving their ability to influence horse health and welfare positively.

17. Large welfare organisations also work with appropriately trained **Local Authority** inspectors to ensure that welfare legislation is observed and that horse owners and keepers are given the best possible advice on the care of their animals. Local Authority inspectors are concerned with the licensing of riding schools and other enterprises where horses, ponies and donkeys are used for hire or reward, and, in future, livery yards and animal sanctuaries, and also work with the State Veterinary Service to enforce laws relating to the keeping, transport and trading of farm livestock. They may also become involved where there is a case of cruelty or neglect, as may the RSPCA or SSPCA.
18. **Central and devolved Government** works with the horse industry to achieve common objectives. It should intervene in horse health and welfare where necessary in the public interest, for example, by preventing and combating serious diseases, in order to:
- 1 Protect human health;
 - 1 Protect and promote the welfare of animals;
 - 1 Protect wider economic, environmental and social interests;

- 1 Ensure that we can move and trade animals and animal products internationally; and
- 1 Maintain the high value of the horse industry.

User groups and risks

19. Many of the risks to which horses may be exposed occur regardless of breed, type or the use to which the animal is put. However, the usage introduces potential additional risks, specific to the different activities. It also affects how concerns should be addressed, as levels of knowledge and opportunities for enforcement vary widely between the different user groups. These groups and the possible significant additional risks are shown in the following table.
20. A much more robust base of evidence on the health and welfare status of the horse population needs to be established. The following sections set out Aims and Actions to work towards this, and address the current priorities for action on the basis of the preliminary risk analysis.
21. Although many of the user groups are self-regulated by their respective governing bodies (See Aim 1) there are still areas of the horse industry that are not regulated and health and welfare issues need constant monitoring and reassessment. The table below sets out some of the issues that this Strategy aims to address.

User Group	Issues
<p>Competition</p> <p>Dressage Driving Endurance Eventing Horseball Polo Polocross Racing Reining Showing Showjumping Vaulting</p>	<p>The international nature of the competition sector and extensive national travel of horses increase the risk of exposure to infectious disease.</p> <p>There is a minority of owners and trainers using questionable practices in training animals, for example hypersensitisation and hyperflexion, or using drugs to mask injuries or to enhance performance. In addition, some animals are at risk of injury as a result of overwork.</p> <p>In some disciplines, there are specific concerns, for example out of season care for some polo ponies, obesity in show horses increasing the likelihood of conditions such as laminitis, low finishing rates and dehydration in some endurance competitions and injuries in general.</p> <p>Unregulated competitions are a concern, particularly where horses are asked to perform on inappropriate surfaces.</p>
<p>Leisure</p> <p>Livery Yards Home</p>	<p>This group covers livery and home kept animals. While knowledgeable owners and proficient livery yards maintain high standards of health and welfare, others do not. In the latter cases, horses are at an increased risk of injury and/or disease as a result of inadequate knowledge, care or resources. There is also a risk in some cases of animals being overused or inappropriately used, especially geriatric or injured animals.</p> <p>There is a risk of inappropriate and unregulated treatment and foot care that can greatly increase the risk of injury or disease.</p> <p>A lack of isolation or quarantine facilities and basic biosecurity measures at some livery yards, coupled with the movement of horses at these facilities, increases the risk of the spread of diseases.</p>
<p>Breeding</p>	<p>The stud and breeding sector is broad - ranging from highly successful, professionally run businesses, producing quality animals at the top end of the</p>

	<p>scale, to poorly managed businesses producing poor quality animals at the bottom.</p> <p>There are still too many owners who take the view that, once an animal can no longer be ridden, it should be used for breeding, regardless of its suitability.</p> <p>At the bottom end, horses are at risk of injury or disease due to inadequate knowledge or care and through a lack of proper facilities. This can result in the overbreeding of mares or inappropriate breeding from injured or older animals. Poor hygiene and a lack of facilities can put both mare and foal at risk from infection or injury, and a lack of isolation facilities risks the spread of disease. Barren and maiden mares may be treated poorly at some facilities.</p>
<i>Riding Schools & Colleges</i>	<p>Many riding schools are members of the British Horse Society and/or the Association of British Riding Schools, and are consequently required to achieve and maintain high standards of health and welfare. There are also riding schools that are not members of either the BHS or ABRS that maintain high standards.</p> <p>However, there are yards where standards are poor. Some riding schools are unlicensed and trade illegally. At these yards, horses are at risk of injury or disease due to inadequate knowledge and/or care, or as the result of a lack of facilities or resources. This can result in injured or geriatric animals being overworked, the inappropriate matching of size, weight and ability of rider to horse and the use of ill-fitting tack. This not only puts the horse at risk, but the rider too. Basic standards should be maintained by the current Riding Schools Inspection, but this may not be adequate where horses are used against veterinary advice, or where facilities are not inspected.</p>
<i>Entertainment</i>	<p>While many horses in the entertainment sector are treated well, there are some concerns regarding in-season accommodation and out of season care, especially for beach donkeys. Over-use and the inappropriate matching of size and weight of rider to horse can lead to injury.</p>
<i>Travellers & Fairs</i>	<p>While many horses in the care of travellers are well looked after, some are not and there is a general reluctance to seek veterinary support. Animals tethered for long periods of time are prone to injury and the travelling nature of the community increases the risk of disease spread. In some cases, inadequate knowledge, facilities and resources increases the risk of injury or disease.</p>
<i>Semi-feral Animals</i>	<p>Looking after semi-feral animals requires specialised knowledge and skill and without these, the animals are at an increased risk of injury and disease. In addition, the sometimes poor financial value can result in injured or diseased animals not being treated.</p> <p>There can be a lack of breeding standards, which may result in in-breeding, over-breeding or poor quality animals being bred. As most of these animals are grazed on common land that may be in multiple ownership, a strong "commoners association" or similar organisation is essential, as is a central management plan for the area and its equine occupants.</p>
<i>Sanctuaries</i>	<p>To run a sanctuary well takes a great deal of specialist knowledge, experience and resources – as well as good will. There are many excellent sanctuaries providing refuge and rehabilitation to hundreds of horses. However, there are also many poorly managed and under-resourced sanctuaries that risk doing more harm than good to the animals in their charge. For example, some do not have the appropriate knowledge and experience to deal with neglected or poorly treated "problem" animals, or they lack the appropriate isolation facilities and practices necessary to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of disease.</p>

AIM 1: REVIEW HEALTH AND WELFARE STANDARDS

Champion: National Equine Welfare Council

- 1.1 Standards defining satisfactory horse health and welfare are required in order to gauge the extent to which animals are healthy and are treated humanely, and to assist those responsible for them to fulfil their duty of care.
- 1.2 The health and welfare of an animal is determined by its physical and mental state, including fitness for the purpose for which it is kept. These aspects are inextricably linked. The Farm Animal Welfare Council propounds 'Five Freedoms' which are relevant to horses and are reflected in animal welfare legislation.
 - 1 **Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** - by providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
 - 1 **Freedom from Discomfort** - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
 - 1 **Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
 - 1 **Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour** - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company, as appropriate.
 - 1 **Freedom from Fear and Distress** - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
- 1.3 These Freedoms define ideal states. They serve as a touchstone for standards which need to be expressed in concrete terms tailored to practical application. Welfare standards for horses are currently set out in the over-arching Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys (NEWC, second edition 2005), as well as in more specific, sectoral codes of practice.
- 1.4 Horse owners and keepers are responsible for the health and welfare of horses and veterinary surgeons are the primary portal for guidance on equine health standards. Owners should be familiar with the appropriate preventive health programmes that should be in place for their animal(s), including nutrition, foot and dental care, vaccination and worm control and foal care. Programmes should be devised in consultation with the veterinary surgeon. Veterinary practices should facilitate this process by encouraging owners and keepers to have, and adhere to, veterinary health care plans for all horses under their care. Veterinary practices should provide educational material about horse health standards via newsletters and consider staging client education meetings on a regular basis.
- 1.5 It is also the owner's or keeper's responsibility to be able to recognise ill health and seek veterinary assistance as required and to recognise when quality of life deteriorates, seek veterinary advice if necessary and arrange euthanasia when appropriate. Thought should be given to carcass disposal and relevant legislation as this may impact on the choice of euthanasia method.

- 1.6 This Strategy is not intended to replace existing guidelines and codes. There is, however, a need for a systematic overview of the current written advice on horse health and welfare standards so as to ensure that, taken together, they provide a sufficient, comprehensive, consistent and clear statement of standards, and to identify any significant gaps that need to be filled. The review should examine welfare regimes that are being developed or have been introduced in Europe and other parts of the world to assess their applicability in Britain, perhaps with further research or adaptation to our national circumstances. The review will also inform work on some other Actions.
- 1.7 A number of governing bodies are responsible for establishing and enforcing standards for some user groups. Organisations such as the Horseracing Regulatory Authority and British Show Jumping Association, working alongside others such as the RSPCA, do much to set and maintain standards of health and welfare within their areas of interest. Where it exists, this form of self-regulation, with support from veterinary and welfare organisations, works well. For example, horseracing is probably the most scrutinised and regulated of the competition disciplines, with safeguards in place to prevent the use of prohibited substances and minimise the risk of disease and injury. It must be argued that, while self-regulation may not necessarily address all health and welfare issues in a way that would satisfy everyone, it does have a significant impact on improving health and welfare standards.
- 1.8 However, not all user groups are regulated, and reliable evidence on the health and welfare status of the horse population overall is patchy. This is especially the case with the leisure user group, due to its large size and rapid growth. There is therefore a strong case for new horse health and welfare surveillance systems (see Aims 2 and 3) and for agreeing, in the light of surveillance data, ways in which standards can be improved or enforced more effectively.

Action 1a: Review all statements (legislation, codes of practice, best practice guidelines) relating to horse health and welfare standards within and across the user groups, including standards under development or adopted overseas; identify and fill any potential gaps; and identify ways in which standards can be improved, including enforcement arrangements and improving education and training. See also Aims 2, 3 and 6.

Action 1b: Identify areas where there are no arrangements in place to promote and enforce health and welfare standards and consider ways of addressing the problem.

Action 1c: Review availability and costs of euthanasia, types of carcass disposal and relevant legislation.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

AIM 2: REVIEW HEALTH SURVEILLANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Champion: British Equine Veterinary Association

- 2.1 Currently, there are no comprehensive arrangements for assessing the health status of the national horse population. As a core element of improving horse welfare over time, health surveillance arrangements should be introduced, based on key indicators that provide sound evidence of horse health status, sub-divided where appropriate into the different user groups. Adequate data need to be collected and maintained in order to:
- 1 Provide a valid baseline of the extent to which horses are healthy measured against agreed standards;
 - 1 Pinpoint problem areas, including those specific to particular user groups;
 - 1 Assess the impact of ill health and injury;
 - 1 Help prevent and manage the risks of disease and injury, including endemic and exotic diseases and infectious and non-infectious disease; and
 - 1 Identify, drive and monitor improvements, tracking changes over time so that the outcomes of measures taken can be assessed and the need for any further action decided.
- 2.2 The growing international nature of the horse industry, with breeding stock and their biological products being shipped around the world, sports horses regularly travelling long distances to compete in international events, and the movement of horses throughout the expanded European Union, increases the risk of the spread of infectious diseases along with potentially significant welfare, economic and social consequences. In addition, climate change is increasing the establishment of vectors capable of transmitting and spreading exotic diseases, some of which represent serious threats to human, as well as horse, health.
- 2.3 Although a small number of exotic horse diseases represent a risk to human health, significantly more diseases represent an issue for horses and an economic threat to the horse industry as a whole. Future health and welfare problems and threats (including those which are novel and may not currently be foreseen) need to be predicted and plans made for dealing with them. In particular, Britain needs to be fully equipped to prevent or minimise the impact of a large-scale epidemic of an exotic horse disease, ideally leading, where possible, to its eventual eradication. We need, therefore, to assess the extent to which the horse industry and Government is prepared for an outbreak of an infectious disease and the extent to which it could cope with the economic and other consequences.
- 2.4 Discussion has begun between the industry and Government on the question of compensation for compulsory slaughter in the event of certain specified diseases. This is relevant to equine health and welfare since it is essential that owners and keepers are not tempted to conceal disease outbreaks simply because of the economic consequences and are aware of the steps they can take to reduce the risk of introduction of disease. The debate needs to be concluded, with both industry and Government taking proportionate responsibility.

Action 2a: Review surveillance arrangements for horse diseases, both endemic and exotic, infectious and non-infectious, and horse injuries, including analysing the risks and associated costs, and consider any improvements.

Action 2b: Consider ways in which Britain can prepare itself for the economic implications of an outbreak of serious infectious disease.

Action 2c: Assess Government and industry contingency planning arrangements for notifiable diseases, taking account of European and other international comparators.

Action 2d: Ensure a high level of vigilance for new and emerging threats to horse health and welfare in order to implement proactive or remedial action to reduce or negate such threats.

Action 2e: Identify any other areas of horse health and welfare that either have surveillance and control measures in place or require them to be put in place.

Action 2f: Review the Infectious Diseases of Horses Order 1987 to ensure that it is up-to-date, reflects the contents of the STEED contingency plan* and incorporates lessons learned from previous outbreaks of disease and provision for compensation for mandatory slaughter.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

* A new draft of the Defra Specified Type Equine Exotic Diseases contingency plan is expected to be available for full public consultation in early 2007.

AIM 3: REVIEW HORSE WELFARE OBSERVATION ARRANGEMENTS

Champion: National Equine Welfare Council

- 3.1 The industry needs to ascertain the true picture of ill treatment, neglect and cruelty to horses in Britain by introducing a surveillance arrangement for horse welfare. Consideration should then be given as to how standards can be reviewed and improved, as necessary.
- 3.2 Any horse welfare surveillance system should be based on reports from groups and organisations, including Government, with an interest in the welfare of horses.
- 3.3 The industry should encourage welfare organisations (including those that are not current members of NEWC) and any other horse organisations to whom welfare cases are reported to share information about cases, whether reported, investigated, confiscated or prosecuted, with a central body in an agreed format. This data should be collated, evaluated by a panel of experts (including veterinary surgeons), and the results shared with those supplying the data. It can then be used to review and improve welfare standards.
- 3.4 The industry should establish basic standards of care applicable in each user group and these should be given wide publicity as Codes of Practice through the relevant groups, NEWC and Government.
- 3.5 Various systems are currently used in the surveillance and assessment of welfare problems (e.g. Body Condition Scoring). The systems are not widely used and are not well understood and, where developed for a specific breed, it is not known whether they are reliable if applied to other breeds. The systems need to be reviewed and industry wide agreement reached in order that investigating officers, prosecuting bodies, legal representatives and Courts all use the same tool of measurement.

Action 3a: Review observation arrangements for horse welfare and consider any improvements, including standardisation of methods of welfare measurement.

Action 3b: Develop a system of horse welfare surveillance based on reports from groups and organisations with an interest in the welfare of horses.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

AIM 4: REVIEW METHODS OF HORSE IDENTIFICATION

Champion: British Horse Society

- 4.1 Establishing and promoting a permanent method of identifying horses in those sectors where such a system is not in place would have a great impact on health and welfare. In particular, it would:
- 1 help owners and keepers to trace and identify lost or stolen animals and help reduce the number of horses stolen by serving as a deterrent to thieves;
 - 1 allow welfare organisations to trace the owners of horses whose welfare has been compromised and to identify loose or abandoned horses making dishonesty or fraud more difficult; and
 - 1 simplify the tracing of animals involved in an outbreak of a notifiable disease, hopefully achieving eradication.
- 4.2 Currently, Horse Passports serve as an identity document for all horses across the European Union. However, these rely heavily on silhouettes as the main means of physical identification but silhouettes are not sufficiently effective to achieve all of the outcomes expected of them. In some areas, the industry itself mandates the use of more robust means of identification, e.g. microchipping for Thoroughbreds.
- 4.3 The European Union is currently finalising new legislation in respect of horse identification. It is expected that this will require the microchipping of all equines, beginning with foals born from a specified date. Clearly, once this legislation is in place, it would be beneficial for all horse owners and keepers to consider applying the same method of permanent identification to older horses and ponies. It is understood that there will be an exemption for feral ponies prior to sale. It is not yet clear what sanctions will be in place to ensure compliance. Up to date information on the new legislation will be available on the Defra and BHIC websites.
- 4.4 The National Equine Database will, for the first time, provide a means of bringing together information on the majority of horses across Britain. The database has been designed to hold horse passport data as well as information on breeding, competition and performance. NED will act as the central log for microchip numbers and other optional identification data. It is most important, however, that the information kept on NED is kept up to date for instance in respect of changes of horse ownership and horse deaths.

Action 4a: Monitor the development of new legislation on the identification of equines.

Action 4b: Working with the insurance industry and others, promote the application of the agreed permanent physical identification for all horses.

Action 4c: Promote the recording of information on all horses on the National Equine Database.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

AIM 5: REVIEW MEDICINES NEEDS AND AVAILABILITY

Champion: British Equine Veterinary Association

- 5.1 In order to control disease and assist good health and welfare across all user groups, it is essential that an adequate range of effective medicines is available to treat the spectrum of horse diseases and conditions.
- 5.2 Veterinary medicinal products are placed on the market under a European regulatory framework. The legislation is implemented in the UK through the Veterinary Medicines Regulations under which the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of Defra, is responsible for authorising new veterinary products for the UK market. In order to be granted authorisation, products must have a favourable risk/benefit balance identified through the assessment of their quality, safety and clinical efficacy and must be safe to the person administering the medicine and to the environment as well as to the equine consumer.
- 5.3 While this regulatory system is effective, it is highly expensive and time consuming for pharmaceutical firms to develop new products for the market that will meet these criteria and thus gain authorisation. This, coupled with the relatively small size of the market for many equine veterinary medicines, inevitably means that the rate of bringing new products onto the market is low and is therefore a limiting factor in the availability of authorised equine products.
- 5.4 In the absence of an authorised product to treat a given horse disease or condition, veterinary surgeons may prescribe other products through a prescribing cascade. This relies on the professional abilities of individual veterinary surgeons. As well as exercising the cascade competently, the veterinary surgeon must ensure that the active substance(s) in the product proposed for administration to the horse have been entered into Annex I, II or III of European Regulation EC/2377/90, or have been listed in the 'Essential List' (Positive List) of substances not entered into Annexes I-III that can be administered to horses intended for human consumption, and, if so, set a withdrawal period between the time of the administration and the moment when the animal may be slaughtered for human consumption. If this is not possible, the horse must be declared as not intended for human consumption in its passport and may then never enter the human food chain. This system is an essential part of prescribing medicines for horses and its promotion and retention are vital.
- 5.5 Further, the availability of products for administration to horses may be subject to limitations arising from issues relating to other species. For example, recent European legislation has led to the withdrawal, for use in horses intended for human consumption, of authorisation of an equine veterinary medicinal product because it contained a substance that has been banned for use in food-producing animals.
- 5.6 These limiting factors constrain the choice and availability of an appropriate and effective range of veterinary medicinal treatments for the full spectrum of horse diseases and conditions. It is therefore proposed that a Working Group be established to consider and identify future needs in respect of equine veterinary medicines, to propose plans to meet those needs and to ensure the continuing availability of essential equine veterinary medicines. The Group should take a wide view and

consider a European focused solution. It should include representatives from all interested parties including Defra's Animal Health and Welfare Directorate, the National Office of Animal Health (NOAH) to represent the pharmaceutical industry, the horse industry and the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA). The VMD should be represented but as an observer since, as a regulatory authority, it cannot be involved in research and development or supply issues.

- 5.7 It is important that all owners and keepers of horses are aware of, and fulfil, their responsibilities with respect to the administration of medicines to horses, including the safe storage, safe administration and recording of the medicinal substances used. In addition, the industry, together with Defra, VMD, NOAH and BEVA, has a central role to play in owner education and provision of information to owners.
- 5.8 It is also important that clarity is maintained about the definition of veterinary medicinal products (currently defined as products claimed to be medicinal by either 'presentation' or 'function') and that there is clear differentiation between these and substances without medicinal effect, including feed supplements. It is essential that the industry promotes the education of all those involved with the care and keeping of horses so that the difference between medicinal products and other products is understood. In relation to Aim 1.4, the industry, VMD and veterinary surgeons each have key roles to play in maintaining awareness of these differences and the importance of appropriate use of both medicinal and non-medicinal products in the treatment and prevention of disease. Specifically, owners and keepers of horses need to be able to judge when veterinary advice and the administration of medicinal products is appropriate.

Action 5a: Establish a working group to determine current and likely future medicine supply needs and recommend how best to meet them.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

AIM 6: REVIEW EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

Champion: LANTRA

- 6.1 In order to secure good horse health and welfare, everyone involved with horses needs sufficient education about the requirements of proper standards of horse care and the skills needed to meet those requirements. There is a need for mechanisms that recognise the skills and competencies of individuals involved with the care of horses. A preliminary risk analysis does not negate the general view that horse owners and keepers have appropriate knowledge and skills, but it does show inadequacies in parts of some user groups. A more detailed audit of the education and skills levels existing across the horse industry should be undertaken, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing training provision.
- 6.2 In the light of this audit, it may be agreed that it is necessary to devise an education, skills and training plan, tailored to different user groups and sub-groups, which, amongst other things, will help to prepare horse owners and keepers better for their role in understanding normal and abnormal horse behaviour, health maintenance and disease prevention. The plan could promote, for example, appropriate feeding and nutrition, worm control, safe transportation, stabling and tack fitting. It should have particular regard to the needs of prospective and new owners, and of owners who do not belong to any of the horse organisations. It should recognise the fundamental role that training establishments and riding schools play in health and welfare education as these venues often represent the first time that people encounter horses. They are thus primary learning places. The plan should also recognise the role that livery yard managers, particularly those running "do it yourself yards", have in advising first time owners. A major effort will be required to communicate the plan widely. It will need to tie in with measures in the Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales to raise skills and training levels for people working and volunteering in the industry.

Action 6a: Audit education and skill levels and training provision, and identify significant gaps.

Action 6b: Devise and introduce a resourced plan to meet any significant gaps identified in Action 6a.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

AIM 7: REVIEW RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Champion: The Horse Trust

- 7.1 Veterinary research is fundamental to improving horse welfare through advancing understanding of horse health, disease, abnormal conditions and injury, leading to improvements in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management. Advancing horse health and welfare through veterinary research depends on the availability of funding, the rational application of funds, the existence of a national nucleus of appropriately trained scientists and veterinarians with suitable facilities to carry out research, and communication of results.
- 7.2 Britain is well-served by an active research base in academic and scientific institutions and by the availability of funds for equine research. The use of these funds is optimised by a rigorous review process to ensure that the highest standards of science and relevance to welfare are achieved. Research workers disseminate their results to the equine veterinary profession and the broader scientific community through the scientific literature and conferences. Results are communicated to the industry through meetings and 'lay' publications. There are exciting opportunities ahead for equine research, for example, the recent completion of equine genome sequencing has unlocked opportunities for enhancing the prevention of a wider range of diseases than has been possible before. The review of disease surveillance arrangements under Aim 2 of this Strategy may direct future actions, including research, to improve disease prevention and risk management.
- 7.3 While current arrangements for research are satisfactory, it is timely to review the national situation to ensure that Britain continues to advance equine health and welfare through science and apply those advances in the most efficient and effective way. Working in conjunction with the health surveillance arrangements at Aim 2, the review should encompass at least the following:
- 1 Current sources of funds and opportunities to maximise funds from national and EU sources in line with research opportunities.
 - 1 Opportunities to improve the quality and rate of progress in equine research and to improve exploitation of technological advances to the benefit of equine health and welfare.
 - 1 Opportunities to improve the allocation, distribution and use of funds.
 - 1 Opportunities to enhance understanding of science in relation to equine health and welfare.
 - 1 Opportunities to improve communication and uptake of research results.

Action 7a: Review veterinary research arrangements; identify opportunities to improve funding, the quality and rate of progress of research, the allocation, distribution and use of funds, and communication and uptake of results.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

AIM 8: REVIEW DELIVERY AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Champion: British Horse Industry Confederation

- 8.1 The publication of this Strategy is a landmark step towards improving the overall standards of equine health and welfare in Britain. It is not, however, an end in itself - it is the beginning. The desired improvements will only be achieved through vigorous pursuit of the Aims, implementation of the Actions, monitoring and assessment of the resulting outcomes and further actions where appropriate. The Champions who have volunteered to lead this process in respect of each of the Aims have a clear responsibility for driving the various elements of the Strategy forwards, but they cannot do so alone. Their role is that of facilitators and each will need to be supported by their organisations and other individuals involved in the relevant Actions. Co-ordination will also be required where strands of activity overlap. Implementation will therefore be a major effort that will demand and rely on the commitment and enthusiasm of those individuals and organisations directly concerned with the achievement of each Aim, and, ultimately, of the wider equine industry in Britain.
- 8.2 Effective oversight is needed to ensure that the Strategy is fully implemented and regularly reviewed. To this end, the BHIC, which already has responsibility for the predominantly economic and social Horse Industry Strategy for England and Wales, will co-ordinate and monitor delivery of this work. The BHIC is well placed to fulfil this role, given the wide experience of its membership. However, not every group that has an interest in achieving the Vision as set out in these pages is directly represented on its Board. BHIC will therefore have to call upon the expertise of wider interest groups and to receive their full support in taking the Actions forward.
- 8.3 The Action Plan will be posted on the dedicated website (www.equinehealthandwelfarestrategy.co.uk) with the clear indication of where the responsibilities lie. There will also be a link from the BHIC website (www.bhic.org.uk). Progress will be reviewed informally after six months by a steering group under the auspices of BHIC. One year after publication of the Plan, this group will report on what has been fully achieved, what has been partially achieved and what remains to be done.
- 8.4 The Actions set out in this Strategy will provide a firmer evidence base for assessing horse health and welfare and determining whether any further action is needed and, if so, what form it should take. Any further action should be proportionate and cost-effective, taking full account of costs and benefits, and be appropriately resourced.

Action 8a: Ensure the Strategy is implemented, monitor its effectiveness, and review its content to determine whether changes are needed and if so what form they should take.

See the Action Plan at Annex A for more details.

ANNEX A: EQUINE HEALTH AND WELFARE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>AIM 1: Review health and welfare standards</p> <p>Champion: National Equine Welfare Council</p> <p>Timing: Medium Term</p>				
<p>Action 1a: Review all statements (legislation, codes of practice, best practice guidelines) relating to horse health and welfare standards within and across the user groups including standards under development or adopted overseas; identify and fill any potential gaps; identify ways in which standards can be improved, including enforcement arrangements and improving education and training (Aim 6).</p>	<p>NEWC and its members, Defra and BEVA.</p>	<p>The Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium is a comprehensive document of health and welfare standards.</p> <p>The Compendium includes a list of Codes of Practice and best practice guidelines.</p> <p>Information on equine health and welfare is available in printed publications and via the internet. Its accuracy is not necessarily verified by appropriate professional scrutiny.</p> <p>No central knowledge of potential gaps.</p> <p>Education and training may bear little resemblance to requirements in certain sectors of the industry. Standards are being developed or have been introduced in other European countries/other parts of the world.</p>	<p>Defined statements of minimum health and welfare standards for user groups.</p> <p>Industry co-operation to compile, update and maintain all statements of advice or guidance.</p> <p>Statements easily accessed on one website and/or in pdf or booklet form.</p> <p>Inter industry co-operation and consultation to fill gaps.</p> <p>Specialised horse industry and horse welfare requirements catered for by Colleges and Universities/Lantra.</p> <p>Agreed mechanisms for promoting awareness of statements.</p> <p>Secure funding to assure the above.</p>	<p>Contact all horse organisations to clarify: what statements exist; latest versions.</p> <p>Request industry co-operation to identify gaps and work together to fill these.</p> <p>Request industry co-operation to share and compile health and welfare standards specific to user groups.</p> <p>Regular reviews with Defra regarding areas requiring specific legislation or changes.</p> <p>Work with Lantra, BHS and other education providers to establish basis of horse education and training with specific regard to health and welfare.</p> <p>Establish equine health and welfare standards website.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>Action 1b: Identify areas where there are no arrangements in place to promote and enforce health and welfare standards and consider ways of addressing the problem.</p>	<p>BEVA, NEWC</p>	<p>There are currently some areas of industry where there is little or no effort to encourage and promote health and welfare standards.</p>	<p>Identify areas where health and welfare standards should be promoted and enforced.</p>	<p>Draw on results of action 1a to identify areas where interest groups have concerns about gaps and shortcomings.</p> <p>Encourage industry wide identification of such areas.</p> <p>Develop an action plan to address these areas.</p>
<p>Action 1c: Review availability and costs of euthanasia, types of carcass disposal and relevant legislation.</p>	<p>BEVA, NEWC</p>	<p>Costs and availability of methods vary nationwide.</p>	<p>Educated owners with a full knowledge of what methods are available.</p>	<p>Identify current advice and update as necessary.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>AIM 2: Review health surveillance arrangements</p> <p>Champion: British Equine Veterinary Association</p> <p>Timing: Medium Term</p>				
<p>Action 2a: Review surveillance arrangements for horse diseases, both endemic and exotic, infectious and non-infectious, and horse injuries, including analysing the risks and associated costs, and consider any improvements.</p>	<p>BEVA, AHT, ILPH, Defra</p>	<p>Surveillance for exotic diseases occurs (Defra). Passive surveillance of endemic disease occurs via collation of laboratory submissions (AHT/Defra/BEVA). Racing has arrangements for recording racing health events. The AHT operates the Equine Influenza Surveillance Programme.</p>	<p>Continued disease surveillance but modified to facilitate testing of suspected cases of infectious disease within the UK. Industry co-operation to establish active endemic disease surveillance and reporting.</p>	<p>Establish industry-wide group to review current arrangements for surveillance of exotic and endemic diseases. Identify limiting steps of current schemes and rectify. Regular reviews required to keep schemes current, relevant and appropriate.</p>
<p>Action 2b: Consider ways in which Britain can prepare itself for the economic implications of an outbreak of an infectious disease.</p>	<p>Defra</p>	<p>Currently handled by Defra in consultation with specialist groups.</p>	<p>Realistic estimates of the likely costs of outbreaks of known endemic and exotic infectious diseases. Models that can be applied to estimate the likely costs of new or emerging diseases. Defra-led policy group containing industry representation, including expert veterinary scientists and epidemiologists.</p>	<p>Establish Defra-led group to review current arrangements, continue analysis of infectious disease outbreaks. Ensure this action point is developed in close association with Action 2a.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>Action 2c: Assess Government and industry contingency planning arrangements for notifiable diseases, taking account of European and international comparators.</p>	<p>Defra</p>	<p>Currently handled by Defra in consultation with specialist groups.</p>	<p>Current and relevant contingency plans for notifiable diseases. Defra-led group containing industry-wide representation, including expert veterinary scientists and epidemiologists, to regularly review contingency planning for notifiable diseases and be responsive to changing risks and industry needs nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Establish Defra-led group to assess current planning and contingency arrangements. Ensure this action point is developed in close association with Action 2a.</p>
<p>Action 2d: Ensure a high level of vigilance for new and emerging threats to horse health and welfare in order to implement proactive or remedial action to reduce or negate such threats.</p>	<p>Defra</p>	<p>Surveillance for exotic disease is co-ordinated via Defra and the regulatory framework for notifiable diseases. Field vigilance for endemic and exotic disease is provided primarily by veterinary surgeons in equine or mixed practice.</p>	<p>Improved infectious disease skills and capability within all sectors of the industry responsible for horse health care to maintain the highest levels of vigilance. Continued training of field veterinarians to increase infectious disease skill and capability, especially in the areas of recognition, epidemiology and control. Maintenance of specialist training and research programmes in equine infectious disease and epidemiology.</p>	<p>Establish Defra-led group with industry and specialist veterinary science and epidemiology representation. Review arrangements for infectious disease training in veterinary undergraduate and postgraduate education. Promote awareness of the importance of infectious disease capability to those providing veterinary undergraduate and postgraduate education.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
			Education of owners and keepers of horses about infectious diseases and new or emerging threats to the UK horse population.	Promote, via horse welfare and industry groups, horse owner awareness of new and emerging equine infectious diseases.
<p>Action 2e: Identify any other areas of horse health and welfare that either have surveillance and control measures in place or require them to be put in place.</p>	Defra	<p>Surveillance of general standards of health and welfare is provided via industry and sport groups and for horses included in the Riding Establishments Act. The Animal Welfare Act will extend surveillance to include horses kept in livery yards.</p> <p>There is no co-ordinated health surveillance of horses not included in the above groups.</p>	<p>Veterinary health care plans for all horses in Britain.</p> <p>Improved awareness of the importance of health and welfare surveillance for all horse owners and keepers.</p> <p>Improved knowledge and capability in health surveillance for all those involved with horse care.</p>	<p>BEVA and veterinary practices to encourage horse owners and keepers to adopt and adhere to health plans.</p> <p>The industry and media to increase owner/keeper awareness of their responsibilities and the importance of health plans.</p>
<p>Action 2f: Review the Infectious Diseases of Horses Order 1987 to ensure that it is up-to-date, reflects the contents of the STEED contingency plan and incorporates lessons learned from previous outbreaks of disease and provision for compensation for mandatory slaughter.</p>	Defra	Currently handled by Defra in consultation with specialist groups including BEVA.	Current, relevant and appropriate legislation that reflects the industry's needs and is responsive to changes in international horse health and emerging risks to the British horse population.	Defra-led review group containing industry representation, including expert veterinary scientists and epidemiologists.
			Framework to allow regular reviews of infectious disease legislation.	

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>AIM 3: Review horse welfare observation arrangements</p> <p>Champion: National Equine Welfare Council</p> <p>Timing: Within two years</p>				
<p>Action 3a: Review observation arrangements for horse welfare and consider any improvements, including standardisation of methods of welfare measurement.</p>	<p>NEWC and its members, Defra, BEVA.</p>	<p>No single industry arrangement.</p> <p>Some organisations work closely together. Others operate in isolation, only working with other organisations when required.</p> <p>NEWC statistics are the only industry wide measure of welfare cases but are not fully comprehensive.</p> <p>Regional groups meet regularly, but not consistent over whole country.</p> <p>Welfare organisations often have little or no support from local government when problems occur.</p> <p>No broad agreement on welfare measurement methods.</p>	<p>Regular regional meetings with opportunities for all organisations to participate, co-ordinated by one organisation.</p> <p>Establish a national standard for statistical reporting of problems.</p> <p>Requirement for more organisations to collect, collate and distribute information.</p> <p>Agreement on a nationally accepted measure of horse welfare.</p>	<p>Encourage organisations to work together from the top.</p> <p>Organisations to learn about the new opportunities and possible difficulties presented by the Animal Welfare Act.</p> <p>Establish co-operation with local government officers, via LACORS, particularly in the field of licensing of horse premises.</p> <p>ILPH to launch (2007) an Obliterating Obesity in Horses campaign.</p> <p>NEWC is continuing to develop the scope of its annual statistical return.</p> <p>NEWC pilot scheme to encourage non-members to attend Regional meetings.</p> <p>NEWC Sub-Committee to liaise industry-wide on Body Condition Score charts.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>Action 3b: Develop a system of horse welfare surveillance based on reports from groups and organisations with an interest in the welfare of horses.</p>	<p>NEWC and its members, Defra and Local Authorities.</p>	<p>Individuals report their concerns to several organisations at same time, wasting time and resources.</p> <p>Injurious weeds – ragwort quite well covered but no central source of reliable information.</p>	<p>Better educated general population with regard to what constitutes reportable incidents.</p> <p>Established route for reporting incidents with liaison between the various organisations involved.</p> <p>Secure funding to maintain up to date information.</p> <p>Central body to collate information, evaluate, disseminate and use to improve education and welfare.</p>	<p>Develop and publish advice on what constitutes a problem and how best to report it.</p> <p>Develop and publish advice on which organisation can best deal with specific problems.</p> <p>Establish mechanisms to use information to improve education and welfare.</p> <p>NEWC 'One stop' website for all available ragwort information to go live in 2007.</p> <p>www.theragworthub.co.uk</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>Aim 4: Review methods of horse identification</p> <p>Champion: British Horse Society</p> <p>Timing: Short Term</p>				
<p>Action 4a: Monitor the development of new legislation on the identification of equines.</p>	<p>Defra, RSPCA, NEWC, BEVA, BHS, BEF, BETA including identification system manufacturers and operators</p>	<p>Microchips/freeze brands etc used on voluntary basis, registered with manufacturer/operator.</p> <p>EU due to approve new legislation on identification</p>	<p>Permanent identification of all horses with registration on National Equine Database.</p>	<p>Assist Defra with consultation on EU legislation.</p> <p>Promote compliance once legislation enacted.</p> <p>Promote uptake for all horses.</p>
<p>Action 4b: Working with the insurance industry and others, promote the application of the agreed permanent physical identification for all horses.</p>	<p>BHS, BEVA, RSPCA</p>	<p>No requirement for universal permanent identification</p>	<p>Certainty of identification</p>	<p>Promotion of benefits of permanent identification.</p> <p>Debate with insurance industry regarding implications.</p>
<p>Action 4c: Promote the recording of information on all horses on the National Equine Database.</p>	<p>BHS, BEF, NED, DEFRA</p>	<p>Incomplete records on Database</p>	<p>Comprehensive information on Database</p>	<p>Work with NED to ensure all horses entered on Database</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>Aim 5: Review medicines, needs and availability</p> <p>Champion: British Equine Veterinary Association</p> <p>Timing: Report within two years</p>				
<p>Action 5a: Establish a working group to determine current and likely future medicine supply needs and recommend how best to meet them.</p>	<p>BEVA, NOAH, Defra AHW, VMD (as an observer)</p>	<p>No current central industry view or co-ordination.</p>	<p>Report and recommendations within two years.</p>	<p>Working Group and terms of reference to be established. Information gathered. Review and report.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>AIM 6: Review education, skills and training</p> <p>Champion: LANTRA</p> <p>Timing: Within three years.</p>				
<p>Action 6a: Audit education and skill levels and training provision, and identify significant gaps.</p>	<p>Lantra, BHS, BHEST, BEVA, FTA.</p>	<p>Stage 5 Sector Skills Agreement & Action Plan produced and linked to BHIC Action Plan as a result of industry consultation.</p> <p>National Occupational Standards available for the Horse Industry.</p> <p>Skills Passports for Competition grooms being developed in conjunction with the Occupational Competency Framework to allow recognition of skills & competencies of those entering, employed or volunteering in the horse industry.</p> <p>Audit of provision and qualifications currently available being undertaken through the SSA processes.</p> <p>Lobby of funding agencies to ensure funding meets the needs of employers.</p>	<p>Development of Skills Passports for the whole of the horse industry.</p> <p>Review of National Occupational Standards and horse qualifications to meet the requirements of new welfare legislation.</p> <p>Effective delivery mechanisms in place to ensure awareness of standards and access to training and education provision available for all that need it.</p> <p>Funding streams available to support the effective embedding of horse welfare training.</p>	<p>Further development of the Occupational Competency Framework and Skills Passports.</p> <p>Embed animal welfare units in the Land-based and Environmental Diploma.</p> <p>Employers and agencies to lobby for adequate funding resources via the SSA.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
		<p>Various codes, guidelines etc are promoted by their owners in a variety of different ways.</p> <p>Many charities have educational programmes but they are largely un-coordinated.</p> <p>RSPCA planning promotion to animal owners on their responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.</p> <p>ILPH running a series of "new owner" seminars.</p> <p>BHS and Pony Club tests and stage exams.</p>		
<p>Action 6b: Devise and introduce a resourced plan to meet any significant gaps identified in 6a.</p>	<p>Lantra, BHS, BHEST, BEVA, FTA</p>	<p>Complete picture unavailable.</p>	<p>Owners and keepers are aware of their responsibilities.</p> <p>Owners and keepers recognise and exercise those responsibilities, and have the knowledge and skills to do so.</p>	<p>Resourced Plan to be devised.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>AIM 7: Review research requirements</p> <p>Champion: The Horse Trust</p> <p>Timing: Within 2 years, subject to the availability of conclusions from relevant actions at Aim 2.</p>				
<p>Action 7a: Review veterinary research arrangements; identify opportunities to improve funding, the quality and rate of progress of research, the allocation, distribution and use of research funds, and communication and uptake of results.</p>	<p>The Horse Trust; HBLB; ILPH; PetPlan Charitable Trust; BEVA; BEF; BHS; relevant academic and research institutions.</p>	<p>Good, regular flow of funds from a small number of funding bodies. Possible scope for increasing the available funding.</p> <p>Good national research base.</p> <p>Good communication with and among interested parties in some cases.</p> <p>Possible scope for improvement.</p> <p>Exciting opportunities to further equine research.</p>	<p>Confirm current situation (sources of funds, allocation, use, results, communication).</p> <p>Explore future opportunities and means to exploit them.</p> <p>Identify improvements in funding and related arrangements.</p>	<p>Gather and analyse information.</p> <p>Discussion with interested parties; evaluation and conclusions.</p> <p>Follow up recommendations as appropriate.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Current Position	Desired Outcome	Action in Progress
<p>AIM 8: Review delivery and further development</p> <p>Champion: British Horse Industry Confederation</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing oversight and monitoring, with progress reports published annually.</p>				
<p>Action 8a: Ensure the Strategy is implemented, monitor its effectiveness and review its content to determine whether changes are needed and if so what form they should take.</p>	<p>BHIC/Champions</p>	<p>No central strategic review of health and welfare in the British horse sector.</p>	<p>Bring the Strategy into action successfully and effectively. Pave the way for continual improvement.</p>	<p>Establish a Steering Group. Establish and implement means of gathering the information that the Group requires. Evaluation and reporting, including identification of sub-strategies/actions. Dissemination of Reports. Take other actions as needed to follow-up Reports and achieve the desired outcomes.</p>

ANNEX B: RELATED INITIATIVES

Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales⁴

B1 This is intended to foster a robust and sustainable horse industry, increase its economic value and develop its contribution to national life. It recognises that high standards of horse health and welfare are fundamental to the industry's growth and are vital to all of its strategic aims. These are to:

- ¹ Bring the horse industry together and develop its national, regional and local impact. Increase participation in equestrianism and develop the social contribution of the horse industry.
- ¹ Boost the economic performance of horse businesses.
- ¹ Raise equestrian skills, training and standards.
- ¹ Increase access to off-road riding and carriage driving.
- ¹ Consider the environmental impact of the horse.
- ¹ Encourage sporting excellence.
- ¹ Improve the quality and breeding of horses and ponies.

B2 The Strategy is supplemented by an Action Plan⁵. The first action is to "achieve and maintain a satisfactorily high standard of animal welfare throughout the horse industry, through successful implementation of the Health and Welfare Strategy... and through industry support to dedicated horse welfare organisations." Many of the other actions in the Strategy will benefit horse health and welfare in England and Wales. Examples are to:

- ¹ Improve pasture management;
- ¹ Consider codes of practice for good land management and conservation grazing;
- ¹ Campaign to educate riders and motorists in on- and off-road safety;
- ¹ Establish lead bodies to assist in improving the quality of horses and ponies;
- ¹ Capitalise on the National Equine Database to improve breeding;
- ¹ Support native and indigenous breeds;
- ¹ Raise standards of business performance; and
- ¹ Promote higher skills levels within the industry.

Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain⁶

B3 This Strategy sets out what Government wants to achieve over the next decade in terms of national animal health and welfare cross-species. It recognises the need to involve individual species groups in its delivery. The Equine Health and Welfare Strategy supports its implementation.

⁴ Prepared by the British Horse Industry Confederation with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Welsh Assembly Government, 2005. Available to download at www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses/pdfs/en-horse-industry-strategy.pdf

⁵ Available on the BHIC website at www.bhic.co.uk.

⁶ Prepared by Defra, the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government. 2004. Available to download at www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/strategy/ahws.pdf

Animal Welfare Act 2006 and Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006⁷

B4 These Acts consolidate and modernise animal welfare legislation. They introduce a statutory 'duty of care'. They require owners and keepers to take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of animals in their care, to the extent required by good practice. They enable preventive action to be taken before suffering occurs, and strengthen penalties and enforcement measures so as to deter persistent offenders. They introduce a power to make secondary legislation and statutory codes of practice to promote the welfare of non-farmed animals. Measures in preparation which are relevant to this Strategy address:

- ¹ livery yard licensing and inspection, including clarifying the responsibilities of the yard owner and the horse owner;
- ¹ riding schools licensing;
- ¹ code of practice on tethering of horses;
- ¹ animal sanctuary registration, including rehabilitation and re-homing arrangements; and
- ¹ performing animals – approval of trainers and inspection.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005 on the Protection of Animals during Transport and Related Operations⁸

B5 This Regulation replaces existing EU legislation on animal transport. It improves welfare standards for long journeys and tightens enforcement arrangements. It includes some requirements that apply exclusively to horses. By 2011 the European Commission should submit a report on its impact, and this may be accompanied by further proposals.

National Equine Database (NED)⁸

B6 NED provides for the first time a means of bringing together information on the majority of horses across Britain. It has been designed to hold horse passport data as well as information on breeding, competition and performance. NED is already being used to underpin efforts to manage disease outbreaks and inform ongoing surveillance work. Over time, NED will help identify good and poor breeding stock, reducing the number of unsuitable animals currently being used for breeding. It also has the potential to eliminate British bred horses from being mis-sold, for example as being younger than they actually are. This, together with performance and breeding data, will help ensure that horses bought are fit for purpose. In addition, NED could be used to identify all horses owned or kept by people being investigated or prosecuted for neglect or abuse. It could also be used to check whether anyone banned from owning or keeping horses did not become a registered owner or keeper during the course of the ban. It will also provide a facility for horse owners to enter microchip numbers and other identification data, which, along with owner information, could provide a powerful resource for tracking the owners of lost or stolen horses.

⁷ Animal Welfare Act 2006 www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts_2006/20060045.htm Animal Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/20060011.htm

⁸ Available to download at

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_003/l_00320050105en00010044.pdf

⁹ See www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tracing/horses/ned.htm.

ANNEX C: CONSULTEES

Abingdon and Witney College
Ada Cole Rescue Stables
Advantage West Midlands
Agricultural Development Advisory Service
Amateur Jockeys Association of GB
American Miniature Horse Club GB
American Quarter Horse Association of the UK
American Saddlebred Association of Great Britain
Anglo-European Studbook Ltd
Animal Health Trust
Appaloosa Horse Club UK Ltd
Arab Horse Society
Askham Bryan College
Association of British Insurers
Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations
Berkshire College of Agriculture
Bishop Burton College
Blue Cross
Box Systems
Brackenhurst School of Land-based Studies
Bransby Home of Rest for Horses
British Appaloosa Society
British Association for the Purebred Spanish Horse Ltd
British Bavarian Warmblood Association
British Breeding
British Connemara Pony Society
British Dressage
British Driving Society
British Equestrian Federation
British Equestrian Insurance Brokers
British Equestrian Trade Association
British Equestrian Vaulting
British Equine Veterinary Association
British Eventing
British Fallabella Studbook
British Hanoverian Horse Society
British Harness Racing Club
British Horse Driving Trials Association
British Horse Foundation/Database
British Horse Industry Confederation
British Horse Loggers
British Horse Society
British Horseball Association
British Horseracing Board
British Miniature Horse Society
British Morgan Horse Society
British Mule Society
British Palomino Society
British Percheron Horse Society
British Racing School
British Reining Horse Association
British Show Hack, Cob and Riding Horse Association
British Show Jumping Association
British Show Pony Society
British Skewbald & Piebald Association
British Spotted Pony Society
British Warmblood Society and British Sports Horse Registry
Brooke Hospital for Animals
Brooksby Melton College
Byways and Bridleways Trust
Cannington College
Capel Manor College
Caspian Breed Society
Caspian Horse Society
Chichester College
Cleveland Bay Horse Society
Clydesdale Horse Society
College Farm Equestrian Centre
College of West Anglia
Coloured Horse and Pony Society UK
Commoning Animals Protection Society
Council for National Parks
Country Land and Business Association
Countryside Agency
Countryside Alliance
Courses for Horses
Dales Pony Society
Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society
Dartmoor Pony Society
Department for Culture Media and Sport
Department for Transport, Road Safety Division 3
Derby College
Devon Horse & Pony Sanctuary
Disability Sport England
Doncaster Bloodstock Sales
Donkey Breed Society
Donkey Sanctuary

Duchy College
 East Durham and Houghall Community College
 East Midlands Development Agency
 East of England Development Agency
 Easton College
 Effem Equine Ltd
 Endurance GB
 Equestrian Support Services
 Equine Grass Sickness Fund
 Eriskay Pony Society
 Essex Horse & Pony Protection Society
 European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders Associations
 Exmoor Ponies In Conservation
 Exmoor Pony Society
 Farm Animal Genetic Resources
 Farmkey
 Farriery Training Service
 Federation of Bloodstock Agents
 Federation of Small Businesses
 Fell Pony Society
 Fjord Horse National Stud Book Association of GB
 Fjord Horse Registry of Scotland and Fjord Horse UK
 Forestry Commission
 Fortune Centre for Riding Therapy
 Friesian Horse Association of Great Britain and Ireland
 GO Network and GOSE
 Greatwood Caring for Retired Racehorses
 Gypsy Cob Society
 Hackney Horse Society
 Hadlow College
 Haflinger Society of Great Britain
 Hartpury College
 Highland Pony Society
 HM Customs and Excise
 Holme Lacey College
 The Horse Trust
 Home Office
 Horse Passport Agency Ltd
 Horse Passports Ltd
 Horse Pasture Management Project
 Horse Rescue Fund
 Horse World
 Horserace Betting Levy Board
 Horseracing Regulatory Authority
 Horseracing Sponsors Association
 Horses & Ponies Protection Association
 Horses and Courses LTD
 Humane Slaughter Association
 Hurlingham Polo Association
 Icelandic Horse Society of GB
 Imperial College London
 Industry Committee (Horseracing) Ltd.
 International League for the Protection of Horses
 International Miniature Horse and Pony Society
 Irish Draught Horse Society
 Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary
 Jenny Pitman Racing
 Jockeys Association of GB
 KBIS Horse Insurance
 Kingston Maurward College
 LANTRA Sector Skills Council
 Lincoln College
 Lipizzaner National Studbook Association of GB
 Lipizzaner Society of GB
 Lluest Horse & Pony Trust
 Local Government Association
 London Development Agency
 Lusitano Breed Society GB
 Master of Fox Hounds Association
 Merrist Wood Campus
 Mill House Animal Sanctuary
 Miniature Mediterranean Donkey Association of UK
 Moorcroft Racehorse Welfare Centre
 Moulton College
 Mounted Games Association
 Myerscough College
 National Association of Bridleways
 National Association of Farriers, Blacksmiths & Agricultural Engineers
 National Association of Local Councils
 National Equine Defence Society
 National Equine Forum
 National Equine Welfare Council
 National Farmers Union
 National Office of Animal Health
 National Pony Society
 National Tourist Agencies
 National Trainers Federation
 Natural Horse Group

New Forest Pony Breeding Society
 Newham Riding School and Association
 Northern Counties Horse Protection Society
 Northumberland College
 Northwest Development Agency
 Oaklands College
 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
 One NorthEast
 Open College of Equine Studies
 Otley College
 Oxford Brookes University
 Permanent Show Organisers Association
 Permit Trainers Association
 Pet-ID UK Ltd
 Petplan Equine
 Pleasure Horse Society
 Plumpton College
 Point to Point Owners and Riders Association
 Point to Point Secretaries Association
 Ponies Association UK
 Pony Club
 Queen Ethelburgas College
 Racecourse Association
 Racehorse Owners Association
 Racehorse Transporters Association
 Racing Economics
 Rare Breeds Survival Trust
 Reaseheath College
 Redwings Horse Sanctuary
 Retraining of Racehorses
 Riding for the Disabled Association
 Rodbaston College
 Rother Valley College
 Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
 Royal Society for the Protection of Animals
 Scottish Executive Environment & Rural Affairs
 Department
 Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to
 Animals
 Selle Francais
 Shetland Pony Stud Book Society
 Shire Horse Society
 Shuttleworth College
 Small Business Service
 Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad
 Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies (North)

Society of Master Saddlers
 South East England Development Agency
 South Essex Insurance Brokers
 South Hants Horse & Pony Protection Society
 South West Equine Protection
 South West of England Regional Development Agency
 Sparsholt College Hampshire
 Sport Coach UK
 Sport England
 Sport Horse Breeding of Great Britain
 Sport Pony Studbook Society
 Spotted Horse and Pony Society
 Spotted Pony Breed Society GB
 St Helens College
 Stable Lads Association
 Standard and Trotting Horse Assoc of GB and Ireland
 Stonar School
 Suffolk Horse Society
 Tattersalls Ltd
 Thanet College
 The Institute for Horticultural and Rural Studies
 The National Stud
 Thoroughbred Breeders' Association
 Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Centre
 Tourism South East
 Trailblazers
 Transport and General Workers Union
 Trakehner Breeders Fraternity
 UK Horseshoers Union
 UK Polocross Association
 UK Sport
 UK Trade and Investment
 Unicorn Trails
 United Saddlebred Association UK Ltd
 University of Bristol
 University of Central Lancashire
 University of Lincoln
 Veteran Horse Society
 Veterinary Medicines Directorate
 Visit Britain
 Walford & North Shropshire
 Weatherbys ID Passports
 Welsh Pony and Cob Society
 Wiltshire College, Lackham
 Worshipful Company of Farriers
 Worshipful Company of Loriners

Worshipful Company of Saddlers
Yale College

Zippo's Circus

Approximately 140 individuals were also consulted.

Notes



