

EQUINES

Animal Welfare (Equines) Code of Welfare 2013

A code of welfare issued under the Animal Welfare Act 1999

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National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
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Preface

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is the purpose of this code of welfare?

Efficient equine management requires both experience and the observation and practice of high standards of care. It is necessary that owners and persons in charge have the knowledge and ability to ensure the welfare of their animals. This code sets minimum standards that represent society's expectation of standards of care that are based on good practice and scientific knowledge. The code also includes recommendations for best practice to encourage standards of care over and above the minimum. Advice is given throughout this code which is designed to encourage owners, handlers and staff to strive for a high level of welfare and encourage those responsible for its implementation to adopt the best practice of husbandry, care and handling.

1.2 Who does this code apply to?

This code applies to all persons responsible for the welfare of equines. Under the Act, the "owner" of an animal and the "person in charge" are responsible for meeting the legal obligations for animal welfare. For the purposes of this code, the term 'equine' will apply equally to horses, ponies, donkeys and crossbreds of these unless specifically stated otherwise. This code does not apply to zebras.

The owner may place an equine in the care of others for purposes such as feeding and management, rearing, training, transport or slaughter. Responsibility for meeting minimum standards during the particular task lies with the person responsible for carrying out the task. In practice, the identification of the person in charge is determined by the minimum standard in question.

1.3 What animals does this code apply to?

This code applies to all horses, ponies, donkeys and crossbreds of these that are held for any purpose in New Zealand including those kept as companions (pets), those kept for breeding, for sport, entertainment or as working animals. This code also applies to unbroken and undomesticated horses contained for management purposes. Examples of equines used for work, sport or entertainment include those used in competitive sport and racing, those used for movies or stunt work, those kept for farm work, police work, profit (commercial pleasure riding) and equines used to draw equipment such as machinery or transport vehicles.

1.4 What happens if I do not follow the minimum standards in this code?

Failure to meet a minimum standard in this code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the Animal Welfare Act. A person who is charged with an offence against the Animal Welfare Act can defend him or herself by showing that he or she has equalled or exceeded the minimum standards in this code. Suggested indicators for the minimum standards do not have a legal effect but they can be used to determine whether minimum standards are being met.

The recommendations for best practice in this code have no legal effect and are included to encourage higher standards of animal welfare.

1.5 How does this code relate to other codes of welfare?

Codes of welfare have been developed, or are being developed, for individual species of animals, painful husbandry procedures, animals used in entertainment (circuses and rodeos), commercial slaughter, and the transport of animals. Other codes of welfare should be consulted where appropriate (see Appendix IV "Codes of Welfare", to this code and the Ministry for Primary Industries website at: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare).

2. Stockmanship and Animal Handling

2.1 Stockmanship

Introduction

Owners and persons in charge are required to ensure that they have the skills and personal qualities necessary to be both effective and safe when handling equines. It is necessary that personnel working with equines possess a knowledge of their needs and behaviours, an understanding of their husbandry, an ability to observe them and skill in the practical aspects of equine handling and care. It is important that all persons involved in husbandry procedures such as handling, shoeing, treating, educating, conditioning, breeding, training, riding or driving equines are able to prove competence relevant to the activity being carried out, or be under the supervision of a competent person.

It is essential that personnel responsible for equines also have a good knowledge of their normal appearance and behaviour and are able to recognise early signs of distress or ill-health so that prompt remedial action can be taken or expert advice sought. A good knowledge of basic equine first aid and access to a veterinary surgeon is essential for anyone caring for equines.

Minimum Standard No. 1 – Stockmanship

Equines must be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel, who, collectively, possess the ability, knowledge and competence necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the animals in accordance with this code.

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 1 – Stockmanship

- Equine health and welfare is in accordance with the minimum standards listed in this code
- Training/competence in the care of equines can be demonstrated and persons in charge are aware how their actions may affect the welfare of the animals
- Job descriptions or other documentation of expectations of personnel duties include reference to equine health and welfare
- Evidence of training/competence in the care and maintenance of equines and knowledge of how the actions of persons in charge may affect the animals' welfare can be demonstrated
- Equines are well habituated to human contact and do not show abnormal fear of humans

Recommended Best Practice

(a) Training and handling procedures should be adapted and modified to suit the individual equine.

General Information

Good stockmanship, appropriate care and timely intervention can lead to positive outcomes for animal behaviour and for health and welfare. There are some differences in the types of handling and care required to maintain the welfare of donkeys, mules and horses. Further information on the care of different equines can be obtained by contacting specific equine industry groups.

2.2 Animal Handling

Introduction

Equines naturally exist as prey animals and so are likely to flee in response to situations or objects that they are unsure of. The risk of injury to both handlers and equines is reduced when good handling skills are used and the equine is held in appropriate facilities. A knowledge of appropriate handling and management skills can lead to positive welfare outcomes for the equine.

Young equines (under 2 years old), benefit from being introduced to basic training and positive handling techniques that will instil confidence in the equine and positively influence their relationship with their handlers. Equines pushed beyond their level of capability at a young age are more likely to sustain injuries or develop undesirable behavioural traits that can continue to be present in the adult equine. A competent person will ensure that equines are trained in a way that is not physically or psychologically damaging. For this reason, it is important that persons training equines are experienced, confident and competent in this role.

Reinforcing and rewarding positive behaviour is crucial when training equines to perform to their full potential. Abnormal or undesirable physiological and behavioural responses by an equine to handling, training and confinement can occur for a number of reasons which can range from negative prior experience, frustration, to wilfulness or pain. Responses may include aggression, biting and kicking. Behaviours such as pacing, weaving and crib biting are more commonly associated with boredom or obsessive compulsive behaviour and will not respond to disciplinary intervention.

The appropriate techniques, used to correct undesirable behaviours, will vary depending on the underlying reason for the behaviour. Undesirable behaviours are likely to become increasingly problematic if not corrected promptly and, should they occur, it is necessary to seek advice from a person experienced in equine behaviour.

Minimum Standard No. 2 – Animal Handling

- (a) Equines must be handled at all times in such a way as to minimise the risk of pain, injury or distress.**
- (b) Only the minimum amount of force required must be used when handling, riding and training equines.**
- (c) Equines must not be worked at such an intensity that is likely to cause exhaustion, heat stress and injury, or will negatively affect the equine's psychological health**
- (d) Electric prodders must not be used on horses.**
- (e) Equines must not be struck around the head or genitals with a whip, lead or any other object.**
- (f) The whip must only be used for safety, correction and encouragement and not used with excessive force.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 2 – Animal Handling

- Handlers' behaviour towards equines is patient
- Handlers are able to recognise the different behaviour patterns of equines and react appropriately

- Equines are well habituated to human contact and do not show abnormal fear of humans
- Handlers appreciate how individual equines may react to and interact with conspecifics, other animals, humans, strange noises, sights and smells
- Handlers are trained in the use of equipment used to move and restrain equines
- Equines are introduced to basic training and are backed, or started in harness, at a suitable age
- Equines are not asked to accept practices and perform procedures prior to the age where they are able to physically and psychologically cope with what is being asked of them
- Equines are trained by competent persons using positive reinforcement techniques
- The mildest form of discipline that will achieve the required behavioural change is used
- Equines do not sustain physical injuries as a result of disciplinary techniques

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Appropriate advice (e.g. from equine behaviourist or other person knowledgeable in equine behaviour) should be sought at the first signs of unwanted behaviour occurring. This may prevent more persistent behavioural problems developing which are likely to be more difficult to cure.
- (b) Persons riding equines should not be heavier than is appropriate for the equine in question taking into account the size of the equine, its breed, physiological status and workload that it is being asked to perform.
- (c) The whip should only be used as an aid to back up the leg of the rider, used only when necessary and not used with excessive force.
- (d) The whip should not be used to coerce performance or used on a fatigued equine.

General Information

The age that equines begin their training can vary considerably depending on their breed and the discipline for which they are to be used. The weight of rider and amount of work they are asked to perform needs to be commensurate with their size and development. Thoroughbred racehorses, as early as 15 months of age, often have small, light riders on their backs in order to race as 2 or 3 year olds. Equines used in other disciplines often begin their training at a later age, and may be three or four before they are first backed and ridden.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) lists a number of training qualifications for those wishing to gain experience in a broad range of areas relating to equine health and management. In addition, a number of universities in New Zealand run a variety of courses in the area of equine studies. Further information on these qualifications and accredited training providers is available through the NZQA website: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/index.html>

Some equine facilities, such as riding schools, offer advice and training days to enable those who are responsible for equines to learn how to handle or improve their handling skills. Equine related organisations or clubs can also offer advice on equine husbandry and care.

2.3 Restraint and Containment

Introduction

The construction of suitable fencing is vital for equines to ensure that they do not either become entangled in the fencing material, or escape and become injured roaming away from the property. The suitability of fencing varies according to the breed, sex and disposition of the equines, as well as stocking density and paddock size. It is important that fences are readily visible to equines and are well maintained with no sharp protrusions from the fence on the inwards side.

Tethering is sometimes used to contain equines within a specified area without the necessity to erect boundary fences. Tethering has the potential to cause injury and is recommended to be used only when other forms of grazing or containment are unavailable and for short time periods only. Only placid equines, and those adequately trained to accept the practice, can be tethered in relative safety and, even then, only tethered under close supervision. Tethered equines have some other particular requirements that must be met in order to ensure that their needs are met. In addition, the food, water and shelter requirements described in Section 3 Food and Water and Section 5.1 Shelter, apply to all equines, including tethered equines.

It is important that any restraint applied to the equine to assist normal management or treatment is the most mild and effective method available and is applied only for the minimum period required.

Minimum Standard No. 3 – Restraint and Containment

- (a) Restraining and containing equines must be performed in such a way as to minimise the possibility of injury or harm.**
- (b) Fences must be designed, constructed and maintained to minimise risk of injury to equines.**
- (c) When restraining equines, the mildest effective method available must be used and applied only for the minimum period required.**
- (d) Equines that are restrained by tethering must be:**
 - (i) placid and trained to the conditions;**
 - (ii) provided with constant access to palatable water, sufficient food and effective shelter;**
 - (iii) able to walk and move around without undue hindrance and;**
 - (iv) kept under general surveillance.**
- (e) Equines must not be tethered for longer than 15 hours without being released for exercise.**
- (f) Equines under two years of age, or those that are sick, pregnant, nursing or physiologically compromised in any other way must not be tethered.**
- (g) The tether must not be sited in a position that allows the equine to reach any public access way.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 3 – Restraint and Containment

- Wire and electric fencing is kept at a sufficient tension so horses cannot become entangled in it
- Horses are not introduced into a new paddock in the dark

- The height, strength and quality of fences and gates being used to contain equines are sufficient to prevent them escaping and are clearly visible
- Gateways are wide enough to allow for the easy and safe passage of equines
- Non-toxic preparations are used if painting or treating wooden fencing rails
- Electric fencing used for fencing equines is highly visible
- Equines that are tethered are calm, have been trained to accept tethering, and to accept human approach
- Equines that have been tethered during the day are placed in a paddock or loose box overnight
- Food and water requirements are met according to food and water minimum standards and indicators (see Section 3 Food and Water)
- Sites that are to be used for tethering equines are examined beforehand for potentially harmful objects that a horse could eat such as toxic plants or litter, and for objects or vegetation that might snag on the tether or headcollar and prevent the horse's movement
- Tethered equines have the ability to walk and move around the constraints of the tethered range

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Wire with the potential to cause serious injury, such as high-tensile steel or barbed wire should be avoided when constructing fences for equines.
- (b) When using electric fencing, equines should be supervised until they have become accustomed to the boundaries of the new paddocks.
- (c) Measures should be taken to ensure that boundaries fences are visible to equines.
- (d) Equines should not be tethered.
- (e) If tethering equines, wide ropes made of hemp or other soft material should be used instead of nylon rope, which can cause serious burns if the equine becomes entangled.
- (f) Hobbles should not be used to restrain unattended equines.

General Information

Post-and-rail type fences painted with non-toxic preparations provide an ideal visual barrier for premises designed mainly for horses, although this type of fencing can be costly. A popular alternative to post-and-rail fencing, which also provides a good visual barrier, is a single top rail attached to a conventional post-and-wire fence. Post-and-rail type fences are less suitable for donkeys as they can chew through them.

Equines are social animals and need to be provided with one or more companions. While interaction with humans may prove a substitute for some of their social and behavioural needs, the welfare of equines that are tethered on their own is compromised. Providing an equine with the company of other equines is preferable, however, equines can also live with companions such as sheep, cows or goats. If it not possible to keep an equine in a herd with social companions, providing equines with the opportunity to see or hear other equines (or other animals) can provide welfare benefits. When tethering equines in close proximity to other tethered equines, they need to be sufficient distance away from each other so that the tethers cannot become entangled.

When tethering equines, the longer the tether, the less chance that it will become dangerously twisted and cause injury. It is recommended that the tether is 9m or greater in length, and is fixed as low as possible to the anchor post and include a swivelling device on the tether. It is important that the area chosen to tether the equine is free of obstructions that may entangle the tether. Nylon rope can cause severe burns and serious injury if an equine does become entangled while tethered. Wide hemp ropes are less harsh and have lower potential to injure the equine.

Hobbles can be used to limit the locomotion of an equine by inhibiting the action of one or more legs and are used in situations where effective restraint is required including medical treatment or surgery, to prevent persistent jumpers escaping from paddocks, to restrain mares being served at stud or to shoe difficult equines. A number of types of hobbles are available and they are generally made of rope, leather or synthetic materials. Equines need to be gradually introduced to the hobbles using recognised techniques until they become accustomed to the new equipment.

2.4 Saddlery and Equipment

Introduction

The tack and equipment used with equines can have a large influence on their health and welfare. It is important that all tack used to handle, ride or drive equines is of a suitable size and is correctly fitted to reduce rubbing or slipping and minimise discomfort. For reasons of comfort, hygiene and safety it is necessary that all leather and synthetic equipment is maintained in a clean, supple condition, free from cracks and other features likely to cause chaffing, burns and abrasions.

As tack is used as an aid to guide or control an equine and influence its movement and behaviour, the incorrect use and handling of any piece of equipment has the potential to cause pain and distress. For this reason, it is important that handlers and riders are aware of the potential effects that incorrect and harsh use of equipment can have on the health and welfare of an equine. It is important that techniques, methods and equipment that have a mild effect on equines are considered and their use implemented in place of severe equipment. However, how the equipment is used by the handler or rider will largely determine the effect that any piece of equipment has on an equine. Ropes that are used for educating and restraining equines can cause significant injury to both horse and handler if they are of the wrong type.

Halters or headcollars are sometimes left on equines when turning them out into paddocks when the equine has a history of being difficult to catch. However, this practice can be potentially hazardous as the headcollar may catch on items in the paddock and potentially cause injury. If halters or headcollars are left on the equine when turning them out, it is necessary to check the equine frequently to ensure that the headcollar is free of damage and is not chaffing or causing injury. Young equines outgrow their halters rapidly, which can result in pressure injury if they are not adjusted and changed as necessary.

Minimum Standard No. 4 – Saddlery and Equipment

- (a) Equipment used on equines must be maintained in good condition and be fitted so as not to cause chafing or injury.**
- (b) Equipment must not be used in a way that causes pain, injury or distress to the equine.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 4 – Saddlery and Equipment

- Equipment is regularly cleaned and inspected to ensure that leather/synthetic fibre etc is supple and all parts of the equipment are in good order
- Bits are clean and have no rough or sharp edges from dirt and grass build up
- Equipment does not pinch, rub or cut equines on which it is used
- Every effort is made to ensure that equipment is fitted correctly for the individual horse on which it is being used
- Equipment that is placed next to the horse's skin is kept clean, soft and free from debris
- Equipment that is restrictive for the horse is used by knowledgeable and competent persons only
- Equipment that is severe and will cause the equine pain or distress is not used

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Ropes used for educating and restraining equines should be pliable, at least 15 mm thick and not made of nylon.
- (b) Ropes should not be attached directly to an equine's legs.
- (c) Where leg restraint is essential, felt-lined leather straps should be used for this purpose.
- (d) Covers should be removed from the equine on a weekly basis and aired; and loose hair and caked-on dirt removed from the cover.
- (e) Young and inexperienced equines should be handled gently with equipment that exerts a mild effect only.
- (f) Equines should be monitored when being brought back into work to ensure that the equipment is not rubbing while the skin hardens with consistent use of the equipment.
- (g) Halters or headcollars should preferably not be left on equines when they are turned out into the paddock as the halter may become caught and cause injury to the equine.

General Information

If halters or headcollars are left on when turning equines out into a paddock, they need to be checked frequently to ensure that they not become caught up or the halter is not chaffing or restricting head or jaw movement.

The use of restrictive equipment needs to be reduced to a minimum to maintain an equine's welfare. Often, the use of positive enforcement behavioural techniques can bring changes in behaviour, creating the same results as restrictive methods, without reducing the equine's welfare. There is now a wealth of knowledge in relation to using positive methods to train equines and it is important that these positive methods are used where possible or advice sought on training techniques if necessary.

3. Food and Water

Introduction

When considering the amount and type of food, nutrients and water that any equine requires, a number of factors need to be taken into account including physiological state, size, management system, climate and the amount of work an equine is required to perform. All equines need a daily diet in adequate quantities and containing sufficient nutrients to meet their requirements to maintain good health and welfare.

In their natural state, equines will eat a variety of forages (mainly grasses) to meet their nutritional needs. Due to the small size of their stomach, the equine will normally consume its daily intake over 16-20 hours. When the energy requirements are low (such as for equines in light work, dry broodmares and non-working equines) fresh forage, of an adequate amount, can provide most of the equine's needs. Access to lush high energy pasture needs to be monitored closely to avoid laminitis and obesity.

When an equine is in work its feed demands will increase and, due to the amount of time that medium or low energy forage takes to digest, the equine may not be able to physically eat enough to sustain its increased needs on a daily basis. Therefore, equines in moderate-to-heavy work generally need supplementary feeding in the form of grains or concentrates. Some forage must be consumed however, to aid digestion and keep the equine healthy. To avoid potentially serious health problems, it is important that if changes are made to the type and quantity of feed that an individual equine receives, that the changes are made gradually over a period of several days.

When considering the supplementary feeding of equines, it is important that equines are fed the correct supplementary feed for their type and the work that they are performing. Supplementary feeding of equines is a complex topic and if in doubt, specialist advice should be sought prior to planning a supplementary feeding schedule for an equine in work.

The provision of an adequate supply of water is critical for maintaining equine health and welfare. Water needs for different equines vary widely, and there is seasonal variation as well. If water needs are not met, both animal health and welfare will deteriorate.

Minimum Standard No. 5 – Food and Water

- (a) Equines must receive appropriate daily quantities of food and nutrients to enable each equine to:**
 - (i) maintain good health;**
 - (ii) meet its physiological demands; and**
 - (iii) prevent metabolic and nutritional disorders.**
- (b) If any equine shows signs of emaciation or if the body condition score of any equine falls below 2 (on a scale of 0-5) urgent remedial action must be taken to improve condition of the animal.**
- (c) If any equine shows signs of being very fat or if the body condition score of any equine reaches 5 (on a scale of 0-5) urgent remedial action must be taken to decrease body weight.**
- (d) All equines must have access daily to a reliable supply of drinking water that is palatable, sufficient for their needs and not harmful to their health.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 6 – Food

- The diet is balanced nutritionally including the provision of a sufficient quantity of forages
- Equine body condition score is maintained between 2 and 4
- Paddock size, pasture cover and/or feeding frequency and type and amount of supplementary feed is appropriate to the age, physiological state, level of work and breed of the equine
- Steps are taken to reduce competition for feed between individuals such as distributing feed in a number of separate piles or feeding individual horses in separate areas
- Horses are moved to a smaller grazing area, or one providing feed of lower nutritional value, when they become overweight
- Changes to the diet are made gradually over a number of days
- Equines are provided with sufficient water to maintain their health
- Water quality is monitored and does not contain any contaminants at a level harmful to the health of equines
- Water reticulation systems provide a sufficient amount of water to meet the daily needs of the equines, are monitored and maintained efficiently, and any delivery failure rectified immediately

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) All equines, in particular those in ill-health, late pregnancy or early lactation, should not be deprived of food or water for longer than 12 hours.
- (b) Any changes to an equine's diet should be introduced gradually over a period of several days and equines monitored closely during this period.
- (c) When feeding baled forage, twine and wrap should be removed to prevent the risk of illness or death from ingestion and to avoid injury from entanglement.
- (d) Equines receiving supplementary concentrated foodstuffs should have this fed to them in smaller feeds spread evenly throughout the day, rather than in one large feed.
- (e) When working equines are given a "rest" day (i.e. a day without any work), the concentrate or grain part of the ration should be reduced to decrease the risk of metabolic problems.
- (f) Pregnant mares should be fed during pregnancy and lactation to meet their increased energy demands.
- (g) Stallions and breeding mares should be fed at a level commensurate with their increased energy demands associated with breeding.
- (h) Paddocks should be maintained free of plants which are poisonous to equines.
- (i) Items of machinery, equipment or rubbish (especially wire) likely to cause injury should be removed from paddocks used to accommodate equines.
- (j) Watering facilities should be designed to reduce fouling and wastage.
- (k) Troughs should be cleaned often to ensure that water is available and uncontaminated.

General Information

Pasture

Most equine pastures contain a large proportion of weeds and "roughs" where equines are the only grazers due to their grazing habits. Equines can be grazed in conjunction with cattle or sheep which will clean up the "roughs" while also reducing the worm contamination on pasture. Where no cattle or other grazers are available, it is important to remove the dung from the paddock as equines will not eat pasture that is contaminated with equine dung.

Donkeys, mules and smaller ponies have a tendency generally require more roughage and low protein food than larger ponies and horses. For this reason, grain and rich feeds such as lucerne or haylage usually need to be fed only if these equines are in hard work.

Sufficient safe forage needs to be provided for equines as where this is not provided, equines may eat poisonous plants as an alternative, which can result in illness and in serious cases, may be fatal.

In wet weather, higher stocking rates may cause excessive pugging of soil. On small blocks, where the opportunity to spell paddocks and prevent pugging is limited, stocking rate should be reduced and supplementary feeding may be required.

Water and shade needs increase when equines are grazing dry summer pastures and during droughts.

4. Behaviour

Introduction

In New Zealand, equines are kept under a variety of conditions, from extensive grazing to intensive housing in yards, pens and stables. Equines are highly social and hierarchical in nature and thrive best in herds in which they can establish hierarchies. Whenever animals are introduced into a herd, they will be challenged as newcomers and will have to establish their place in the group. These challenges can be aggressive and lead to injury and distress. Such behaviour needs to be managed and this is particularly important when introducing young equines into a herd for the first time. The risk of injury increases where equines are overcrowded, and competition for food, water and space may lead to fighting. Subordinate animals need to have sufficient space to escape bullying by dominant animals.

Signs of injury, aggression or stress include continual harassment, hair loss, fighting, excessive fence pacing and isolation. A large paddock can be used to minimise confrontation and, where possible, paddocks with broken contours and natural cover will assist in reducing stress. Colts, stallions, mares close to foaling and sick animals generally require segregation from other groups to reduce the risk of injury and/or transfer of disease.

When mixing equines, consideration needs to be given to differences in the individuals such as the temperament of the animals to be mixed, physiological status of the equines and differences in breed, age and body size as well as the availability of food and water, ground conditions and size of the paddock.

Exercise is extremely important for an equine's physical and mental health, particularly where horses are stabled for many hours of the day. Insufficient exercise can lead to behavioural problems and the development of stereotypical behaviours. Equines are usually exercised by being ridden or turned loose into a paddock to exercise themselves, but they can also be exercised in other ways such as lunging them or walking equines in hand or on a walker.

Minimum Standard No. 6 – Behaviour

- (a) Where equines are mixed, they must be managed to minimise the effects of aggression and injury.**
- (b) Equines must receive daily exercise sufficient to maintain their health and well-being.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 5 – Behaviour

- Stallions are kept in a separate paddock if there is a risk that they could cause injury to other individuals in a herd
- Personnel know the temperament and the social structure of the equines under their care and are aware which horses can be mixed
- Equines are provided with sufficient space to enable subordinate horses to move away from those individuals exhibiting threatening behaviour
- When first mixing horses, management practices are used that aim to reduce the chances of competition and aggression between individuals occurring (e.g. spreading additional

feed (hay) over a large surface area, feeding individuals in separate areas, providing additional space etc)

- Equines are observed closely when unfamiliar equines are first placed together, and then daily until settled, to monitor for signs of injury or continued aggression
- Equines subjected to persistent bullying are removed from the herd
- The level of exercise is appropriate for the age and level of fitness of the equine

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) The introduction of new animals to the herd should not occur more frequently than necessary because of the social distress involved while the introduced and resident equines re-establish a hierarchy.
- (b) If any equines are subjected to persistent bullying, they should be removed from the paddock, checked for illness and injury and monitored closely thereafter to ensure that confrontation is minimised.
- (c) Equines should be kept in herds, or at least with one other social companion. If this is not possible, equines should be kept where they can see or hear other equines (or other animals).

General Information

Horses, donkeys and mules are all social animals and need to be provided with companions to maintain their welfare. While interaction with humans may provide a substitute for some of their social and behavioural needs, the provision of social companions of their own species is preferable. Equines can, however, live with companions such as sheep, cattle or goats. If it is not possible to keep an equine in a herd with others, providing them with the opportunity to see or hear other equines (or other animals) can provide some welfare benefits.

Equines are not always kept as riding or working animals. They can be kept for a number of other reasons including as pets, as companions for other equines, or jack donkeys may be kept to reduce the amount of aggression and injury between bulls. In cases such as these, even though the equine is not being worked, it still needs to be provided with a standard of care that will maintain its health. Regular attention needs to be paid to the equine's physical health, its hooves and teeth and grazing monitored to ensure that the equine does not become either under or overweight.

5. Shelter and Housing Facilities

5.1 Shelter

Introduction

Equines kept extensively may be exposed to the effects of weather; heat, cold, rain, snow and wind. In areas lacking in natural shelter belts and trees, equines benefit from constructed artificial shelters in order to help keep warm or cool, or covers in colder weather.

Equines kept in yards do not have the same freedom of movement as those in open paddocks. They are more susceptible to the chilling effect of cold winds and rain, and heat stress from direct summer sun and will require additional shelter to ensure their health and welfare. Lack of adequate shelter and/or feeding can result in stress, discomfort, loss of body condition and increased susceptibility to disease.

Minimum Standard No. 7 – Shelter

- (a) **All equines must have access to shelter to reduce the risk to their health and welfare caused by exposure to cold.**
- (b) **Equines must be provided with the means to minimise the effects of heat stress.**
- (c) **Covers must be used to protect equines from climatic extremes where other forms of shelter are not sufficient to maintain the equine's health and welfare.**
- (d) **Where equines develop health problems associated with exposure to adverse weather conditions, priority must be given to remedial action that will minimise the consequences of such exposure.**
- (e) **Additional measures must be taken to enable clipped equines to keep warm.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 7 – Shelter

- Where necessary, horses are covered with rugs to enable them to effectively thermoregulate
- Clipped equines are stabled or are provided with additional rugs, shelter and/or feed appropriate for the weather conditions

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Equines that are housed in yards should be given additional artificial shelter in the form of covers or rugs.
- (b) Equines should not be clipped if the forecast is for cold wet weather unless they are stabled or provided with sufficient covers, additional roughage and/or suitable shelter to minimise the effects of exposure.
- (c) The rugs or covers of equines should be inspected daily to ensure that they fit the equine correctly and have no loose or broken straps.

General Information

Horses and ponies of different breeds will have differing requirements for shelter. In general, semi-feral horses and ponies tend to be hardier than domestic equines and are more able to withstand climatic extremes. Some breeds of domestic equine, such as the thoroughbred and the Arabian, are recognised as being 'thin skinned' and require additional attention to ensure that their shelter requirements are met. Susceptible equines (i.e. young, old, sick, injured or non-acclimatised animals) will require additional shelter to maintain their health and welfare. The coat of donkeys is less waterproof than that of horses and so donkeys may be more susceptible to exposure to climatic extremes than horses. As a result, all donkeys require access to shelter.

A form of artificial shelter for an equine is a cover or rug. Provision of a waterproof, well insulated cover is necessary for non-acclimatised, clipped, sick, injured, and old equines for warmth during cold weather. The type of covers used on equines should be varied to meet the environmental conditions to which they are exposed. Equines will require different rugs for summer and winter. If worn during inclement weather, covers must be maintained in a waterproof condition. Unclipped horses and ponies, turned out in paddocks with reasonable shelter, generally adapt well to their environment and when fully acclimatised, may not require covering.

5.2 Facilities

Introduction

Facilities used for equines can consist of temporary housing such as stalls and yards but also include areas such as feed storage areas and tack rooms. Temporary housing areas can be used where indoor accommodation is not available or where equines are being held outside for work purposes or to perform husbandry procedures such as shoeing, worming or grooming. These temporary housing facilities usually provide some shelter from the elements. It is important that yards are situated in well-drained areas and are soundly constructed of timber or metal piping.

Minimum Standard No. 8 – Facilities

- (a) All facilities must be designed, constructed, maintained and operated in a manner that minimises the likelihood of distress or injury to the animals.**
- (b) All electrical fittings and attachments to main voltage must be out of reach of equines, or protected from interference or damage by equines.**
- (c) Faeces and urine must not be permitted to accumulate to such an extent that they pose a threat to the health and welfare of the equine.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 8 – Facilities

- Handlers are trained and familiar with the operation of facilities and understand how incorrect operation may affect the equines in their care
- Floor surfaces are not slippery
- Potential hazards such as windows, ventilators, light bulbs, power cables and associated fittings are covered or placed out of reach of equines
- The storage of all grain based feeds, health remedies, toxic materials and associated

equipment is secure and is inaccessible to equines

- Sharp objects, protrusions, edges, gaps, including damaged flooring likely to cause injury have been removed, repaired or covered
- All stable and barn doorways are wide enough for an equine to move through easily
- Personnel take action to rectify any problems, or potential problems, that are apparent upon inspection of equines

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Toxic paint and timber preservatives should not be used on surfaces or floors that are accessible to equines.
- (b) Yards and pens used to contain equines for unsupervised periods should not be constructed with electrified tape or electrified wire as the only barrier.

General Information

Some equines in New Zealand may be kept in a semi-feral state, and in this case, special handling facilities may be necessary to enable routine management such as worming and hoof trimming to be performed. When constructing facilities such as these, the design should take into account the need to keep stress in these equines to a minimum to reduce danger and avoid injury for both equine and handler.

It is not uncommon for horses, as a prey and herd animal, to flee as a herd when one horse is panicked. When a large number of horses are being kept within the vicinity of each other, particularly in a novel environment (e.g. at multiple day competitive events) and where horses are being contained in temporarily built yards and pens, this fleeing behaviour can result in horses being injured, sometimes fatally. The use of sturdy materials to construct temporary yards, rather than materials such as electric fencing, lessens the chance of horses initiating panic or joining the fleeing herd, decreasing chances of injury to horses and persons in the area.

5.3 Housing

Introduction

Loose boxes are commonly used for the overnight or long-term individual accommodation of equines. A loose box will provide each equine with sufficient room to lie down, rise and turn around in comfort. Housing equines in loose boxes that are too small may increase the risk of injury to equine and handler, particularly with young and untrained animals, and so the loose box needs to provide sufficient space. If equines are to be housed in loose boxes for an extended period of time, the provision of bedding is necessary to give them the opportunity to rest.

Some premises in New Zealand provide covered stalls for the temporary accommodation of individual equines. Stalls are usually quite small but are ideal for providing a sheltered standing area. Most stalls are used for temporary housing and are not ideal for ongoing or long-term use, due to their small size. They are not recommended to be used for periods longer than 12 hours at a time.

When planning the layout and construction of stables, loose boxes and stalls, priority is to be given to the safety and comfort of the equines, adequate drainage and ventilation, and the safety of handlers. It is important that all buildings be soundly constructed, with no exposed surfaces or projections likely to cause injury to equines. Non-slip floor surfaces (e.g. dirt, concrete, wood, rubber) designed to direct liquid effluent away from the animal accommodation will help reduce build up of effluent and

resulting injury, and regular checking and filling of holes which may develop in the floor will help to maintain an even surface. Bedding needs to be replaced or cleaned regularly. Fire is a threat in the stable environment but can be minimised by taking precautions to minimise the risk.

Minimum Standard No. 9 – Housing

- (a) When housed, equines must be confined in a manner which prevents them causing injury to themselves and to adjacent animals and have sufficient room to lie down, readily rise and turn round in comfort.**
- (b) Equines must be able to lie down and rest comfortably for a sufficient time each day to meet their behavioural needs.**
- (c) Equines must not be continuously tied in a stall for more than 15 hours , except under veterinary supervision.**
- (d) Ventilation must be sufficient to prevent a build-up of excessive heat, humidity and noxious gases.**
- (e) Immediate and appropriate action must be taken to reduce ammonia levels if they exceed 25ppm at equine level.**
- (f) Bedding must be of good quality, friable, and with minimal risk of toxic agent contamination.**
- (g) Equines housed in buildings must be monitored at a frequency that ensures their health and welfare.**
- (h) Each day, equines housed in buildings must be provided with natural or artificial light of appropriate intensity for a minimum of nine hours and an appropriate period of darkness.**
- (i) Floors must be constructed of a non-slip surface or material and must be designed to drain liquid effluent away.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 9 – Housing

- When the equine is standing with all four feet on the floor there is sufficient space above it to enable the full range of head and neck motion without touching the ceiling
- All stable and barn doorways are wide enough for an equine to move through easily
- Adequate lighting is provided to allow inspection of all equines
- Levels of ammonia are no more than 25ppm at any time
- The bedding provided is clean and dry and provides warmth and protection against abrasion
- Facilities housing a large number of equines intensively operate a roster system to ensure all horses have regular supervision by competent personnel
- When using a roster system, full documentation is maintained and is available to all personnel outlining any health problems, or potential health problems, that have been apparent upon inspection of equines
- Equine owners and people in charge arrange for competent personnel to supervise equines when travelling away
- When ambient temperatures are extreme, equines are monitored more frequently than

usual, animal behaviour is observed and corrective action taken if needed

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Alleyways in stables should be wide enough to allow equines to be turned around in comfort without risk of injury to other equines and people
- (b) The clear space above normal head position of an equine should exceed 1 metre.
- (c) A stall should provide sufficient space for an equine to be led in and turned around to reduce possible injury associated with moving equines backward into position. It is recommended that the minimum width and length of a stall should be 1.5 m and 2.1 m respectively.
- (d) Damp straw, hay and used bedding should not be stored in or near stables as it is a common cause of fires.
- (e) If being housed in stalls, equines should be cross-tied, with leads attached from the head collar to each side rail.
- (f) Water containers and feed bins should be constructed and sited in a manner that minimises the risk of injury to equines.
- (g) Appropriate fire prevention measures and an emergency plan should be devised and documented and personnel trained to implement it.
- (h) Smoking in stable areas should be prohibited due to the risk of fire.
- (i) Equines turned out in paddocks should be checked daily.

General Information

Contingency plans for potential fire, flood and restriction of supplies are essential in a large stabling environment. It is important that all staff working in establishments housing equines are aware of the procedures that are in place should an emergency occur. Alarm systems that can give immediate warning of a fire can be fitted for additional assurance and immediate indication of an emergency.

As a guide to the level of ammonia within houses, 10-15 ppm of ammonia in the air can be detected by smell and an ammonia level over 25 ppm will cause eye and nasal irritation in people

Cross ventilation can be provided by fitting windows or ventilators at a high level on opposite walls however, care should be taken to ensure that they are at an appropriate height to avoid directing draughts on to the animals.

Precautions need to be taken to prevent equines in stalls kicking and biting adjacent animals, or damaging themselves.

6. Husbandry Practices

6.1 Breeding and Foaling

Introduction

The majority of mares are sexually mature at two years of age and will begin to regularly come into season after this age. Mares are seasonally polyoestrous. As day length increases they will start cycling and come into oestrus every 21 days until day length decreases in autumn and cycling ceases. When a mare is in season, she is more willing to accept a stallion, and at this stage, a mare and stallion can be mated for breeding purposes.

Minimum Standard No. 10 – Breeding and Foaling

- (a) Owners or persons in charge of mating equines must ensure that they possess the appropriate experience and level of competency in the technique used so that the health and welfare of the equines is not compromised.**
- (b) Mares that are foaling, or are due to foal, must be provided with a suitable area in a safe, sheltered and quiet environment.**
- (c) Mares that are due to foal must be observed discretely and as frequently as required to ensure that they are not experiencing difficulties.**
- (d) If a mare is exhibiting any signs to indicate that she is experiencing difficulties at any point during or following foaling, expert assistance must be sought immediately.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 10 – Breeding and Foaling

- The person supervising a mare that is due to foal has a knowledge of indicators that the mare may be experiencing problems foaling
- Contact details for a veterinarian are accessible to all personnel
- Sufficient bedding, warmth, shelter, food and water are provided for a mare due to foal
- Persons in charge of breeding equines have received training in the relevant techniques (natural insemination, artificial insemination, or embryo transfer)

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) If foaling is to take place in a paddock, the area should be free from hazards such as ponds and ditches in which the foal can become injured or drown, and free from large livestock such as other equines or cattle, which are likely to be curious of the new foal and may accidentally injure it.
- (b) If foaling is to take place in a foaling box, the box should be thoroughly disinfected and well bedded down in a warm but well ventilated environment. Potential hazards such as hay nets or bucket holders should be removed before foaling.
- (c) Mares in late pregnancy should be observed at least twice daily for signs of impending foaling.

General Information

Precautions can be taken to reduce the chances of either mare or stallion becoming injured, acquiring or spreading infection during the breeding process.

Jenny donkeys mature later than mares and are not bred until 3 years of age.

Inexperienced mares or those who have experienced foaling difficulties previously are more likely to experience difficulties during foaling and care needs to be taken that these equines have experienced persons on hand to assist if required.

6.2 Rearing and Weaning

Introduction

Foals rely on the dam's milk to obtain all nutrients for the first few weeks of life. Colostrum is the first milk produced by the dam after foaling and contains nutrients and antibodies that are essential to protect the foal from disease. The newborn foal absorbs antibodies from colostrum, but begins to lose the ability about six hours after birth. It is important that foals receive sufficient colostrum as soon as possible after birth to ensure their health and welfare.

Weaning foals from their dam combines a number of factors with the potential to compromise animal welfare – the physical separation of dam and foal, changes to the foal's feeding regime, and cessation of milk being taken from the dam. In some cases, weaning may also mean a change in the environment for the foal and mixing with other new social groups.

While weaning is stressful, foals generally appear to adapt within a few days without any long lasting consequences to their health and welfare.

Minimum Standard No. 11 – Rearing and Weaning

- (a) Newborn foals must receive sufficient colostrum or a good quality commercial colostrum substitute.**
- (b) Weaning must be managed in a way that avoids undue stress on the dam and foal and minimises negative impacts on their health and welfare.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 15 – Rearing and Weaning

- Handlers are able to recognise if a foal is not receiving adequate feed and remedy the situation
- Foals are not weaned until they are receiving at least 75% of their daily feed requirements from solid feed

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Foals should receive colostrum as soon as possible after birth, preferably within the first six hours.
- (b) Equines should not be weaned from their dams until they are at least 6 months of age.
- (c) Foals should be introduced to the feed that they will be expected to consume following weaning to help reduce weight loss and growth problems upon weaning.

General Information

Colostrum, either fresh or stored, can provide local immunity in the gut and is a highly digestible, high quality food. Note that antibodies cannot be absorbed by the foal beyond 24-36 hours after birth and so colostrum needs to be fed as soon as possible after birth.

Weaning can be undertaken abruptly (with dam and foal kept out of visual and auditory contact from each other) or progressively (gradually removed from each other but kept in adjacent paddocks). The latter method may be less stressful for equines, but requires good fences and greater resources. There is some evidence that weaning foals into an environment which is as natural as possible, and providing them with access to clean water and a high fibre diet, is beneficial for their health and welfare.

6.3 Reproductive Technologies and Selection of Animals for Mating

Introduction

Breeding management techniques and programmes that optimise genetic potential are used in all sectors of the equine industry in New Zealand. In addition to selecting animals with desirable genotypes for breeding, there are a number of established and developing technologies being used to facilitate genetic gains and better manage animals.

Minimum Standard No. 12 – Reproductive Technologies

- (a) Laparoscopic artificial insemination must be carried out only by veterinarians, or by trained and competent operators under veterinary supervision, using appropriate pain relief, sedatives or anaesthesia.**
- (b) Cervical artificial insemination and pregnancy diagnosis must only be carried out by persons trained and competent with the techniques.**

Note: NAWAC has recommended that surgical embryo transfer be listed as a significant surgical procedure, as defined by the Act.

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) When selecting equines for breeding, attention should be given to selecting animals of appropriate physical size (both stallion and dam), and breed (i.e. whether they will be kept extensively or stabled intensively). Foaling experience should also be taken into account.

General Information

Equines usually give birth to one foal only. Twin births do happen, but it is rare that both foals survive and usually one or both of the foals die during the pregnancy.

Pregnancy can be confirmed by ultrasound, blood test, urine test or manual palpation.

6.4 Surgical procedures

Surgical procedures need to be conducted in a manner that manages anticipated pain and distress. Docking of a horse's tail is classified as a "restricted significant surgical procedure". The Act limits restricted significant surgical procedures to a veterinarian or a veterinary student under direct veterinary supervision, who must have first satisfied themselves that the procedure is in the best interests of the animal.

It is an offence under section 21(2)(a) of the Act to perform, or cause to be performed, blistering or firing or nicking of a horse.

If in doubt about a surgical procedure, veterinary advice should be sought.

Note: NAWAC has recommended that tooth extraction be listed as a significant surgical procedure, as defined by the Act.

6.5 Identification

Introduction

Identification of horses using specified systems is a compulsory requirement in some areas of horse sport such as thoroughbred and standardbred racing. However identification can also be used as a temporary method of keeping track of a horse while being sold or transported, or can be a way of proving ownership in the case of horse theft. There are a number of different methods of identification which vary in their permanency and the amount of pain that they cause the horse when applied. Methods of identification include hot and cold branding, hoof branding, microchipping, lip tattooing, ear tagging and DNA analysis.

NAWAC call for comments:

NAWAC is aware that both hot branding and freeze branding are performed as a means of identification for equines. Both procedures have the potential to cause the equine pain upon application. NAWAC is seeking comment in relation to the use of pain relief during the performance of both hot and freeze branding.

Minimum Standard No. 13 – Identification

- (a) All identification procedures must be applied by a competent operator.**
- (b) Pain relief must be used with hot branding.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 13 – Identification

- No injuries or infections are apparent at the site of identification
- One application to the skin, for the minimum time, is required to produce a brand

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) If hot or freeze branding are undertaken, they should only be carried out by a competent equine handler trained in the procedure. The brand site should be closely shaved before branding.
- (b) Microchipping should be administered by a trained equine handler or veterinarian who ensures good aseptic technique.
- (c) Freeze branding should only be used with pain relief.

- (d) Freeze branding is performed using liquid nitrogen, rather than dry ice, as the brand is applied to the skin for a shorter period for a similar result.

6.6 Pre-transport Selection

Introduction

Where specific guidelines for the selection and transport of equines exist, they should be consulted, otherwise transport should generally be in accordance with the Animal Welfare (Transport within New Zealand) Code of Welfare 2011. Conditions for slaughter are described in the Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010. All persons in charge of equines, including staff and contract transport operators, should be aware of the requirements for pre-transport selection and transport of equines.

In cases of doubt about the condition of an animal, a veterinarian needs to be consulted. A veterinarian can certify an animal as fit for transport, in which case the appropriate documentation needs to accompany the animal on its journey.

Transport can be a stressful experience for equines, particularly for those animals that have not been transported previously, that have had a negative past experience while being transported or which are not used to human contact. Good handling techniques will help to reduce anxiety during the process.

Minimum Standard No. 14 – Pre-transport Selection

- (a) All equines selected for transport must be examined by the person in charge prior to loading to ensure that they are fit for transport and are able to withstand the journey without suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.**
- (b) Any equine likely to give birth during transport or be affected by metabolic complications of late pregnancy as a result of the journey must not be selected for transport.**
- (c) Proper care must be taken when deciding if it is appropriate to transport young, old, pregnant or otherwise physiologically or behaviourally compromised animals.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 14 – Pre-transport Selection

- No equine gives birth during transport
- Foals under 4 months of age are transported with their dam

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Every effort should be made to ensure that equines are transported for the shortest possible time.
- (b) When undertaking long journeys, equines should be provided with the same type of feed that they are used to eating at home, both at rest stops during the journey and upon arrival.

General Information

All precautions should be taken to ensure the safety and security of equines during transportation. Equines are transported on land, sea or in the air in a variety of trailers and containers from small

boxes that carry one equine alone to large trucks or containers that are capable of carrying a large number of equines simultaneously. In all cases, it needs to be ensured that trailers or containers used to transport equines have no inward protrusions or gaps in which equines could catch a limb and become injured. Trailers or containers need to be adequately ventilated, the floors made of a non-slip material and there needs to be sufficient space to allow the equine to stand in a natural position with all four feet on the floor.

7. Health, Injury and Disease

Introduction

Health and welfare are closely associated, and owners have a responsibility to, as far as possible, prevent ill-health in their equines and treat it where it occurs. Every person responsible for the supervision of equines needs to be able to recognise signs of ill-health, have knowledge of basic equine first aid, and have access to a veterinarian to diagnose and treat any serious illness or injury. Potential problems need to be noted as early as possible and steps taken to rectify the problem.

Regular examination of the hooves of equines can ensure that signs of injury, other abnormalities, loose shoes and impacted foreign material are detected before they cause further problems to the health of the equine.

The dental health of equines can have a large influence on their health and welfare. Equines with worn, sharp or otherwise abnormal teeth often experience discomfort or pain and are unable to chew their food properly which can result in poor digestion or malnutrition.

Animal health programmes need to include disease prevention strategies. The ability to detect ill-health early in equines is crucial for successful diagnosis and treatment.

Minimum Standard No. 15 – Health, Injury and Disease

- (a) Those responsible for the welfare of equines must be competent at recognising ill-health or injury and take prompt remedial action, as appropriate.**
- (b) Medication must only be used in accordance with registration conditions and manufacturer’s instructions or professional advice.**
- (c) Hooves must be trimmed as required to permit normal mobility and to maintain hoof health, shape and function.**
- (d) Teeth must be maintained as required to permit normal grazing, chewing and function.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 15 – Health, Injury and Disease

- Personnel working with equines have a good knowledge of equine first aid and are able to recognise key physical and behavioural signs that an equine is unwell, in pain or distressed
- Hygiene standards and management procedures protect against ill-health and spread of disease
- When the early signs of a disease outbreak are recognised or suspected, expert advice is sought promptly and any intervention is documented
- Animals that have failed to respond to treatment are humanely and promptly destroyed
- A regular health programme is implemented
- Expert advice and treatment is sought for any irregularities in the hoof which are causing the equine to be lame or may cause potential problems if not remedied
- Equines are not showing head shaking, loss of condition, resistance to bridling or dropping of hard feed while eating as a result of dental abnormalities

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Following illness or injury, the owner or person in charge should follow veterinary instructions regarding the resumption of work for the equine.
- (b) Equines should have an annual health check conducted by a veterinarian.
- (c) Equines should receive regular expert care from a qualified and competent hoof care professional to maintain the health of the hoof.
- (d) Equine teeth should be examined and treated as necessary, but at least annually for dental conditions that may cause pain or interfere with normal feeding, digestion or work.
- (e) A record should be maintained of any medicinal treatment given to equines.
- (f) Equines should be provided with protection against infectious disease by vaccination according to veterinary recommendations.

General Information

Equines in good health are generally bright and alert, move freely and actively graze. They have no signs of wounds, lameness or injuries.

The optimum frequency for trimming the hooves of an individual equine to maintain its health and welfare will depend on factors such as its age, time of year, nutrition, management, the present condition of the hoof and the presence of injury. Unless running on dry abrasive surfaces, hooves need regular trimming to avoid cracking and disease. Equines standing in excess moisture, such as that that occurs in stabled horses under conditions of poor stable management, or pastured equines standing in excess moisture for extended periods of time can suffer hoof problems such as thrush.

Where abnormal heat or painful pressure points are found in the hoof, a veterinarian or competent farrier can provide advice on the cause, and appropriate action to prevent further problems developing.

Following trimming of the hoof, equines can subsequently have shoes fitted, they can be left unshod, or the hooves can be trimmed leaving the hoof shaped as the 'barefoot trim'. The method that is appropriate for an individual horse will depend on a number of factors including the individual horse's hooves, the management schedule that the horse is kept under and its workload. Shoes, if used, need to be removed and adjusted or replaced regularly in response to hoof wall growth or when shoes have moved off the wall. Trimming of hooves and fitting shoes by persons who have not received adequate training in equine anatomy and hoof care can cause lameness, muscular problems and impaired movement which can possibly result in irreparable damage to the horse.

Sharp and uneven points can develop on the outer edges of the equine's teeth. Regular attention is required to file these edges so that the equine can chew more effectively. Older equines (i.e. those over 16 years of age) may require extra dental care and attention than younger equines.

As a result of being ridden, horses can be subject to muscular pain, including back pain. If equines are experiencing pain, they may change their behaviour in an attempt to escape the discomfort. This can be interpreted as 'disobedience' or 'misbehaviour' by the novice rider. Both gradual or sudden changes in equine behaviour need to be investigated and, if necessary, a veterinarian called to perform an assessment of the equine to determine if the horse is experiencing pain, before other methods of correction are considered.

8. Emergency Humane Destruction

Introduction

Where, in the opinion of a veterinary surgeon, an equine will not respond to treatment for any serious injury involving significant pain, or where an equine is in such a condition that it would be cruel to keep it alive, the animal needs to be humanely destroyed without unreasonable delay. Destruction must be performed using a recognised acceptable method and only by persons who are able to prove competence or appropriate training in using the method selected.

Humane euthanasia requires brain activity to cease as rapidly and painlessly as possible, and that death ensues as soon as possible. There are two acceptable methods for the humane euthanasia of equines which are:

- rapid intravenous injection of a euthanasing agent; and
- shooting, using a firearm or captive bolt.

Minimum Standard No. 16 – Emergency Humane Destruction

- (a) **Equines must be handled, restrained and killed in such a manner as to minimise unnecessary pain and distress prior to death.**
- (b) **Personnel undertaking emergency humane destruction must be competent in the handling and killing of equines.**
- (c) **Equines must be rapidly rendered insensible and remain in that state, until death.**
- (d) **Equines must not be shot in the back of the head.**
- (e) **The spinal cord must not be severed or broken in any animal, until after death.**

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 16 – Emergency Humane Destruction

- Persons undertaking humane killing are appropriately trained
- Equines are handled gently and calmly at all stages of the process
- Any equipment used to undertake humane killing is well maintained in order to operate efficiently
- Equines are inspected following the procedure to confirm death

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Free-bullet firearms should never be used at point blank range. Shotguns and rifles should be at least 10 cm from the head when aimed.
- (b) Wherever possible, emergency slaughter of horses should be conducted discretely and at a site distant from other animals so as not to cause anxiety to other equines.

General Information

Firearms that are used to shoot an equine must be at least 0.22 calibre (long rifle). The target area and direction of the bullet are shown (see Appendix II: Captive Bolt and Free-bullet Firearm Stunning Sites). Correct position is critical for the humane and effective slaughter of animals.

Adequate precautions must be taken to protect other animals and people from injury and it is essential that the operator is competent in using the equipment.

Appendix I: Body Condition Scoring of Equines

Method

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

Score

0 – Very Thin

Pelvis

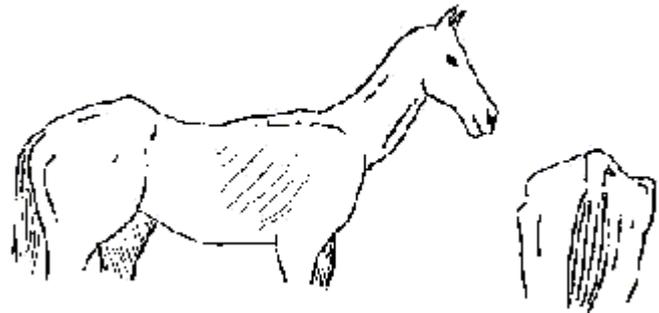
Angular, skin tight
Very sunken rump
Deep cavity under tail

Back and ribs

Skin tight over ribs
Very prominent and sharp backbone

Neck

Marked ewe neck
Narrow and slack at base



1 – Thin

Pelvis

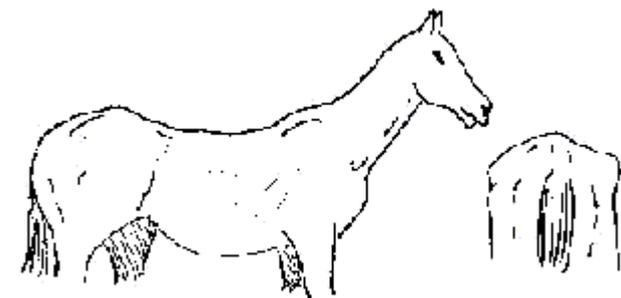
Prominent pelvis and croup
Sunken rump but skin supple
Deep cavity under tail

Back and ribs

Ribs easily visible
Prominent backbone with skin sunken on either side

Neck

Ewe neck, narrow and slack at base



2 - Moderate

Pelvis

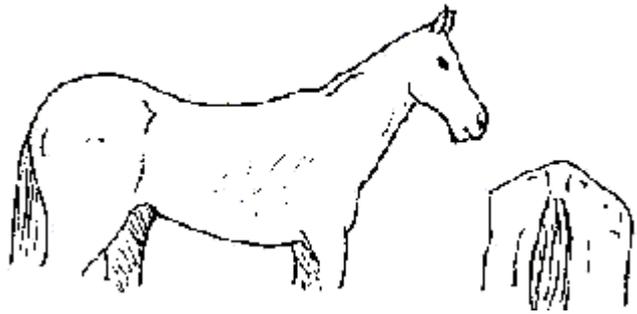
Rump flat either side of backbone
Croup well defined, some fat,

Back and ribs

Ribs just visible
Backbone covered but spines can be felt

Neck

Narrow but firm



3 - Good

Pelvis

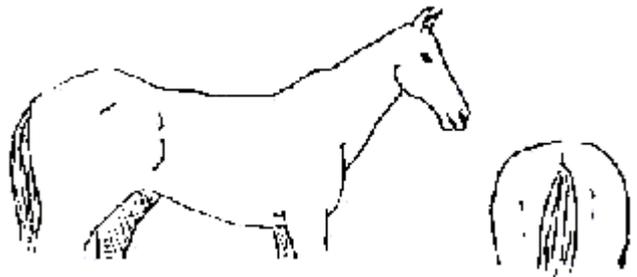
Covered by fat and rounded
No gutter
Pelvis easily felt

Back and ribs

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

Neck

No crest (except for stallions) firm neck



4 - Fat

Pelvis

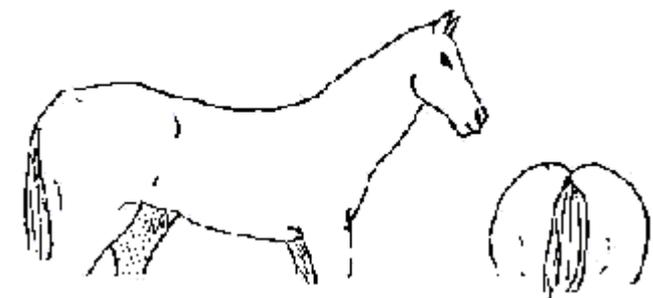
Gutter to root of tail
Pelvis covered by soft fat
Need firm pressure to feel

Back and ribs

Ribs well covered - need firm pressure to feel
Gutter along backbone

Neck

Slight crest
Wide and firm



5 - Very fat

Pelvis

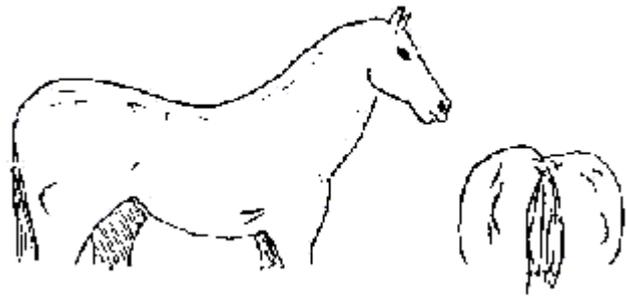
Deep gutter to root of tail
Skin distended
Pelvis buried, cannot be felt

Back and ribs

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

Neck

Marked crest
Very wide and firm
Fold of fat

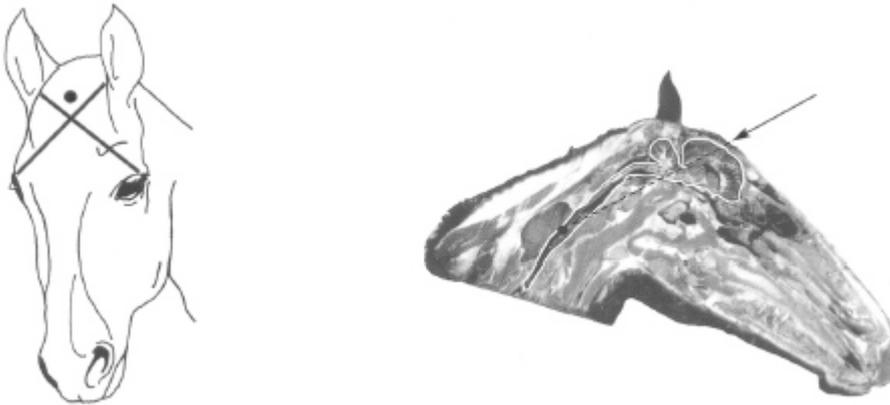


Note: When using this chart to assist in calculating bodyweight (Appendix II) the score must be calculated to the nearest 0.5 points.

Based on the Carroll and Huntington Method

Appendix II: Captive Bolt and Free-bullet Firearm Stunning Sites

Equines



The optimum position for equines is at right angles to the frontal surface, well above the point where imaginary lines from eye to ear cross.

Figure source: Based on Humane Slaughter Association (2005) Guidance Notes No. 3: Humane Killing of Livestock Using Firearms. Published by the Humane Slaughter Association, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK. www.hsa.org.uk

Appendix III: Interpretation and Definitions

Act	The Animal Welfare Act 1999.
animal	<p>As defined in the Act:</p> <p>“(a) Means any live member of the animal kingdom that is –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) A mammal; orii) A bird; oriii) A reptile; oriv) An amphibian; orv) A fish (bony or cartilaginous); orvi) Any octopus, squid, crab, lobster, or crayfish (including freshwater crayfish); orvii) Any other member of the animal kingdom which is declared from time to time by the Governor-General, by Order in Council, to be an animal for the purposes of this Act; and <p>(b) Includes any mammalian foetus, or any avian or reptilian pre-hatched young, that is in the last half of its period of gestation or development; and</p> <p>(c) Includes any marsupial pouch young; but</p> <p>(d) Does not include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A human being; or <p>Except as provided in paragraph (b) or paragraph (c) of this definition, any animal in the pre-natal, pre-hatched, larval, or other such developmental stage”.</p>
body condition score	A scoring system used to classify the condition of animals, based on the assessment amount of fat and/or muscle covering they have (see Section 3: Food and Water and Appendix I: Body Condition Scoring of Equines).
colt	A male equine under 4 years of age.
breeding	Copulation of a male and female equine.
dam	A nursing mare.
dystocia	A slow or difficult foaling.
good practice	NAWAC takes to mean a standard of care that has a general level of acceptance among knowledgeable practitioners and experts in the field; is based on good sense and sound judgment; is practical and thorough; has robust experiential or scientific foundations; and prevents unreasonable or unnecessary harm to, or promotes interests of, the animals to which it is applied. Good practice also takes account of the evolution of attitudes about animals and their care.
hobbles	Used to fasten together the legs of a equine to administer restraint and prevent free motion.

equine	Refers to any domestic equine, whether a companion equine, a working equine or semi-wild equine. Includes a foal unless otherwise stated. For the purpose of this code the term “equine” refers to horses, ponies, donkeys, mules and asses unless specifically stated otherwise.
equine behaviourist	A person experienced in equine psychology, biology and behaviour who is able to provide advice on training and correcting behavioural problems in equines.
foaling	Parturition. A mare in the act of giving birth.
filly	A young female horse up to first breeding or 4 years of age.
ill-treat	As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, means causing the animal to suffer, by any act or omission, pain or distress that in its kind or degree, or in its object, or in the circumstances in which it is inflicted, is unreasonable or unnecessary.”
loose box	A single box that provides shelter for one equine (although may be two equines in case of mother and foal) to rest and sleep.
mare	A female horse of 4 years or older.
minimum standards	Minimum standards provide the details of specific actions people need to take in order to meet the obligations of the Act. They are identified in the text by heading, and generally use the word ‘must’ or similar. They are highlighted in boxes within the text.
owner	As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 16 years who – <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) owns the animals; and(b) is a member of the parent’s or guardian’s household living with and dependent on the parent or guardian.”
person in charge	As defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes a person who has an animal in that person’s possession or custody, or under that person’s care, control, or supervision.”
physiological state	Relates to the functioning of the body, its organs and body systems.
recommended best practice	NAWAC takes to mean the best practice agreed at a particular time, following consideration of scientific information, accumulated experience and public submissions on this code. It is usually a higher standard of practice than the minimum standard, except where the minimum standard is best practice. It is a practice that can be varied as new information comes to light. Recommendations for best practice will be particularly appropriate where it is desirable to promote or encourage better care for animals than is provided as a minimum standard. Recommended best practices are identified in the text by a heading, and generally use the word “should”.

scientific knowledge	NAWAC takes to mean knowledge within animal-based scientific disciplines, especially those that deal with nutritional, environmental, health, behavioural and cognitive/neural functions, which are relevant to understanding the physical, health and behavioural needs of animals. Such knowledge is not haphazard or anecdotal; it is generated by rigorous and systematic application of the scientific method, and the results are objectively and critically reviewed before acceptance.
season	Oestrus. The time in the reproductive cycle when a mare or filly shows an interest in mating. Normally around ovulation (release of the egg).
shelter	Cover or protection from weather including sun, rain, wind and snow.
stable	For the purposes of this code, the term stable refers to any building containing loose boxes or stalls. Such buildings frequently incorporate loose boxes, stalls, feed storage and tack rooms.
stall	A narrow covered area where a single equine can be tied for temporary accommodation.
stallion	An entire male equine of 4 years of age or more.
teaser	A male equine (usually of lesser quality and value than the stallion that will cover the mare) that is used to determine if a mare will be willing to be mated.
tethering	Securing an equine to an object, for purposes of grazing, by a halter, headcollar or secure restraint around the neck.
thrush	A infection of the frog of the hoof which may cause tenderness of the foot and lameness.
weaning	The process of separating the foal from the dam when it becomes nutritionally independent.
working equine	An equine whose primary purpose is to provide practical assistance to humans. Includes equines kept primarily for the purpose of driving and managing livestock, police equines.
yard	For the purpose of this code, a yard means any small enclosure without a roof, not being a stable, loose box or paddock.

Appendix IV: Legislative Requirements

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) imposes obligations on every person who owns or is in charge of an animal. This code has been issued pursuant to section 75 of the Act and will provide guidance on how to comply with the legislative requirements. However, this code does not provide an exhaustive list of the Act's requirements, and owners and those in charge of goats should note that they must comply with the minimum standards in this code *and* the general provisions in the Act. A copy of the Act is accessible at:

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz>.

Contents of Codes

Section 69 of the Act provides that a code of welfare may relate to one or more of the following:

- a species of animal
- animals used for purposes specified in the code
- animal establishments of a kind specified in the code
- types of entertainment specified in the code (being types of entertainment in which animals are used)
- the transport of animals
- the procedures and equipment used in the management, care or killing of animals or in the carrying out of surgical procedures on animals.

In deciding to issue a code of welfare, the Minister must be satisfied as to the following matters set out in section 73(1) of the Act:

- that the proposed standards are the minimum necessary to ensure that the purposes of the Act will be met; and
- that the recommendations for best practice (if any) are appropriate.

Despite the provisions of section 73(1), section 73(3) of the Act allows NAWAC, in exceptional circumstances, to recommend minimum standards and recommendations for best practice that do not fully meet the obligations of:

- section 10 or section 11 – obligations in relation to physical, health and behavioural needs of animals
- section 12(c) – killing an animal
- section 21(1)(b) – restriction on performance of surgical procedures
- section 22(2) – providing comfortable and secure accommodation for the transport of animals
- section 23(1) and (2) – transport of animals
- section 29(a) – ill-treating an animal.

In making a recommendation under section 73(3), section 73(4) requires NAWAC to have regard to:

- the feasibility and practicality of effecting a transition from current practices to new practices and any adverse effects that may result from such a transition
- the requirements of religious practices or cultural practices or both
- the economic effects of any transition from current practices to new practices.

This code provides for the physical, health and behavioural needs (as defined in section 4 of the Act) of equines. These needs include:

- proper and sufficient food and water
- adequate shelter
- opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour

- physical handling in a manner which minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, any significant injury or disease,

being a need which, in each case, is appropriate to the species, environment and circumstances of the animal.

This code also takes account of:

- good practice
- scientific knowledge
- available technology.

Legal Obligations of Owners and Persons in Charge of Animals

The owner or person in charge of an animal has overall responsibility for the welfare of the animal in his or her care. The legal obligations set out below are not an exhaustive list of the obligations in the Act.

- (a) The owner or person in charge of an animal must:
- (i) ensure that the physical, health and behavioural needs of the animal are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge.
 - (ii) where practicable, ensure that an animal that is ill or injured receives treatment that will alleviate any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the animal, or that it is killed humanely.
- (b) The owner or person in charge of an animal must not, without reasonable excuse:
- (i) keep an animal alive when it is in such a condition that it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.
 - (ii) sell, attempt to sell or offer for sale, otherwise than for the express purpose of being killed, an animal, when it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.
 - (iii) desert an animal in circumstances in which no provision is made to meet its physical, health and behavioural needs.
- (c) No person may:
- (i) ill-treat an animal.
 - (ii) release an animal that has been kept in captivity, in circumstances in which the animal is likely to suffer unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.
 - (iii) perform any significant surgical procedure (as defined by the Act) on an animal unless that person is a veterinarian, or a veterinary student under the direct supervision of a veterinarian or, in the case of a controlled surgical procedure, a person approved by a veterinarian.
 - (iv) perform on an animal a surgical procedure that is not a significant surgical procedure (as defined by the Act) in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.
 - (v) kill an animal in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Regulations Review Committee of Parliament

Codes of welfare are deemed to be regulations for the purposes of the Regulations (Disallowance) Act 1989. As such, they are subject to the scrutiny of the Regulations Review Committee of Parliament.

Any person or organisation aggrieved by the operation of a code of welfare has the right to make a complaint to the Regulations Review Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

This parliamentary select committee is charged with examining regulations against a set of criteria and drawing to the attention of the House of Representatives any regulation that does not meet the criteria. Grounds for reporting to the House include:

- the regulation trespasses unduly on personal rights and freedoms;
- the regulation is not made in accordance with the general objects and intentions of the statute under which it is made; or
- the regulation was not made in compliance with the particular notice and consultation procedures prescribed by statute.

Any person or organisation wishing to make a complaint should refer to the publication *Making a Complaint to the Regulations Review Committee*, which can be obtained from the website:

<http://www.clerk.parliament.govt.nz>, or by writing to: Clerk of the Committee, Regulations Review Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

Strict Liability

In the prosecution of certain offences under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 committed after 19 December 2002, evidence that a relevant code of welfare was in existence at the time of the alleged offence and that a relevant minimum standard established by that code was not complied with is rebuttable evidence that the person charged with the offence failed to comply with, or contravened, the provision of the Animal Welfare Act to which the offence relates. (See sections 13(1A), 24(1) and 30(1A) of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, as amended by the Animal Welfare Amendment Act 2002.)

Defences

It is a defence in the prosecution of certain offences under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 if the defendant proves that there was in existence at the time of the alleged offence a relevant code of welfare and that the minimum standards established by the code of welfare were in all respects equalled or exceeded. (See sections 13(2)(c), 24(2)(b) and 30(2)(c).)

If a defendant in a prosecution intends to rely on the defence under section 13(2)(c) or section 30(2)(c), the defendant must, within seven days after the service of the summons, or within such further time as the Court may allow, deliver to the prosecutor a written notice. The notice must state that the defendant intends to rely on section 13(2) or section 30(2) as the case may be, and must specify the relevant code of welfare that was in existence at the time of the alleged offence, and the facts that show that the minimum standards established by that code of welfare were in all respects equalled or exceeded. This notice may be dispensed with if the Court gives leave. (See sections 13(3) and 30(3).)

The strict liability provisions and the defence of equalling or exceeding the minimum standards established by a code of welfare apply to the following offences:

- Failing to Provide

Section 12(a): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, fails to comply, in relation to the animal, with section 10 (which provides that the owner of an animal, and every person in charge of an animal, must ensure that the physical, health and behavioural needs of the animal are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge).

- **Suffering Animals**

Section 12(b): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, fails, in the case of an animal that is ill or injured, to comply, in relation to the animal, with section 11 (which provides that the owner of an animal that is ill or injured, and every person in charge of such an animal, must, where practicable, ensure that the animal receives treatment that alleviates any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the animal).

Section 12(c): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or a person in charge of, an animal, kills the animal in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

- **Surgical Procedures**

Section 21(1)(b): A person commits an offence who, without reasonable excuse, acts in contravention of or fails to comply with section 15(4) (which provides that no person may, in performing on an animal a surgical procedure that is not a significant surgical procedure, perform that surgical procedure in such a manner that the animal suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress).

- **Transport**

Section 22(2): A person commits an offence who fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with any provision of section 22(1) (which provides that every person in charge of a vehicle or an aircraft, and the master of or, if there is no master, the person in charge of, a ship, being a vehicle, aircraft or ship in or on which an animal is being transported, must ensure that the welfare of the animal is properly attended to, and that, in particular, the animal is provided with reasonably comfortable and secure accommodation and is supplied with proper and sufficient food and water).

Section 23(1): A person commits an offence who, without reasonable excuse, confines or transports an animal in a manner or position that causes the animal unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Section 23(2): A person commits an offence who, being the owner of, or the person in charge of, an animal, permits that animal, without reasonable excuse, to be driven or led on a road, or to be ridden, or to be transported in or on a vehicle, an aircraft, or a ship, while the condition or health of the animal is such as to render it unfit to be so driven, led, ridden or transported.

- **Ill-treatment**

Section 29(a): A person commits an offence who ill-treats an animal.

Inspection of Premises

Section 127(1): Inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 have the power to enter any land or premises (with the exception of dwellings and marae), or any vehicle, aircraft or vessel, at any reasonable time, for the purpose of inspecting any animal.

Inspectors include officers of MPI, inspectors from approved organisations (e.g. Royal New Zealand SPCA) appointed by the Minister, and the Police.

Liability of employers, principals, directors and officers of bodies corporate

Sections 164 and 165 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 set out further provisions relating to offences committed by employers and charges against bodies corporate.

Appendix V: Codes of Welfare

Codes of Welfare

- Animal Welfare (Rodeos) Code of Welfare 2003
- Animal Welfare (Zoos) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Circuses) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Painful Husbandry Procedures) Code of Welfare 2005
- Animal Welfare (Companion Cats) Code of Welfare 2007
- Animal Welfare (Deer) Code of Welfare 2007
- Animal Welfare (Dairy Cattle) Code of Welfare 2010
- Animal Welfare (Sheep and Beef Cattle) Code of Welfare 2010
- Animal Welfare (Dogs) Code of Welfare 2010
- Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010
- Animal Welfare (Pigs) Code of Welfare 2010
- Animal Welfare (Transport in New Zealand) Code of Welfare 2011
- Animal Welfare (Goats) Code of Welfare 2012
- Animal Welfare (Meat Chickens) Code of Welfare 2012
- Animal Welfare (Layer Hens) Code of Welfare 2012

Codes of Recommendations and Minimum Standards

- Sea Transport of Sheep from New Zealand, September 1991
- Welfare of Deer During the Removal of Antlers, July 1992, amended August 1994, August 1997
- Welfare of Horses, February 1993
- Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments, August 1993
- Sale of Companion Animals, September 1994
- Welfare of Animals at Saleyards, May 1995
- Emergency Slaughter of Farm Livestock, December 1996
- Welfare of Ostrich and Emu, September 1999

Guidelines

- Welfare of Stock from which Blood is Harvested for Commercial and Research Purposes, March 2009
- Welfare of Yearling Fallow Deer During the Use of Rubber Rings to Prevent Antler/Pedicle Growth, September 1997
- Welfare of Red and Wapiti Yearling Stags During the Use of Rubber Rings to Induce Analgesia for the Removal of Spiker Velvet, September 1998

<p>Codes and Guidelines may be obtained from: <i>Animal Welfare Standards Ministry for Primary Industries PO Box 2526 WELLINGTON 6140</i></p> <p><i>email: animalwelfare@mpi.govt.nz</i></p>	<p>Or can be inspected at: <i>Animal Welfare Standards Ministry for Primary Industries Pastoral House Reception, Level 4 25 The Terrace WELLINGTON 6011</i></p>
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Codes and Guidelines are available on MPI's website.

The web page address is: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity-animal-welfare/animal-welfare>