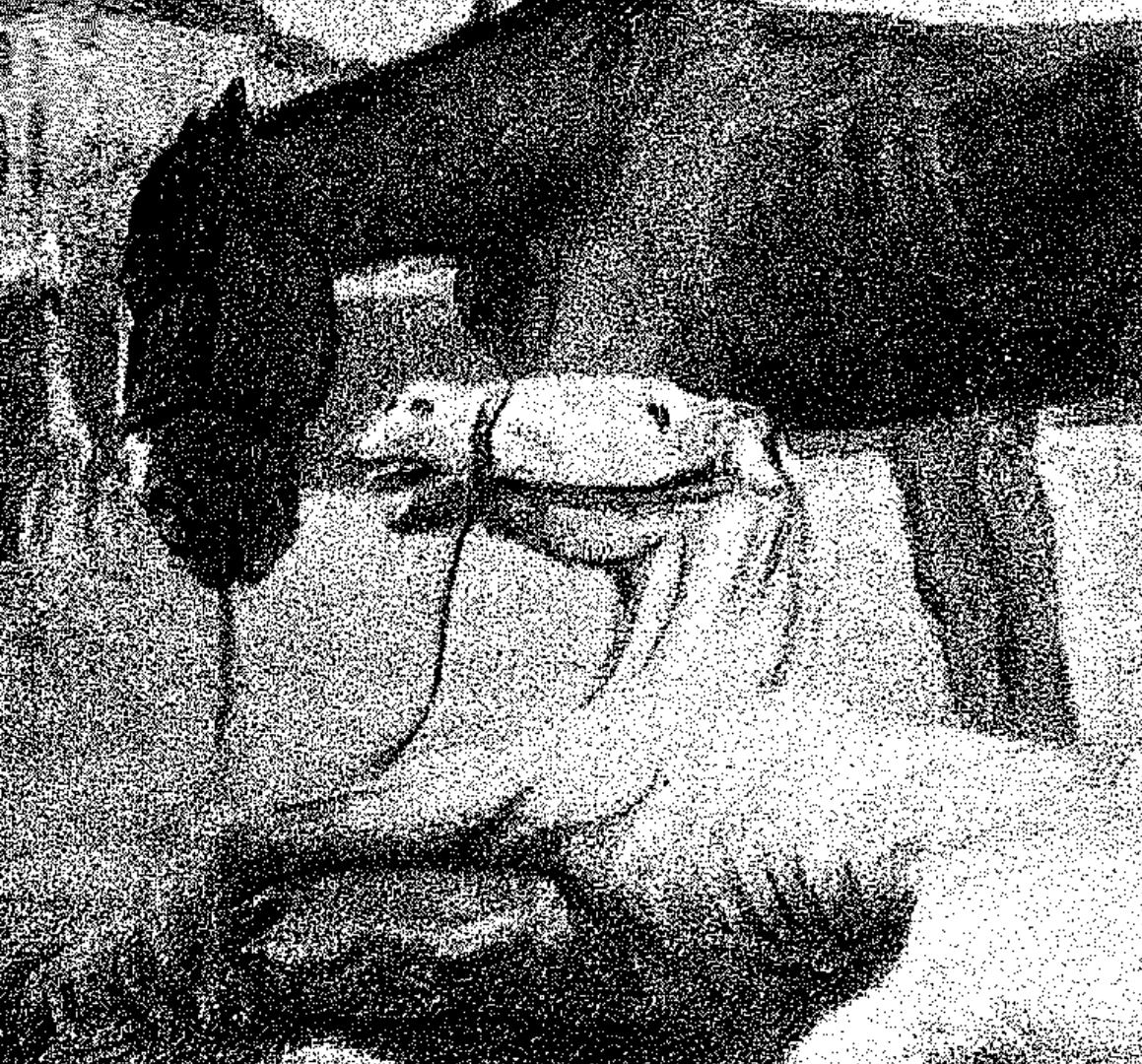


Ethics and Horse Sport

Roly Owers MRCVS

World Horse Welfare





Opinion

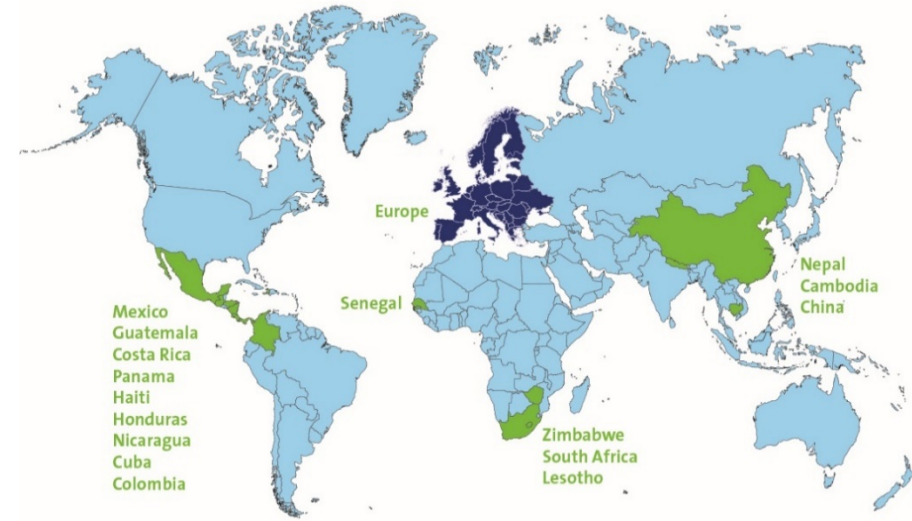
Equestrian sports have an animal cruelty problem – dressage should be banned from the Olympics

In my experience, the most distressed horses are always those who come from the horse racing industry



World Horse Welfare

- Leading equine charity since 1927
- Actively promotes the horse-human partnership
- Works across 4 continents
- 120+ employees – \$14m turnover (US\$)
- Partnership working with governments, universities, regulators, other NGOs
- Strong veterinary credentials
- Active in policy engagement – OIE, EU, UN
- Supports responsible horse sport



Our strategic framework

		Goals				
		Transport	Responsible Ownership		Horse Sport	Working Equids
		<i>Humane transport and slaughter</i>	<i>Prevention</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Responsible use in sport</i>	<i>Supporting livelihoods</i>
		<i>Responsible ownership and recreational use</i>				
Activities	Care	<i>"Providing relief to equines in immediate need"</i>				
	Research	<i>"Understanding the causes of equine welfare challenges and using evidence to inform our work"</i>				
	Educate	<i>"Supporting and improving the horse-human partnership, including changing behaviours"</i>				
	Influence	<i>"Advocating and campaigning to achieve long-lasting change in equine welfare"</i>				

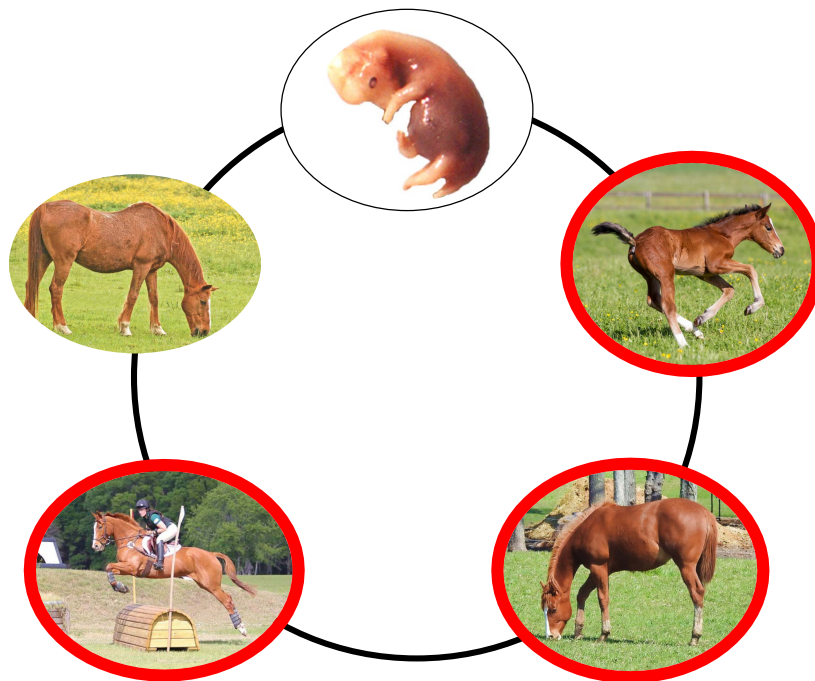


Support responsible horse sport

- Welfare advisor to sport regulators
 - International Equestrian Federation (FEI)
 - Code of Conduct for Welfare of Horse
 - International Horse Sport Confederation (IHSC)
 - British Horseracing Authority (BHA)
 - Informally to other national federations
- Associate Member of British Equestrian



Responsibility for welfare



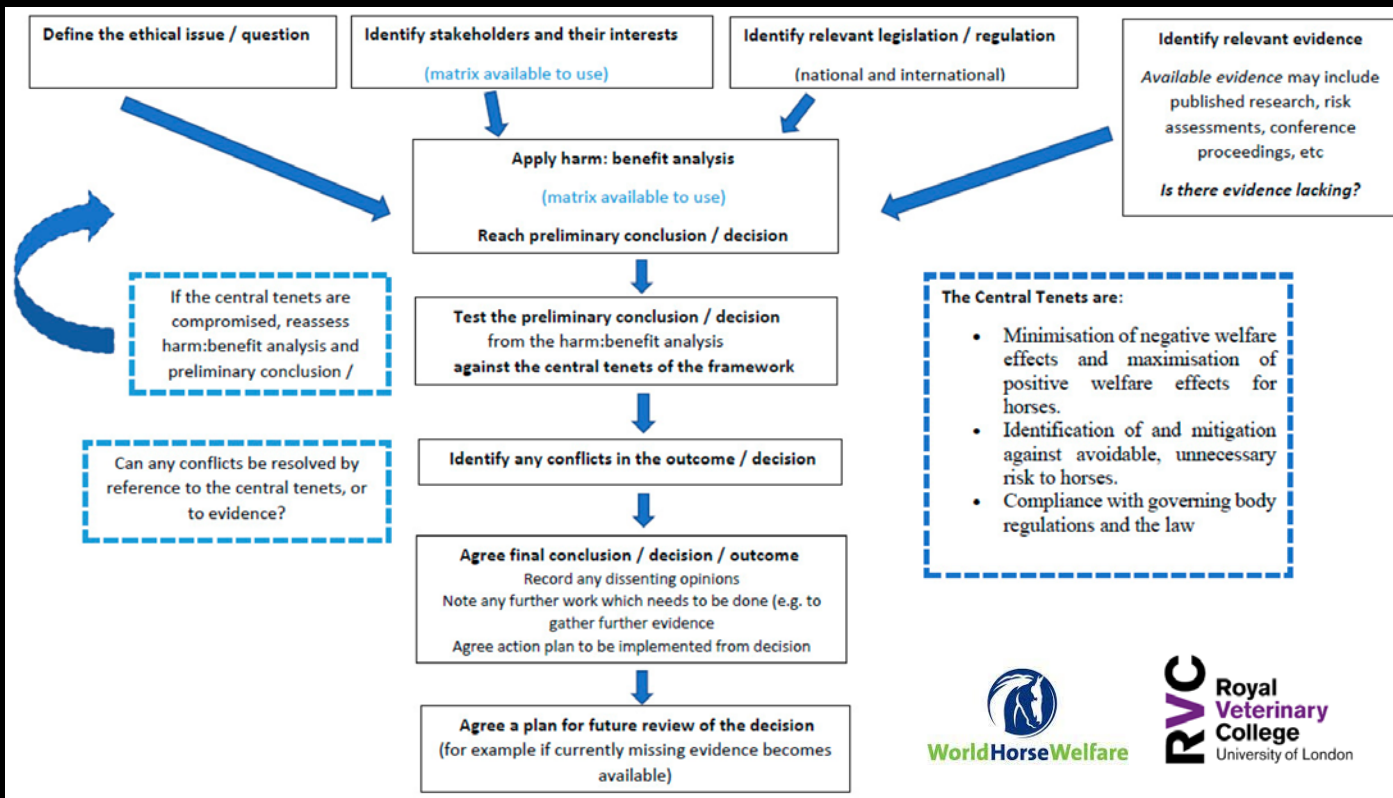


“Please don’t say that
you are passionate about
ethics when you still ride
horses.”

- Online commentator September 2021



Ethical framework for equestrian sport



Challenges at Olympics – but FEI showed welfare paramount

Bleeding nose ends Irish horse's Tokyo 2020 Olympic journey

..... Unfortunately, Kilkenny suffered a nose-bleed (epistaxis) towards the end of the round. This was confirmed by the on-site veterinary team who immediately checked the horse straight after the competition, and he was then taken to the on-site Veterinary Clinic.



PETA calls on IOC president to remove equestrian events from Games



People Want Equestrian Events Banned From Olympics After Coach Disqualified For Hitting Horse

UNILAD

The social licence concept

- Unwritten, non-legally binding contract
- Society 'gives' right to operate
- Concept originated in resource-based industries
- Recently applied to animal-based industries



Levels of social licence

**SLO withheld/
withdrawn**

- Rejection of industry
- Boycotts/sabotage
- Activism

**Acceptance/
tolerance**

- Community listening to industry – but with trepidation
- Reoccurring issues met with threats
- Activities closely monitored

**Approval/
support**

- Industry has established legitimacy and credibility
- Community approves of industry
- Organisations want to collaborate

**Psychological
identification**

- High levels of trust by the community
- Shared responsibility and connection by all stakeholders, through good times and bad



“Society basically says to professions it does not understand well enough to regulate:

‘You regulate yourselves the way we would regulate you if we understood what you do, which we don’t.

‘But we will know if you don’t self-regulate properly and then we will regulate you, despite our lack of understanding.’”

-Bernie Rollin



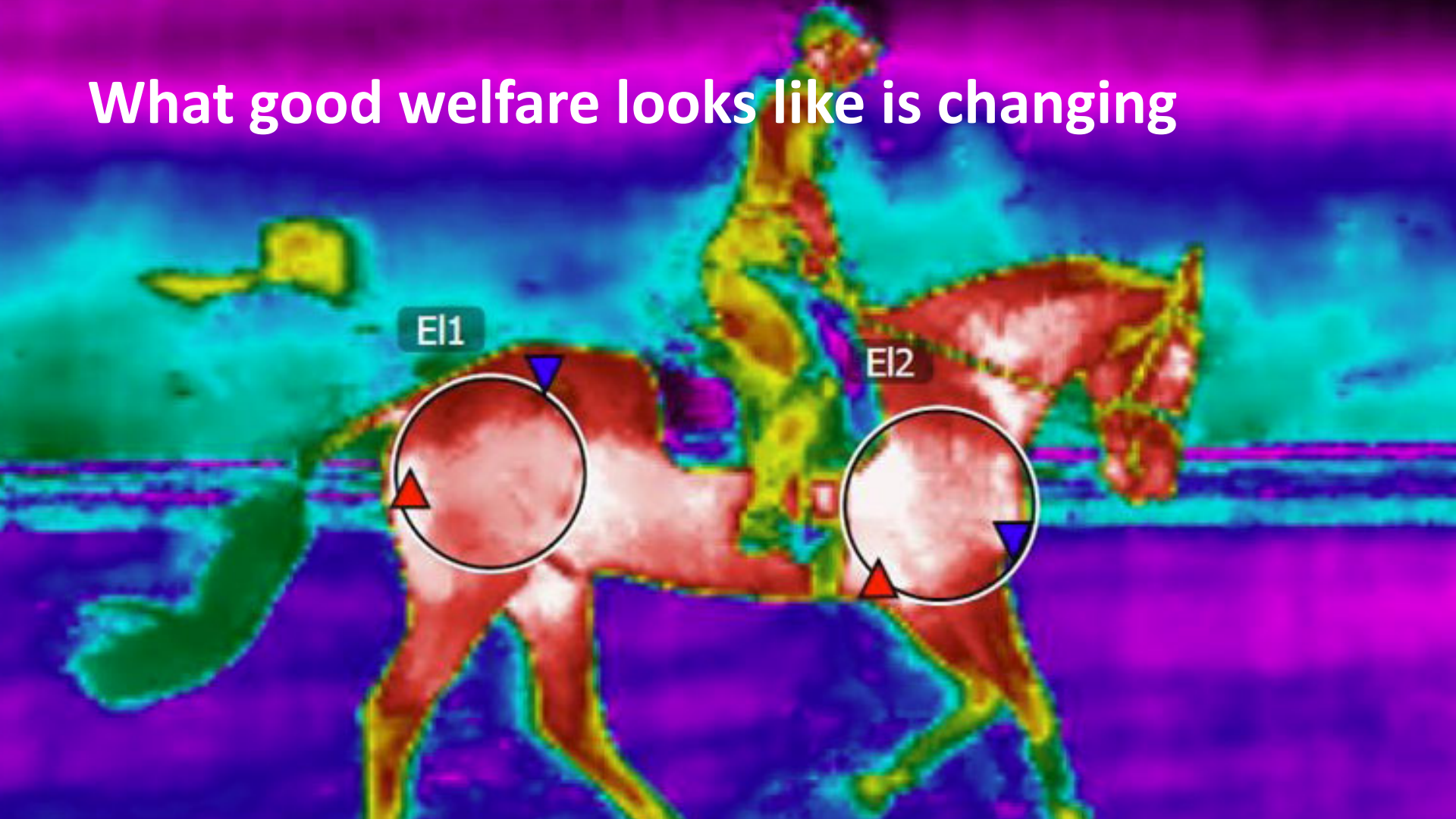


Threats to social licence?

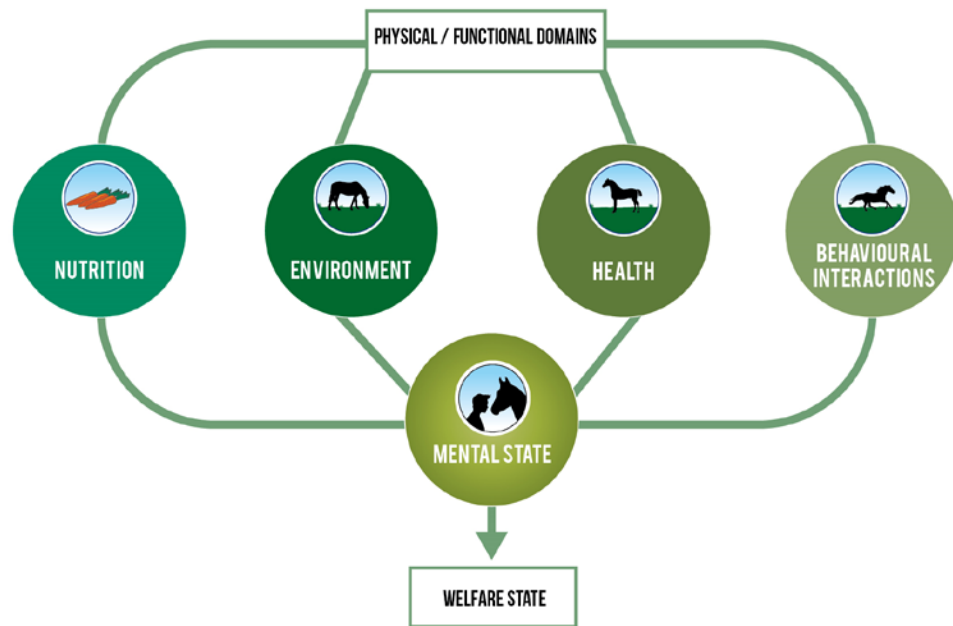
- Not prioritising our horses' mental and physical welfare
- Not listening and engaging with all stakeholders, including the public
- Not basing practice and rules on evidence
- Not being accountable, transparent, and ethical
- Not recognising that our responsibility applies anytime, anywhere – and lasts a lifetime
- Not proactively communicating about welfare and the importance of the horse-human partnership.



What good welfare looks like is changing



Physical and mental welfare: Five domains



- Recognising that horses are sentient beings – protecting against negative experiences and maximising positive experiences
- Quality of life is based on both physical welfare and mental wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing is at least as important as physical welfare



1) Provide for horses' basic needs

- Management should consider horses' basic physiological, ethological, and psychological needs

Friends Freedom

Forage



2) Understand how horses learn

- Learning theory
 - Aligns with horse's natural learning ability
 - Fundamental to safe and effective handling, riding, and training
 - Improves horse welfare
- Non-use of learning theory underpins many training and behavioral problems



3) Stop misuse of tack & training aids



How can we protect our social licence?

- Accept the world is changing
- Be transparent, ethical and accountable
- Ask not only 'Can I?' but also 'Should I?'
- Consider the ethical basis and use of an ethical framework for decision making
- Combine experience with ethics and science to challenge the status quo
- Be ahead of public expectations on horse welfare







THANK YOU

@rolyowers
@horsecharity

