



A GOOD LIFE FOR HORSES
A vision for the future involvement of horses in sport
FINAL REPORT – November 2023

INDEX – A GOOD LIFE FOR HORSES

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1. INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

Humans and horses have a long, shared history, and there is evidence of the significance of this inter-species relationship throughout the world. The role of the horse in association with humans reflects changing societal needs associated with different times in history, different cultures and different requirements. Humans have relied upon horses for war, hunting, transportation, agriculture, trade, commerce and recreation. It's generally agreed that our coexistence with, and ability to rely upon our relationship with horses has had a critical role in shaping today's world.

Social licence is defined as an intangible, implicit agreement between society and an industry which allows that industry (or community) to pursue its activities on a largely self-regulatory basis because such activities have widespread societal approval. Societies' attitudes are changing and evidencing prioritisation of equine welfare through clearly communicated demonstrable actions is critical to ensure the future of equestrian sport.

The FEI has not just a direct but also an indirect influence on advancing knowledge and understanding of equine welfare, specifically around the quality of a competition horse's life from its breeding, early management, training practices, experience at competitions, through to the end of its career and life. The FEI vision for sustaining equine participation in sport now and into the future needs to address ethical concerns related to equine involvement in sport. The vision must then be effectively communicated so that all equestrians recognise that they have an individual and collective responsibility for ensuring equine welfare is prioritised, especially where horses are involved in sport. Maintaining its social licence to operate requires an ongoing pro-active approach from the FEI and the wider equestrian community, through commitment to a trusted equine welfare strategy. This will mean challenging the status quo and recognising that changes will inevitably be necessary to ensure equestrian sports continue to have the approval and acceptance of wider society.

The independent Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission established by the FEI, has now considered all available research and taken into account different stakeholder views including analysis of two extensive public and equestrian surveys. We now provide 30 Recommendations for consideration by the FEI Board. These include; a future-focussed Vision (A Good Life for Horses), proposed strategic approach to strengthen SLO and achieve the Vision, an 'Equestrian Charter' and other key recommendations for prioritising positive equine welfare for horses involved in sport.

Equestrianism must adopt an ethics-based, proactive, progressive, and holistic approach to the protection of equine welfare, to ensure the ongoing trust of all stakeholders, including the public (Douglas et al., 2022)

1.1 Welfare, Ethical Arguments Around the Use of Horses in Sport, and Social Licence

The horse-human relationship has a long and varied history related to changing human/societal needs. Archaeological evidence has shown that people living in Kazakhstan some 5,500 years ago relied on the horse for milk (and probably meat), and there is evidence of use of a "thong bridle" (a strip of leather placed in the horse's mouth) suggesting that horses were harnessed and quite possibly ridden too (Olsen et al., 2006). Over time, and across many parts of the world, humans' association and reliance upon the horse has included: transportation of goods and people, fast travel for trade, migration and communication, for military action, revolutionising farming practices, as a symbol of prosperity or power and to provide sustenance through meat, milk and fuel. The contribution of horses is considerable and has led to them being considered as a major influence in the civilisation and development of many societies.

Whilst there are many studies describing the positive influence of horses on humans, the relationship is not necessarily one-sided. Horses also arguably benefit from their relationship with humankind. They are not only provided with their basic needs such as food, water, shelter and veterinary care but also, as social creatures, they can form close bonds with their human caretakers (Stone 2009), showing positive behaviours when with their familiar handlers (Hayman and Merkies, 2019) as well as seeking attention from their familiar handler especially when alone (Merkies and Franzen, 2021).

It is not surprising given the important role horses have played throughout history, the impact they have made on human development, survival, success, as well as the enjoyment we gain from our interactions with them, that horses have a special place in many societies. Often ascribed almost magical properties and described in myths and legends, there is the risk that perception and reality regarding horses and their needs can become blurred.

Having evolved as prey animals using their speed and endurance to survive, horses have been selectively bred by humans for desirable physical and behavioural characteristics to enable them to fulfil many different functional roles. This has led to the development of the modern sports or performance horse, an animal possessing impressive athletic abilities, trainability and the capability to perform at high levels under competitive conditions. The first recorded 'sporting event' dates to 682 BC with a four-horse chariot race during the 25th Olympiad in Greece (Golden, 2004), and since then equestrian sports have developed rapidly to encompass a wide variety of disciplines across the world. Sport horses are now involved in a variety of different equestrian disciplines, many of these derived from a foundation of skills involved in warfare or for speed and traction. Due to the long history of association between horse and human there is a wide range of traditional equine management techniques, training practices and equipment, many of which are still used today.

A positive relationship between horse and human is necessary for ensuring the safety and welfare of both parties.

As social creatures, horses form close bonds with humans, and a positive relationship between the equestrian and horse is essential for ensuring the safety, welfare and sustainable success of the interaction. At the highest level of performance, equestrians rely on the horse's training and trust to successfully tackle challenging obstacles and for performing under demanding conditions. Prioritisation of equine welfare is therefore viewed as essential not just as an ethical obligation to the horse, but also for maintaining a positive, safe and productive working relationship with the horse.

As highly social animals, horses can form close bonds with humans and come to rely upon them for both functional and emotional needs.

Over the past few years, changing societal values and an increased knowledge and awareness of equine welfare needs has led to questions regarding the involvement of horses in sport and the ethics of equestrianism generally.

Whilst perception and reality may not always align, there is a need to address concerns regarding the ongoing acceptability and approval (the 'social licence to operate'(SLO)) of horses involved in sport, to ensure the future of equestrian sports.

Equestrianism isn't alone; several sports are under pressure, to a lesser or greater degree, to enhance their SLO for a variety of reasons. There are a wide range of issues relevant to SLO in sport including: illegal betting, cheating schemes, racism and inequity. Some issues may be more or less likely in any given sport. For sports which involve non-human animals, there is the additional and differentiating issue of the involvement of a living creature which is dependent upon humans for its care and wellbeing and is, consequently, extremely

vulnerable. Equestrian sports involve both a human and an equine athlete. The quality of the horse-human relationship is therefore considered as fundamental to ethical equestrianism. Since horses are not capable of communicating their preferences in spoken language which humans understand, decisions regarding horses' management and the expectations placed upon horses are complex and varied, often informed by tradition and personal experience rather than by existing and emerging scientifically validated information. There is also the added dimension of competing agendas where the interests and values of various associated stakeholders may outweigh those of most importance to the horse and its wellbeing. In the elite sporting context, it is suggested that there is the risk of tension between constructions of "partnership" between horse and rider, and the pragmatic pressures of elite sport on horse and rider, and their relationship (Hogg and Hodgins 2021).

Philosophical questions relating to the right to partner with the equine athlete and ensuring that the horse is a willing participant and is not coerced are somewhat analogous to questions which arise in other facets of sport where children are involved, where adult athletes are vulnerable due to lack of choice, or where they may be at risk of exploitation. For example, ethics committees to control training procedures as well as research related to the longer-term effects of elite sports activities beginning in early childhood have been proposed to address these and other concerns. The basic ethical consideration when protecting the health and wellbeing of those who are vulnerable within sport is to safeguard against harm associated with that vulnerability.

Public interest in the use of horses (and indeed of other animals) in competitive sport has grown in recent years. This interest is part of a much larger societal discussion about what constitutes a 'reasonable' human use of animals. One's answer to this inevitably depends upon one's ethical approach. For those who adopt a strict deontological, animal rights approach, any use of animals by humans is not ethically permissible, and that necessarily includes the use or involvement of animals in sport. However, the majority approach to animal ethics in current worldwide society is a utilitarian one; i.e., one in which human utilisation of animals is permitted providing that the benefits outweigh the harms. In relation to the involvement of horses in sport, 'benefits' and 'harms' include those relevant to both horses and people. Harms to horses can be harms of omission (i.e., failing to provide or allow for positive welfare experiences) as well as the harms of directly negative welfare experiences. When considering how welfare relates to the ethical justification for the use of horses in sport and thus to SLO it is helpful to reflect that within the Five Domains model of animal welfare ([see section 4.1](#)) 'freedom from' a harm is interpreted not as an absolute, but rather to mean '*as free as possible from*' (Mellor 2016, Campbell 2016). This allows for temporary welfare concerns (such as an accidental injury) to occur providing that an animal's experience of its own welfare *across its lifetime* is a substantially positive one.

The ethical justification for involving horses in sport and thus the maintenance of a SLO is based on maximising positive equine welfare, and minimising negative welfare impacts.

When this approach is translated into consideration of the basis of the social licence for the continuation of equestrian sport, there are clear implications for welfare policy-making and the actions of individuals involved. This is in turn dependent upon accurate identification and mitigation of avoidable and therefore unnecessary risks of harm (Campbell 2016). What is ethically unacceptable in this approach and would result in the loss of the SLO is for humans to be aware of a potential harm and of a way of mitigating it, but to fail to do so. What this means for those involved in any role in equestrian sport is that they must carefully consider the welfare impacts of all they do and adapt their practice as necessary to optimise equine welfare during the lifetime of the horse.

Those involved in equestrian sport must carefully consider the welfare impacts of all they do, and adapt their practices as necessary to equine welfare during the lifetime of the horse

This applies both at a personal and a regulatory level and requires relevant education of stakeholders. Such adaptation should be based in scientific evidence about the welfare impacts of a particular action being carried out, or not. Where the scientific evidence necessary to make a clear decision is lacking, the ‘precautionary principle’¹ should be exercised in favour of the horse, and research aimed at providing the necessary evidence base should be encouraged.

Applying the ‘precautionary principle’¹ where there may be lack of availability of full scientific evidence allows for timely responses to potentially serious risks to equine welfare

At a time when public interest in the welfare of animal athletes is higher than it ever has been, maintenance of the social licence for equestrian sport is dependent not only upon optimising equine welfare as described above including timely responses, but also on transparently and effectively communicating to the wider public about the ways in which this is being achieved.

For it to have a future, the equestrian world needs to proactively address welfare concerns to strengthen its SLO.

1.2 Equine Welfare

Whilst cultural attitudes towards animal welfare will differ across societies, in the context of international horse sport the FEI clearly states that the welfare of the horse ‘**must be paramount**’ ([see FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse](#)). The vast majority – if not all – of those involved in horse sport appreciate the link between equine health, welfare and performance. Many take great pride in providing the very best care and experiences for their sport horses and consider them as a member of their family. This is confirmed by the results of the independent survey of the equestrian community commissioned by the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission (EEWB) in 2022, which showed that 66% of those involved with horses see them as a ‘family member’ or ‘partner’.

66% of those involved with horses see them as a ‘family member’ or ‘partner’ (EEWB Survey 2022)

However, it’s important to note that what may be perceived by humans as good for the horse, may not always be in its best interests. For example, it’s possible to have good equine health without optimal equine welfare, and yet society expects that horses used for economic or competitive benefit should enjoy the highest standards of both. Therefore, everyone involved in using horses for sport and recreation has a moral responsibility to safeguard and optimise equine welfare and wellbeing not only because it is the ‘right thing to do’, but also because protecting equine interests also protects our own. Equine welfare is critical to maintaining and strengthening SLO, enabling the continuation of equestrian sport.

The independent survey of public opinion commissioned by the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission in 2022 showed that, in considering the involvement of horses in sport, the public were ‘most concerned’ about equine welfare (34%) and equine safety (32%) – their greatest concerns by far compared to other aspects, including human safety (9%), human welfare (6%) or impact on the environment (8%). It is therefore essential that equestrian sport can reassure the public of their ongoing commitment to ensuring the highest standards of equine health, welfare and safety.

Central to the FEI is the agreement that equine welfare is ‘important in its own right’.

Historically, approaches to welfare have focused on minimising negative experiences such as pain or fear (Mellor et al. 2017; Webb et al. 2018), but scientific knowledge has progressed in recent years, and it is now

¹ The ‘precautionary principle’ i.e., giving the horse the ‘benefit of the doubt’, by making decisions that consider likely risk to welfare, and are most likely to optimise equine welfare given the uncertainty of the evidence available.

widely recognised that animals also need positive experiences (Mellor et al. 2017) to ensure good welfare (Boissy et al. 2007). In addition, over the past few years there has been an increasing focus on establishing measures that can be used to assess a horse's welfare not just at one point in time, but throughout its life. An animal's welfare covers many elements that contribute to its quality of life, but fundamentally their welfare or wellbeing relates to their ability to cope with their environment or situation, and the way that experience impacts on their mental and physical health (Hall et al., 2018). Central to the development of animal welfare is therefore the recognition that animals can experience positive and negative affective (emotional) states, known as sentience (Duncan, 2006).

Horses are sentient beings and have emotions, but this does not mean they have the same emotions or way of thinking as humans.

Horses are sentient beings, meaning they can feel and experience a range of positive and negative affective states (or emotions). They may not share our human language, but we can infer how they are 'feeling' from their behaviour, postures, facial expression as well as physiological and immunological parameters. Therefore, an individual horse's experiences or situation will influence its emotional (affective) state, with its behavioural expression considered as the primary and most accessible indicator of its welfare or wellbeing (negative or positive) at that time.

For horses involved in recreation or sport, their life experiences will impact upon their emotional responses to the many contexts they will be exposed to. There is a need for all equestrians to understand the importance of providing a balance of positive experiences in training, transport and competition to ensure their horses' needs are met, and welfare is positive (Waran and Randle, 2017).

Good horsemanship, including husbandry and training, should enable horses to perform well without the need for use of excessively restrictive and painful methods, equipment or aids. It is therefore essential that rules, practices and judging standards all ensure that horses involved in sport are not subjected to risks to welfare such as excessive behavioural restriction, discomfort, or constant pressure during training, management, transport or whilst at the event.

1.3 What is the Difference between Ethics and Welfare?

The terms ethics and welfare are often used interchangeably. 'Ethics' is a form of moral philosophy and is concerned with whether we *ought to do something*, at all. When we talk about something being 'ethical' what we most usually mean is: 'It is something which it is OK to do' and by 'unethical' what we most usually mean is 'it is something which it is not OK to do'. How we decide whether something is ethical or not depends upon many things, including our own personal ethics (which are often based in family, cultural and / or religious values), professional ethics and/or the ethical point of view which we are inclined to adopt – for example, a utilitarian (harm versus benefit) or deontological (rights-based) point of view.

Welfare, in contrast, is about the *way in which things are best done* to optimise animal wellbeing *if* we have made the initial decision that it is ethical to do something at all. So, for example, if we believe that it is ethical to use horses in sport at all, then how do we best manage horses on a daily basis to optimise their welfare? Decisions about the best way to do things to optimise animal welfare can be based on assessing the impact of an action or practice on the 'Five Domains' of physical environment, nutrition, health, behavioural interactions and mental state, and through considering positive impacts as well as negative impacts. The aim should be to ensure that animals have a 'Good Life' i.e., one in which their overall experience of their own life when taken across their lifetime is a substantially positive one.

For horses to have a 'Good Life', their overall experience of their own life when taken across their lifetime must be a substantially positive one.

Thus ‘ethics’ and ‘welfare’ are distinct, but they are closely inter-related because our ethical decision making (about whether something is ‘OK to do’ at all) is heavily dependent upon our knowledge of the welfare impacts.

When considering the question of ‘*Is it ethical to use horses in sport?*’ the response will be dependent upon whether one considers that the welfare needs of horses being used in sport can be met sufficiently to ensure that they have ‘good lives’ (as defined above). Similarly, the answer to more specific questions such as ‘*Is it ethical to use item x of equipment?*’ will depend upon what the welfare impacts of that item of equipment are. To answer such questions about welfare impacts we need to access evidence and expert views.

Ethics and welfare are not the same as each other. Ethical decision-making about the human use of horses in sport and leisure depends upon evidence-based information about welfare impacts.

Where good quality research evidence exists about the welfare impacts of particular actions, practices, or items of equipment, we may use that as the basis for ethical decision making. Where there is a lack of good evidence, or where contradictory evidence exists then we should adopt the ‘**precautionary principle**’ i.e., give the horse the ‘benefit of the doubt’, and make the decision most likely to optimise equine welfare given the uncertainty of the evidence available to us. Research aimed at providing the necessary evidence base should then be encouraged.

Where there is a lack of good quality evidence, or where there is contradictory evidence, equine welfare is safeguarded by adopting the precautionary principle until scientific evidence exists.

1.4 Welfare Science, Ethics and Regulation

The ethics of equine use concerns the moral position an individual or society takes in relation to how horses ought to be treated. What is deemed acceptable may or may not be informed by science but is a value-based position held by an individual/group. Welfare science is more objective, and although it relates to a number of different domains, fundamentally it’s the horse’s subjective experience that determines its welfare state. Thus, welfare science, helps provide a more definitive line as to what is, or is not, acceptable from the animals’ point of view.

The field of Animal Welfare Science has evolved considerably over the past 50 years into a respected field of study. Input from various eminent ethologists, physiologists and veterinarians has helped shape the field, through the development of research questions and methodologies, as well as most importantly discussing and agreeing upon a definition of animal welfare and recognizing that welfare is a characteristic of an animal, and although challenging, it can be empirically assessed through various measures related to biological function (animal based measures) or management/environment (resource based measures).

‘Animals have always had welfare, but what humans know of it has become modified over time’ – Prof Donald Broom (2011)

Alongside the development of animal welfare science, global awareness and ethical concern for animal welfare has grown. Animal welfare is now recognised as being a complex, multi-faceted public policy issue, including important scientific, ethical, economic and political dimensions (OIE 2014). Although traditionally the scientific study of animal welfare involving measurements of an individual animal’s quality of life has been seen as separate from the ethics of animal use and treatment, there is increasing acceptance that the two are inter-connected. Public attitudes towards animal welfare vary within and between countries, in part because of a wide range of factors including culture, religion, traditional practice and values. These different beliefs lead to varying concerns for animal welfare, which in turn impacts on developments in policy and legislation in relation to animal use and treatment. Increasing research dissemination and more public awareness about animal sentience, combined with deepening community consciousness regarding animal

use, has led to greater advocacy for the inclusion of sentience into (inter)national and organisational governance frameworks.

1.5 The FEI and Equine Welfare

Equine welfare is fundamental to the FEI, both operationally and reputationally. The FEI has developed various rules and guidelines including a 'Code of Conduct' for the welfare of the horse, drafted with its independent welfare advisor, World Horse Welfare, which states that the welfare of the horse "must be paramount" and "must never be subordinated to competitive or commercial influences". The FEI's rules include multiple provisions intended to protect welfare within its disciplines and these are regularly updated, and serious breaches of these rules are referred to the FEI Tribunal for adjudication/sanction.

Everyone is responsible for the future of equestrian sports. All those involved with horse sport must prioritize equine welfare and be seen to be doing so.

Despite this, questions have been raised as to the consistency and effectiveness of enforcement during competition. In the independent survey among equestrians carried out by the EEWB in 2022 it appeared that those involved with horses (ie within equestrianism) had concerns about horses being treated as 'equipment' or as 'an object/number' instead of as sentient beings. In addition, there were concerns expressed regarding safeguarding the welfare of horses when they are 'outside of the competition event', where it was perceived that the FEI has less jurisdiction and where welfare could be compromised in several ways. In fact, the FEI's rules on 'Abuse of Horse' apply regardless of where/when the abuse is/has been carried out, with the only limitation being that the horse in question is an FEI registered horse, and that the FEI has jurisdiction under its rule to sanction the alleged perpetrator of the abuse. Though the FEI is clear there are rules in place, it is likely that enforcement outside of competition is more challenging. The risk to equine welfare whether real or perceived should be considered in relation to maintaining public and other equestrian stakeholder confidence. It is for this reason that it is proposed that the FEI's vision for equine welfare should address wellbeing across the lifetime of a horse, including; during an event, transportation to and from an event, the time spent training outside of competition, following a competition and post career through to the end of its life.

The FEI's vision for equine welfare should address wellbeing across the lifetime of a horse, including during an event, transportation to and from an event and the time spent outside of competition.

2. CURRENT SLO CONCERNS RELATED TO EQUINE INVOLVEMENT IN SPORT

A number of surveys of public opinion have been carried out over the past few years with some common themes emerging related to equine welfare.

2.1 General Survey Information

There have been several independent surveys regarding equine welfare and public concerns carried out in different countries. For example, in the Netherlands (HAS Green Academy 2022), a survey of public opinion was carried out to determine the level of support for equestrian sport in general. The responses from the 1556 members of the public show that whilst 48% of respondents support equestrian sport, there is also a large proportion of people (45%) who are unsure and therefore could be easily influenced either way. Recent surveys of the UK public carried out by World Horse Welfare (2022 and 2023), demonstrated a high level of concern. In the 2022 survey (with similar results in the 2023 survey), 20% of respondents responded that they did not support horse involvement in sport under any circumstances, with a further 40% supportive *only if equine welfare and safety were improved*. Other surveys such as those carried out regularly by the National Sport Federation in the Netherlands, have gone further and asked respondents about their opinions regarding specifics such as the use of equipment including whips and spurs. Responses from surveys such as these show that there are concerns and a general lack of acceptance regarding the use of certain items of tack and equipment on horses involved in sport.

2.2 Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission - Public and Equestrian Survey Results

In the second half of 2022, baseline information regarding the current social licence situation was collected through two large scale surveys: 1) an online survey of the equestrian community within a number of countries (almost 28,000 respondents), and 2) a market survey of the general public (14,000+) from 14 representative countries. These provided useful insights into the viewpoints of the public and equestrians that engaged with the survey. The Commission was interested in whether the public and equestrian stakeholders had any concerns regarding equine welfare and if there were any obvious SLO concerns that emerged from the responses. The equestrians' views were of particular interest, since these are the people closest to horses and in the main are those most interested in the continued use of horses for leisure and sport.

The surveys showed that not only the non-equestrian public but also the equestrian community themselves believe that horses do not necessarily enjoy being involved in sports and respondents also believed that welfare standards need improving.

In the EEWC (2022) survey of the general public, an average of 20% of respondents believed that horses 'never enjoyed' being involved in sport, while half of the respondents (47%) thought horses 'enjoyed sport only sometimes', and 24% thought they 'enjoyed it frequently' but only 9% of respondents believed horses 'always enjoyed' sport. Respondents to the EEWC (2022) **equestrian survey** conveyed a similar concern regarding horses' enjoyment of sport, with only 5% believing they 'always enjoyed' being involved in sport, 45% believing they enjoyed it 'frequently', 46% believing they enjoyed it 'only sometimes' and 5% 'not at all'. This is clearly of concern for the continued involvement of horses in equestrian sports since if the public and equestrians believe that horses do not generally enjoy being involved in sport, and we are not able to demonstrate otherwise, this could lead to a loss of acceptance or social licence, and ultimately to the demise of equestrian sport.

However, the results of the surveys provide an opportunity to respond to the concerns, and to consider how research and education initiatives can be used to discover how the equine experience can be objectively assessed. Such measurements would not only enable welfare to be improved where necessary but would also facilitate evidence-based development of effective education and communication initiatives for the public and, perhaps more importantly, for equestrian stakeholders.

Both the general public and the equestrian community felt that horses don't necessarily enjoy being involved in sport and modifications are needed to ensure their welfare.

In both surveys results showed marked differences between countries and continents. These might link to differences in culture and attitude and/or be the result of focus on certain disciplines or issues that were picked up by the media.

For now, the majority of equestrian stakeholders and the public indicated that media coverage has not yet played a major influence on their confidence regarding horse welfare and how it is being protected in the sport. However, since this group was relatively large (49% (public) - 67% (equestrians)), there is a risk that a single incident covered by the media could have disastrous consequences for the future of horse sport, if this group loses confidence in equestrian sports.

In the equestrian survey varying levels of concern could be distinguished between groups of stakeholders who were represented across all disciplines. While in total 75% of the almost 28,000 respondents expressed having concerns about horse welfare in sports, this percentage was higher in leisure and national competition stakeholders and vets (70-87%) compared to those who identified as top- and international or FEI- related stakeholders (53-69%).

Moreover, an in-depth 'Delphi' study carried out in 2022 by the Sport Horse Welfare Foundation with the support of various National/Regional Federations, in which equestrian stakeholders' opinions were collected regarding their perception of the most urgent welfare issues, showed that individual stakeholders vary in the relative importance they place on different areas related to sport horse health and welfare (*Marlin and Williams – unpublished results*).

For the future involvement of horses in sport, equestrian stakeholders responding to the equestrian survey suggested that:

- there should be more regulation and improved enforcement of rules and regulations;
- there is a need to invest and facilitate knowledge transfer about horsemanship and riding/training to all involved with horses; and,
- that scientific findings should play a more prominent role in setting new rules, evaluating existing rules and enforcing their implementation and practice.

In the public survey, respondents were concerned generally about the things they believed had a direct impact on the horse. This included equine wellbeing and how horses are treated, and equine safety including the risks of the horse being injured during training or competition. Of lesser concern were: human safety and welfare, commercial interests and sustainability.

In the equestrian survey a free text response option for indicating concerns attracted enthusiastic contributions from many of the survey respondents, providing a great deal of information not just regarding specific concerns, but also regarding suggestions for improvements.

These responses were categorised and subsequently statistically analysed (using factor analysis) resulting in **six priority areas of focus: 1) Training and Riding, Tack and Equipment, 2) Recognizing physical and emotional stress, 3) Accountability, Enforcement, Knowledge, 4) the 'other 23 hours', 5) Competitive drive, the horse as a number or object and 6) not fit to compete, masking health problems** (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. The six priority areas of focus identified through factor analysis of equestrian survey results (relative importance of each area to the equestrian stakeholders identified; 1 highest priority of the focus areas, followed by 2, 3 etc.)

3. IDENTIFYING THE KEY ISSUES WITHIN THE SIX PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS

1. The priority area of most concern involved issues related to ‘Training and Riding, Tack and Equipment’. A more detailed analysis showed that a considerable proportion (34%) of survey respondents used words such as ‘abusive’, ‘cruel’ and ‘violent’ to describe training methods and riding practices they were concerned about. Another large proportion (30%) of respondents used words such as; ‘aggressive’, ‘painful’ and ‘rough’. Eleven percent of the equestrian respondents were also concerned about what they described as ‘the movements of the horse appearing unnatural and in conflict with normal biomechanical capabilities’ of horses. Furthermore, respondents were concerned about the negative impact of ‘rider frustration’ on the horse after a disappointing performance, ‘unethical training methods’ and ‘use of punishment-based training methods’. There were concerns raised about specific practices/training methods such as for example, continued use of ‘hyperflexion’ and ‘rollkur’ in training and competitions. Upon further analysis, almost 2% of all respondents providing open-ended responses expressed their concern about ‘rollkur’ or hyperflexion being excessively practiced whilst at the competition grounds, as well as at whilst training at home.

The concerns expressed through analysis of the free text responses regarding tack and equipment were numerous, with almost 10% of all respondents expressing their concerns about misuse of, or welfare concerns about items of tack and equipment. The main three areas/items of concern (making up more than 75% of respondent concerns) were:

- i. **Bits:** The most frequent concerns highlighted (41%) were about bits and bit use. Sixty percent of these concerns related to the way bits were used (‘harsh’ use of bits) or operated (‘using more than one bit’), the mandatory use of double bridles was highlighted as of concern, as well as there being no option to ride bitless in some disciplines.
- ii. **Nosebands:** The second most frequently mentioned concern within this category related to nosebands and noseband use (20%). Most (59%) of those expressing concerns were associated with ‘tightness’ of the nosebands, followed by concerns about the ‘harshness’ of the noseband (30%).
- iii. **Spurs:** The third most mentioned within the category tack and equipment concerned spurs (18%). The most frequently cited concern (46% of concerns within the tack and equipment section) was what was perceived as the misuse and ‘heavy use’ of spurs, followed by 42% of the respondents concerned about the spur itself (spurs themselves being ‘too harsh’). A proportion also felt spurs should be optional where they are currently compulsory, and there were also those that wanted to see use of spurs prohibited.

2. The priority area of second most concern was ‘(recognizing) physical and emotional stress’, particularly:

- equestrians being unable to recognize stress-related behaviour in their horses;
- horses experiencing emotional stress during training and at competition events;
- horses’ physical health issues being poorly cared for/addressed; and,
- safety issues and death of horses during competition.

3. Frequently mentioned concerns in the priority focus area ‘accountability, enforcement and knowledge’:

- judges rewarding dysfunctional locomotion or expression instead of harmony and accurate biomechanics;
- judges rewarding ‘big names’ (famous/successful people/big sponsors) rather than best performance/stewards not calling into account ‘big names’;
- stewards not enforcing the rules and deficient in their intervention;
- lack of adequately trained stewards;
- lack of vet or steward checks;
- reliance on traditional rather than scientific (evidence based) knowledge;
- lack of knowledge about good horsemanship and quality care; and,
- science-based information not being accessible, or used by, the equine community.

4. The fourth priority area was labelled ‘the other 23 hours’, with concerns expressed including:

- inappropriate housing facilities: ‘majority of life spent in box’, ‘not enough space’, and ‘lack of turnout’ (39%);
- ‘lack of opportunities to show natural behaviour’ and ‘ignoring the horses’ basic needs’ (24%)
- ‘lack of opportunities for social contact’ (22%);
- unsuitable diets and insufficient roughage (11%); and finally,
- overprotective owners keeping their horses inside for fear of injuries.

All concerns were expressed in the context of the home environment, but the ‘lack of turn-out’ was also specifically mentioned in relation to when horses are maintained on competition grounds. Furthermore, this priority area also included concerns about thermal (specifically ‘heat’) control measures at competition grounds, the general stress for horses at competition grounds, and the impact of transport on the competition horse (transportation events being too frequent and journeys being too long).

5. Frequently mentioned concerns in the priority area ‘competitive drive/the horse as a number/object’ included:

- commercial interest being more highly prioritised than horse welfare;
- the pressure on riders and horses to perform whether they are physically/mentally ready/prepared for it or not;
- Rider’s ego and motives being of more importance than the horse’s wellbeing;
- general ignorance about horses and their welfare needs; and,
- horses being treated as ‘machines’ and not as sentient beings.

6. Frequently mentioned concerns in the priority area ‘not fit to compete/masking health problems’ included:

- use of drugs or medical procedures to extend competitive life;
- use of drugs to mask health problems/hide health issues;
- horses not being fit to compete and yet still competing; and,
- doping and issues with enforcement.

There appears to be a significant difference in views between FEI equestrian stakeholders and other equestrians about the priority welfare challenges within horse sport.

Not only was there a difference between stakeholder groups regarding their level of concern about horse welfare in sport, but this difference was also visible in the level of concern they had regarding the six priority areas of focus. The equestrian stakeholders (i.e. competition riders, grooms, trainers, officials, leisure riders etc.) within the equestrian community appeared to prioritise areas of concern significantly differently. For example, when compared to leisure and local/national competition stakeholders and veterinarians, the international level equestrians and FEI stakeholders appeared to have a lower level of concern about all priority areas of focus apart from the focus area labelled ‘not fit to compete/ masking health problems.’ This suggests that there may be a significant difference in views between the FEI equestrian stakeholders and other equestrians from different disciplines regarding the level, and the priority focus of concerns regarding the involvement of horses in sport.

This result suggests a need for further work to determine the reasons for the difference in priorities regarding equine welfare, and an understanding of the most effective change strategies that may need to be employed to address areas of concern.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A FUTURE-FOCUSSED FEI EQUINE WELFARE STRATEGY

The following section provides the framework for the development of a FEI Equine Welfare Strategy. This involves a suggested vision and a strategic approach for ensuring the future of equine involvement in sport and addressing concerns related to social licence.

4.1 Proposed Vision

The Commission considered how best to convey the FEI’s ongoing commitment to ensuring that equine welfare is paramount. Given its significant leadership role, the proposal is that the FEI should adopt a future-focussed inspirational vision statement:

A Good Life for Horses

The vision of ‘A Good Life for Horses’ (Figure 2) provides the FEI with the opportunity to demonstrate both direct and indirect leadership to influence transformative change in relation to strengthening social licence and ensuring the future of equine involvement in sport and leisure.

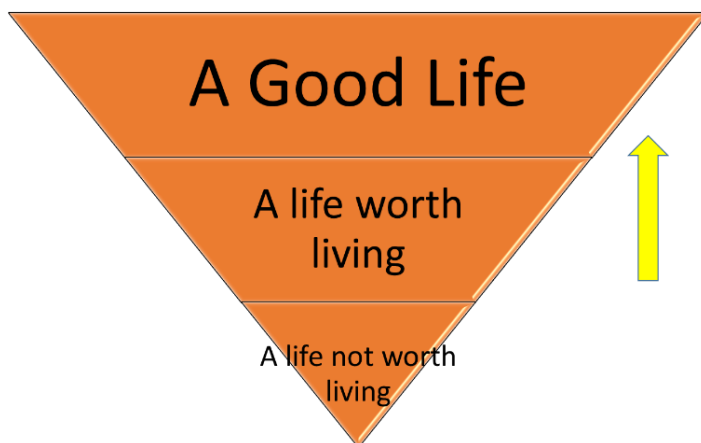


Figure 2. The proposed vision proposes the FEI ‘raises the bar’ providing the leadership required so that all horses enjoy a good life whether involved in sport and leisure activities.

It is proposed that the FEI should define equine quality of life using the Five Domains model as illustrated in [Figure 3](#). The first four functional Domains all contribute to a horse’s affective (emotional) state (Domain 5) and for this to result in an overall positive balance and for equine quality of life to be good, Domains 1 to 4 need to be described in relation to the specific context of equine involvement in sport.

The Commission suggests that as a first step towards developing the Welfare Strategy, further work is required by the FEI with associated equine welfare experts to ensure that a ‘Good Life’ is defined (and agreed) for horses in sport using the Five Domains Framework. This work should be carried out in parallel with various of the 30 Recommendations (ie adoption of the Equestrian Charter, Development of the new Welfare Code and Educational modules for FEI stakeholders).

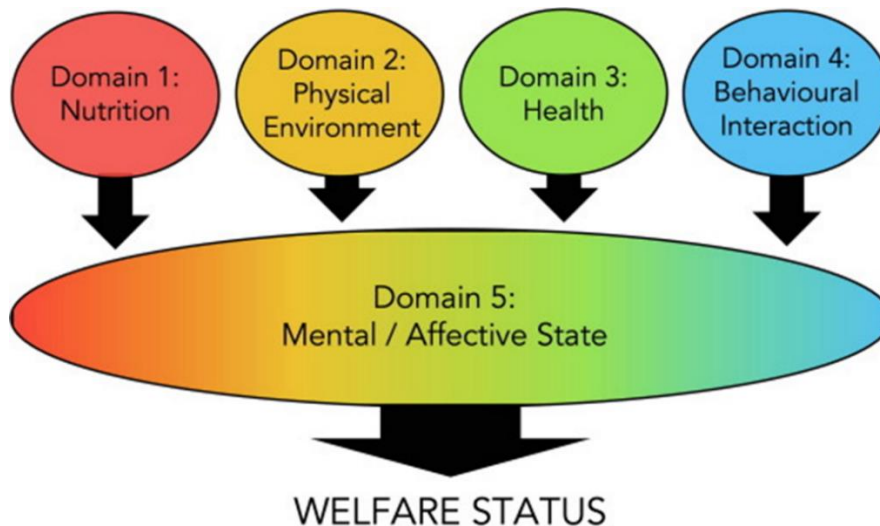


Figure 3. The Five Domains framework for describing and assessing equine quality of life (after Mellor 2017)

Defining and characterising a Good Life for Horses using the Five Domains in the context of horses involved in sport will be an important first step for clarifying expectations regarding high standards of equine welfare, and guiding policy and practice both in and outside of competitions.

An example of the approach that could be used to define and describe outcome expectations is illustrated in [figure 4](#). The welfare state of the horse reflects the overall balance of its negative and positive experiences at any particular time. For horse welfare to be paramount and for the horse to enjoy a good quality of life, there is a need to understand what is required by the horse involved in sport to minimise any negative experiences and optimise opportunities for positive experiences and positive welfare outcomes (Edgar et al., 2013). Practical equine management involves an understanding not just of the functional/biological needs of the horse, but also knowledge about how to ensure facilities, resources, experiences, expectations and opportunities are in the best interest of positive equine welfare. These are collectively known as ‘provisions’ (see David Mellor 2017), and descriptions of how these related to the Five Domains and positive welfare outcomes are necessary to help guide FEI policy and practice.

The EEWB Commission recommends that an important second step is to carry out further work to describe and explain the FEI’s expectations regarding the various **provisions** within each domain, with reference to the various equine life contexts from birth to death, as well as inside, transport between and outside of competition, of the horse involved in sport.

As can be seen in [Figure 4](#), there are basic needs within each Domain – but if the balance of positive experiences is prioritised, the ‘Wellbeing Aims’ will include promotion of positive welfare through providing facilities, experiences, choices and opportunities more likely to provide for positive affective (emotional) states in the horse. Examples of this are included in the second column (Horse Wellbeing Aims).

Practical equine management involves an understanding not just of the functional needs of the horse, but also knowledge about how to ensure facilities, resources, experiences, expectations and opportunities are in the best interest of positive equine welfare.



DOMAIN	HORSE WELLBEING AIMS
<p>NUTRITION Provide ready access to safe water and a diet adjusted to the individual to ensure and maintain optimal health and fitness taking into account the physiological and behavioural needs of the horse.</p>	<p>Minimise thirst, hunger and inappropriate diets. <i>Enable eating to be a pleasurable and fulfilling experience</i></p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT Provide suitable safe, stress-free enclosures with room to move freely, roll, lie down, shade/shelter, with good air quality and comfortable resting and interacting areas. Ensure management, training and performance environments are horse centric.</p>	<p>Minimise discomfort, restriction and behavioural deprivation <i>Promote a comfortable and stress free living, training, transport and performance environment considering temperature, safety, behavioural enrichment, social interaction and positive experiences</i></p>
<p>HEALTH Provide good physical health care, prompt diagnosis, prevention and treatment of disease and injury. Provide for the normal physical development of the horse in developing and implement appropriate training and exercise and ensure there is opportunity for free exercise.</p>	<p>Minimise any negative experiences of ill-health <i>Promote good breeding for sustainable health, optimal health and veterinary care, safe working practices, appropriate fitness, and opportunity for free exercise during the lifetime of the horse</i></p>
<p>BEHAVIOUR Provide the quality and quantity of space, safe enriched facilities, social opportunities and positive human interactions to enable the horse to express and enjoy normal behaviours</p>	<p>Minimise threats and unpleasant restrictions on behaviour <i>Promote provision of horse centric facilities, engagement in rewarding activities and positive human-horse interactions from birth to death.</i></p>
<p>MENTAL (AFFECTIVE/EMOTIONAL) STATE Provide fulfilling, safe, compatible, and appropriate opportunities for horses to enjoy positive pleasurable experiences in all aspects of their lives.</p>	<p>Minimise negative states such as anxiety, fear, negative stress, frustration, exhaustion and loneliness <i>Promote opportunities for expressing positive states including those associated with comfort, pleasure, interest and confidence</i></p>

Figure 4. **Example** of application of the Five Domains framework to promote positive equine welfare outcomes

4.2 Strategic Objectives

It is proposed that a new FEI Equine Welfare Strategy should address two Core Objectives:

- i. **Establish an enforceable expectation that all horses involved in sport must be given a Good Life**
 - a. *Ensuring a **Good Life** for all horses is the fundamental tenet of the FEI Equine Welfare Strategy. This means that horses engaged in sporting (and leisure) activities should be provided with the necessary care, management, training and performance conditions to ensure **positive** physical, mental, behavioural and social outcomes throughout their lives.*

ii. **Strengthen social licence to operate**

- a. *Explicit in the FEI Equine Welfare Strategy is an appreciation of the need to maintain and enhance the reputation of the FEI and equine sports horse industry, and in particular, to demonstrate ongoing commitment to addressing equine ethics and wellbeing concerns to ensure a sustainable social licence for the involvement of horses in sport.*
- b. The proposed FEI Equine Welfare Strategy (Figure 5) involves four key areas to ensure **FEI Leadership** in relation to being trusted, transparent, pro-active and accountable in relation to underpin the two core objectives.

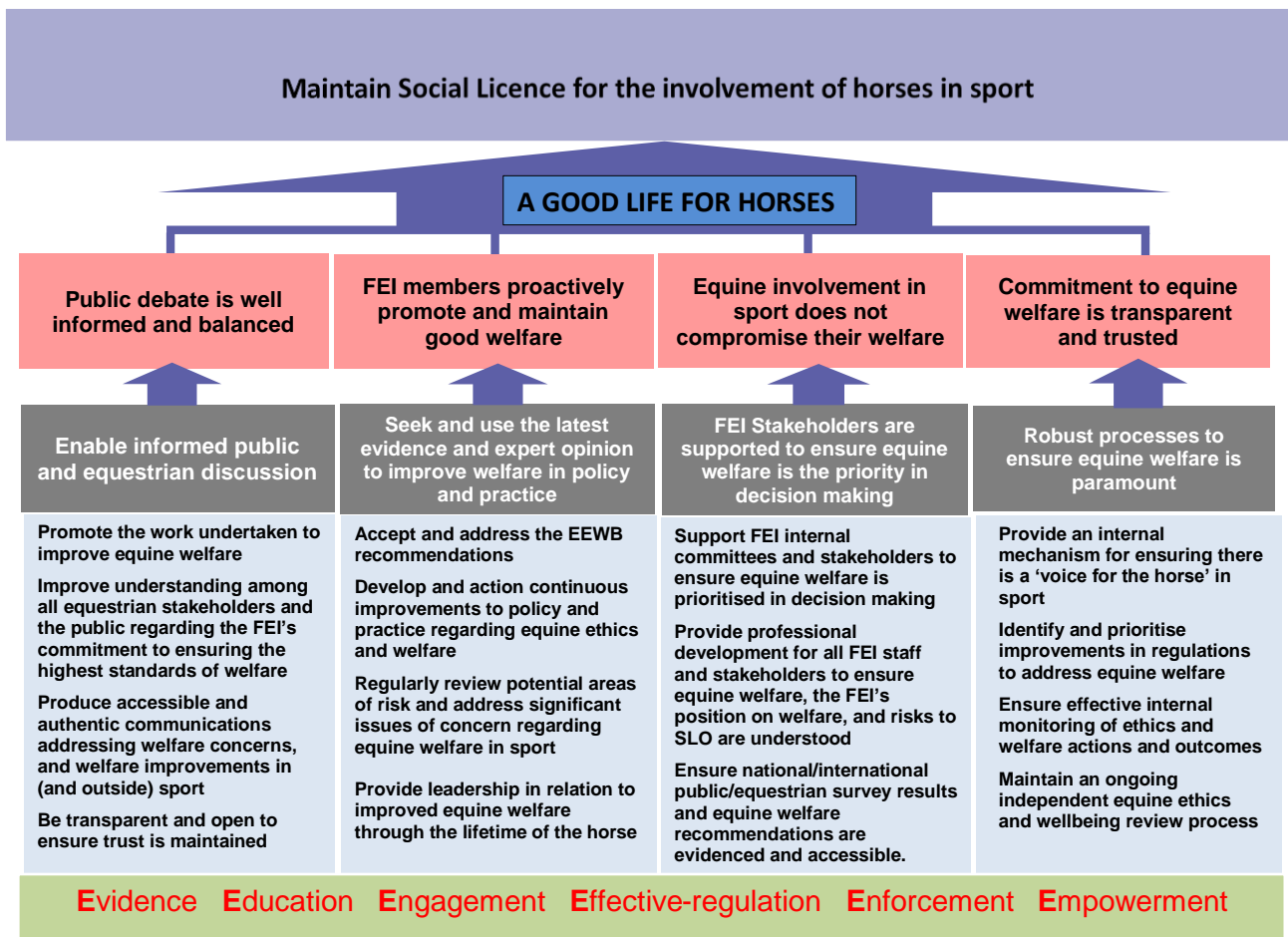


Figure 5. Proposed Strategic Approach for strengthening social licence to operate by promoting a Good Life for Horses

4.3 Organisational and Individual Commitment

The foundation of 'A Good Life for Horses' vision is expressed through the following proposed six organisational commitment statements, demonstrating the FEI's determination to prioritise equine welfare and to define and promote a Good Life for Horses.

These six organisational commitments form the basis of the proposed **FEI Equestrian Charter** to ensure individual commitment to the horse as sentient creature, understanding their responsibilities to the horse and for ensuring a Good Life for their horses ([see Figure 6](#)).

4.3.1 FEI Organisational Commitments to the Horse

- 1. Commitment to ensuring horse welfare is always prioritised**
- 2. Commitment to recognising equines as sentient creatures, capable of feeling both positive and negative emotions**
- 3. Commitment to ensuring that policy and practice in relation to equine welfare take account of current research, and where this is not yet available the 'precautionary principle'² is observed**
- 4. Commitment to recognising that continued involvement of horses in sport relies upon maintaining society's confidence and support**
- 5. Commitment to provision of continuous professional development in relation to equine welfare**
- 6. Commitment to maintaining zero tolerance for any activity in or out of competition which compromises equine welfare or brings the reputation/integrity of equestrian sport into question.**

4.3.2 Proposed FEI Equestrian Charter

Derived from the proposed six 'FEI Organisational Commitments to the Horse', through signing the FEI Equestrian Charter, equestrians and equestrian stakeholders will pledge personal responsibility for their horse(s) wellbeing, ensuring the highest standards of equine welfare, being accountable for horse welfare and constantly improving their understanding of what constitutes a good life for horses involved in sport making use of the latest evidence-based information.

² *The Precautionary Principle advises that where there is a risk or threat of negative animal welfare outcomes, and a lack of scientific evidence or full certainty, we should "give the animal the benefit of the doubt" or "err on the side of caution".*

The FEI Equestrian Charter

Equine welfare involves the physical, psychological, social and environmental well-being of the horse, and all horses involved in sport and leisure activities should be able to live a good life. The FEI requires all those involved in sport involving horses adhere to the FEI Code of Conduct, and to acknowledge and accept that at all times the welfare of the horse must be paramount by pledging to the **FEI Equestrian Charter**.

1. I understand that it is a privilege to involve horses in sport and this comes with responsibilities to the horse.
2. I commit to respecting the horse as a sentient creature capable of feeling both positive and negative emotions, and to ensuring its welfare is always my priority.
3. I undertake to continually develop my understanding of horse behaviour and welfare needs, and to proactively use this knowledge to provide a good life for horses with which I am involved.

Name _____

Signature _____

Figure 6. The proposed FEI Equestrian Charter (see Appendix 6 for proposed word changes provided in feedback from National Federations, and the EEWB Commission response)

4.4 Strategic Enablers

In order to bring about positive change in a structured manner, it is suggested that actions to deliver the FEI's core equine welfare objectives should be planned and implemented through use of Six Strategic Enablers – involving specific areas of activity:

- | |
|---|
| 1. Evidence: improving standards and credibility through being informed by research |
| 2. Education: promoting effective knowledge transfer to ensure optimal standards of equine wellbeing |
| 3. Engagement: ensuring transparency, through clear and timely communication |

4. Effective Regulation: safeguarding equine welfare, especially where there may be competing agendas
5. Enforcement: ensuring clear understanding of the rules and effective compliance by all involved with sports horses
6. Empowerment: promoting a culture of personal responsibility for equine welfare and wellbeing

These Six Strategic Enablers (the '6E's') (Figure 7) provide a structured approach to inform policy, decision-making and different stakeholder actions (and monitoring) related to ensuring a 'Good Life for Horses' and ensuring that actions will be achieved in an effective and transparent way.

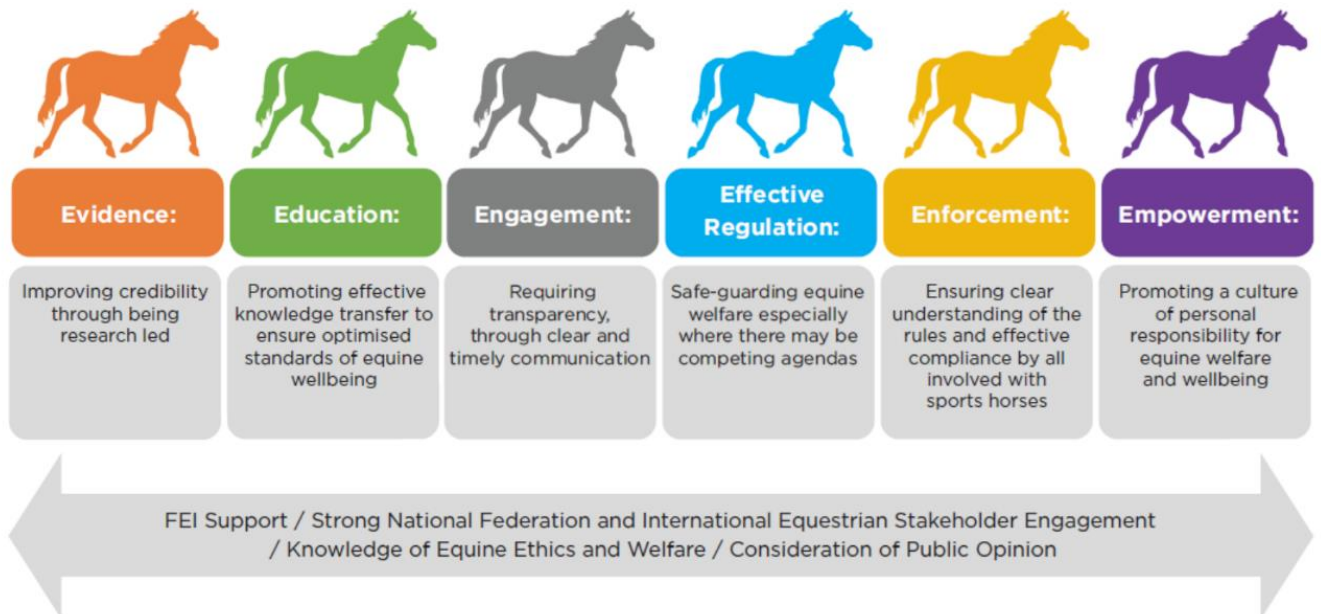


Figure 7. The Six Strategic Enablers to be used for addressing the core objectives of the FEI Equine Welfare Strategy

4.5 Monitoring Progress

To ensure ongoing progress is made in relation to strengthening SLO, regular assessment of measures related to the acceptability of involving equines in sport must be made through use of a standardised monitoring tool (see for example Figure 7). It is proposed that something along the lines of the SLO Monitoring tool should be developed and implemented by the FEI so that reliable data can be generated and made available to inform FEI strategy in a proactive way. This would ensure that 'tipping points' can be avoided and activities that strengthen SLO are clearly defined.

If you don't measure it, you can't manage it.

Such a monitoring tool should make use of evidence-based measures to enable comparisons to be made over time in relation to progress being made towards ensuring a good life for horses involved in sport, and the FEI's direct (and indirect) influence on advancing equine welfare internationally.

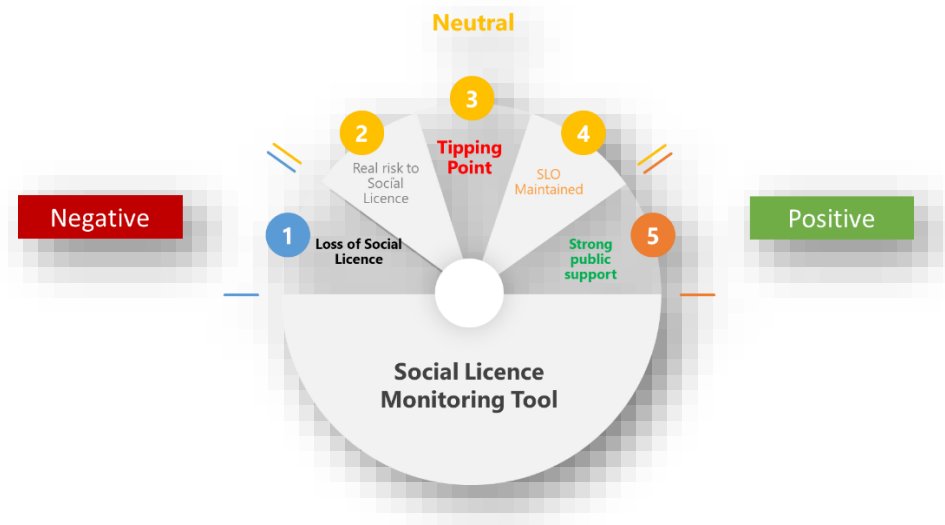


Figure 8. Monitoring SLO over time is required for ensuring that equine use in sports remains accepted

A range of metrics including key SLO measures will need to be developed and utilised including: Regular surveys or polls of Public (non-equestrian) views (for example: % public for or against use of horse in sport), surveys of Equestrian attitudes and specific concerns, analysis of enforcement statistics, completion rate of FEI Equine Welfare and SLO education modules, the number of signees to the Equestrian Charter and positive media activity in relation to equine welfare and placing the horse first. In addition, areas of concern regarding equine welfare and SLO, and lack of progress in addressing such concerns, should be proactively addressed in a timely manner.

It is well known that what is measured can be more effectively managed, and the EEWB Commission suggests that the current situation (the baseline) in relation to equine welfare risks/concerns and progress in each of the Six Priority Areas of Focus should be assessed by each FEI stakeholder group/individual equestrian, with goal-setting and structured plans for monitoring progress in place.

Human attitude and behavioural change is often challenging and stakeholder ‘buy-in’ is necessary for successful outcomes. To gauge success towards specific goals through an implementation plan, monitoring tools such as, for example, the proposed ‘*Equestrian Change Wheel*’ (see Figure 9) making use of the Six Enablers (6Es) could be adopted. This could inform and monitor progress in relation to actions taken to address equine welfare priority areas for use by different equestrian stakeholder groups.

For illustration, the Change Wheel in Figure 9, highlights how the “FEI Officials” stakeholder group could monitor their progress using this approach. Within each Enabler portion of the wheel, there are 6 sliding bars, one for each of the six priority areas of focus. For each stakeholder group (‘officials’ in this case) these sliding bars can be used to indicate the current situation (the white dot), and to inform and then implement any need for change. The length of the bar/line in each section illustrates the extent (number or size) of the activity/projects taking place, and the level of progress made is illustrated by the position of the white dot on the coloured-bars, with progress being indicated as the white dot moves towards the outer circle of the wheel.

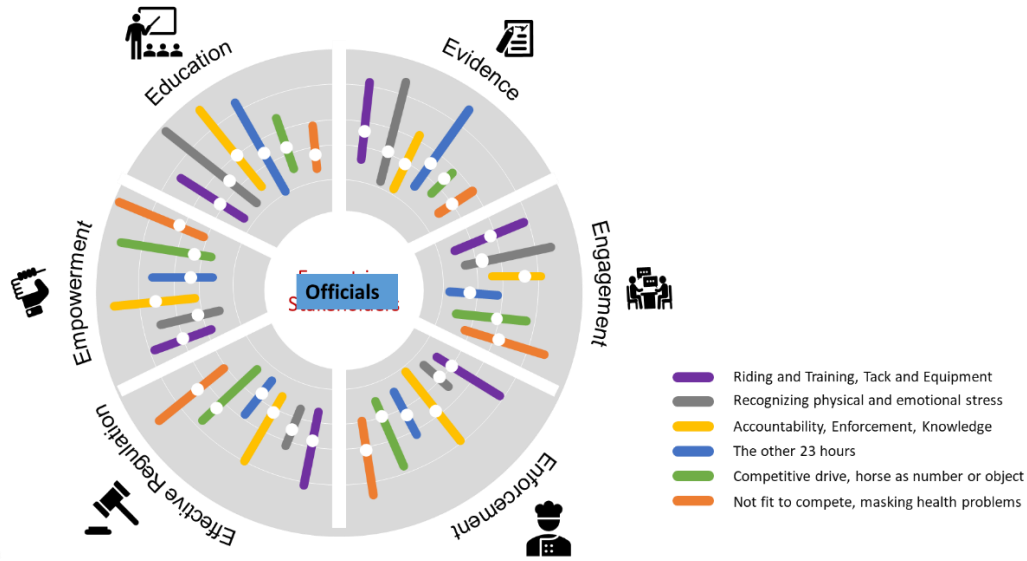


Figure 9. The ‘Change Wheel’ An Example of an approach for monitoring progress.

The Change Wheel makes use of the Six Strategic Enablers (6Es) to inform and monitor progress in relation to actions taken to address equine welfare priority areas.

In this case we have used as an example the stakeholder group - “FEI Officials” for illustration.

(Note: the position of the white dots on the coloured bars are examples only, and not representative of current baseline, state or activity)

5 IMPLEMENTATION

The definition of what constitutes good animal welfare is continually changing with the advancement of science and technology, improved funding for research and our ability to understand equine welfare needs. This means that in adopting all or any of the EEWB Commission **Recommendations**, and developing an implementation plan, it is and will be important to take account of new science-based information as well as the evolving landscape of public and equestrian community opinion. Regular ‘pulse surveys’ such as the recent one carried out by the Commission within the equestrian community ([summarised in section 6 below](#)) will provide useful information to inform decisions regarding changing stakeholder opinions.

It is suggested that a phased implementation plan is developed by the FEI. We suggest that in phase 1 of the implementation plan, the FEI should ensure that all equestrian stakeholders are well-informed regarding expectations in relation to a ‘Good Life for Horses’. The Five Domains model of animal welfare applied to the sport horse will provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensure high standards for welfare in relation to all aspects of the life cycle of the horse involved in sport. This needs to be underpinned by concurrent development of education and training modules and training events to reach all stakeholders (and roll out of these in Phase 2).

Defining, characterising and regularly refining ‘A Good Life for Horses involved in Sport,’ whilst making use of the Five Domains Framework will provide the basis for a revised FEI Code of Welfare to help guide policy and practice and underpin the implementation of the various recommendations made by the Commission. The implementation plan should consider the phasing of these Recommendations following the further development of the vision and strategy as suggested in Phase 1.

The FEI Education working group has, in consultation with some of the EEWB Commission members, already developed some new or revised modules to aid equestrian professional development in relation to ethics, welfare and social licence. Determining how these can be made compulsory for FEI Stakeholders to ensure consistent terminology, understanding and expectations is something that the FEI will need to consider for phase 2 roll out.

It is suggested that a ‘A Good Life for Horses’ working group is put together to help with developing and implementing the vision of a Good Life. This should consist of equine welfare experts and FEI staff who will develop the welfare considerations and expectations across the different life stages of the horse involved in sport. Examples of the approach that could be taken to inform practice have already started to emerge including a practical programme of study (see Figure 10) provided through the University of New England based on the work of Mellor et al., (2020). It may be helpful to make use of the work already undertaken by different University researchers, to help with applying the five domains framework.

Applying the Five Domains Model to the Welfare Assessment of Sport and Recreation Horses

Figure 10. Example of an [Online Programme for Equestrians regarding the Five Domains](#)



The image shows a promotional graphic for an online course. On the left, there is a photograph of a horse's head with the word 'Welcome!' in green text. Below the photo, it says 'Take your horsemanship to the next level with our exclusive online course! Discover how to effectively assess the welfare of sport and recreation horses using the 2020 Five Domains Model.' On the right, there is a list of course details:

- Course type: Short course
- Credential type: Certificate of completion
- Start date: Multiple available
- Duration: Flexible
- Cost: \$222.64 (NZD) to learn
- Community: 72 Learners

A green 'Join now' button is located at the bottom right of the details list.

6. ONGOING MONITORING OF SOCIAL LICENCE

6.1 *Highlights of the Results of the EEWB 'Pulse Survey' (June 2023)*

Following the presentation of the interim report to the FEI Board and 2023 Sports Forum participants, a second survey (the 2023 'Pulse Survey') of equestrians was carried out by the EEWB Commission ([See Appendix 3](#)). The purpose of the survey was to follow up the 2022 equestrian survey and to gauge up to date responses to some of the same questions and any changes in responses as compared with the 2022 survey. In addition, the Pulse survey provided the opportunity, to 'socialise' the EEWB Recommendations and to determine the level of support for the recommendations including the proposed vision of a 'Good Life for Horses', and the proposed Equestrian Charter.

The survey was answered by more than 5,700 respondents from over 50 countries. As with the 2022 survey the greatest response rate was from France followed closely by the UK.

Using the same stakeholder categories as the 2022 Survey for comparative reasons, respondents identified themselves as either FEI (Rider, groom, trainer, official etc), Leisure rider, Local competitor, Breeder, Vet etc. There was a greater proportion of FEI stakeholders to non-FEI respondents than in the 2022 survey but a similar distribution across the various groupings.

The majority of respondents were aged 26-45 (37%) or 46-67 (40%). Respondents who regularly participated in Dressage accounted for 32% of total, with Showjumping at (28%) and Eventing at (13%) – all other FEI disciplines were represented, but to lesser extents.

In contrast to the 2022 survey in which respondents had a 'free text' response option for describing any concerns, in this survey respondents were asked to identify which of the six priority areas of focus that resulted from analysis of the 2022 survey, they were most concerned about. As with in the 2022 survey, the priority area of focus of most concern was 'Training and Riding Practices, Tack and Equipment' (27%). This was followed by the priority area of focus 'horses treated as an object or number' (20%), 'recognizing emotional and physical stress' (16%), 'enforcement, accountability and horsemanship' (14%), 'horses not fit to compete, masking health problems' (12%) and 'the other 23 hours' (10%).

As in 2022, the pulse survey revealed a difference between FEI and Non-FEI respondents in the comparative level of concern for the different areas.

Furthermore, the pulse survey revealed that, Showjumping respondents were most concerned about 'Training and Riding practices; Tack and Equipment' (26%), followed by 'Horses Being Treated as an Object' (22%). Similarly, Dressage respondents, were also most concerned about 'Training and Riding practices, Tack and Equipment' but this represented a greater proportion of the respondents (36%) than for Showjumping. The Eventing respondents reported their highest focus area for concern as 'Emotional and Physical stress' (24%) followed by 'Enforcement and Accountability' (22%).

Most respondents felt that horses can 'Live a Good Life' when involved in sport (52% **definitely** agreed and 27% agreed) – but interestingly, the proportion was different for FEI vs non-FEI respondents, with 83% agreement for FEI respondents, as compared with 72% for non-FEI stakeholders.

Overall, 79% of equestrian respondents agreed that horses can live a Good Life when involved in sport.

When asked to consider the past year and whether there have been any noticeable initiatives concerning sport horse welfare, 21% of equestrian respondents said they had seen 'more', and 49% felt there had been 'some'.

Overall, 71% of the equestrian respondents felt that the EEWB Commission’s Recommendations would make a real or some difference to the welfare of sport horses, with some respondents being more confident than others (see Figure 11).

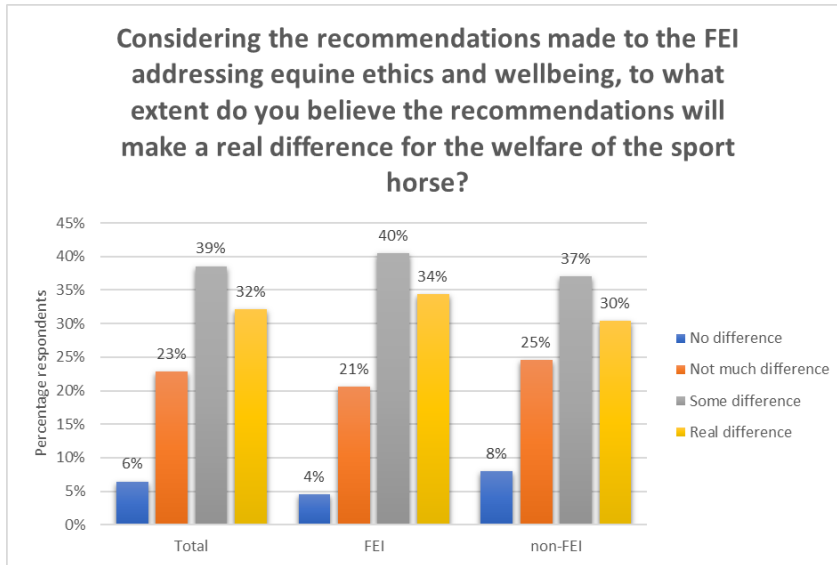


Figure 11. Responses from 'Pulse Survey' to the question of whether the EEWB Commission's Recommendations would make a real difference for the welfare of the sport horse.

Most of the FEI and non-FEI respondents were 'definitely' or 'possibly' prepared to pledge to the proposed Equestrian Charter (see Figure 6) (97% and 98% resp.) and support was similar across the three disciplines of Dressage, Showjumping and Eventing.

71% of respondents believed that the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission's Recommendations would make a real difference to the welfare of horses in sport.

Overall, it appears that there is a positive response to the Commission’s Recommendations regarding ensuring a 'Good Life for Horses', and the development of an Equestrian Charter to provide a transparent means for equestrians to pledge their commitment to their horse’s ongoing wellbeing. The key priority area of focus 'Training and Riding practices, Tack and Equipment' remains the priority area of concern overall, although there is variation between the disciplines regarding the relative priority assigned to the other five focus areas. More information on the results of the pulse survey is available through the Documents within the Commission’s website.

6.2 Engagement with various Equestrian Stakeholders

Appendix 4 and 5 provides information regarding the main engagement events undertaken by Commission members in relation to the development of the Recommendations and the Interim Report. Feedback from the majority of those who requested presentations, discussion or information has been mainly positive and highlights the need for ongoing stakeholder engagement after the Commission has completed its work. Responses to the questions raised by stakeholders who attended one of the two webinars promoted by the FEI, and through interaction with the FEI Board via webinar, or the Federations or FEI Associated organisations were responded to at the time of the meetings. A summary of the recorded questions and responses is provided in Appendix 5, and responses to the Federation’s questions regarding the Equestrian Charter is described in Appendix 6.

All questions posed by the public via the EEWB Commission email address were responded to by the EEWB Communication officer, with any FEI related questions being forwarded to the relevant party. Positive engagement was also provided by different Commission members with the media in different countries, through presentations to different stakeholder groups and with various articles being written based upon interviews with Commission members being given to answer questions regarding the EEWB Commission Recommendations.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

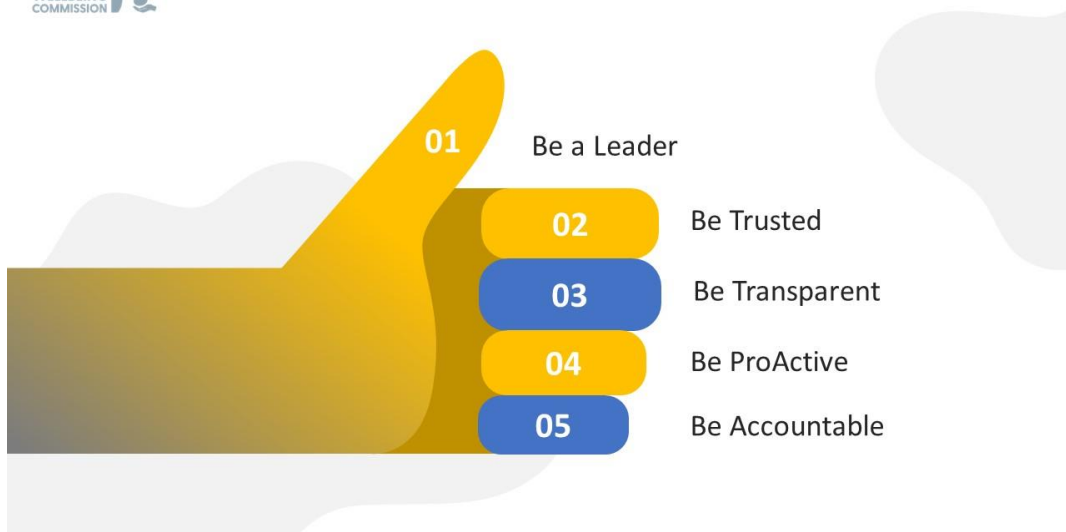


Figure 12. Suggested approach for consideration of the EEWB Commission’s recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon current research evidence, informed through discussion with equine welfare experts, the results of the EEWB Equestrian and Public Survey analysis and other relevant reputable surveys.

In addition to the early recommendations (and supporting information) provided to the FEI Board (see **Appendix 1**), the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission presents the following **24 recommendations for consideration**:

See [EquinewellbeingDocuments](#) for links to the documents referred to in these Recommendations.

7.1 *Be a Leader*



The FEI will play a critical role in advancing equine welfare globally by setting an example that others aspire towards.

Recommendation 1

Develop and share a future-focused ‘**Good Life for Horses**’ vision ([See Figure 2](#)) including a strategy for safeguarding equine wellbeing and ensuring the future involvement of horses in sport (see [Figure 5](#))

Recommendation 2

Publicly commit to defining, promoting and ensuring a **Good Life** for horses as the fundamental tenet of the FEI Equine Wellbeing Strategy (see [Figures 3](#) and [4](#)).

Recommendation 3

Develop and use an ‘equine centric’ design approach for FEI event planning and management to ensure that equine behavioural, social, physical (including thermal) and mental needs are a key consideration in choice of location/venues/provision of facilities and management of a FEI affiliated event.

Recommendation 4

Promote only ethical and evidence-based equestrianism. Ensure ongoing development of an understanding of the importance of utilising ethical, evidence-based practices in horse training, management and performance.

Recommendation 5

Ensure that the horse’s interests are always placed before the interests of the human or sport and celebrate equestrians who clearly place their horse’s interests before their own.

7.2 Be Trusted



The FEI will embed equine welfare within its structure and ways of working to demonstrate its commitment to prioritising equine welfare in both policy and practice.

Recommendation 6

Create a permanent internal FEI Equine Ethics and Wellbeing ‘body/office’ to advocate specifically for the welfare interests of horses in sport, providing a ‘voice for the horse’ (see below) and supporting the FEI in ensuring welfare is paramount.

Provide an internal office solely concerned with ‘equine wellbeing’ to ensure that the horse’s interests are prioritised in decision making and practice.

Provides clear ‘agency’ for the horse	Ensures the horse’s interests can always be considered before any others	Demonstrates the FEI’s ongoing commitment to advancing equine welfare in sport	Ensures ongoing development in relation to new evidence	Provides global leadership through direct and indirect influence
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Recommendation 7

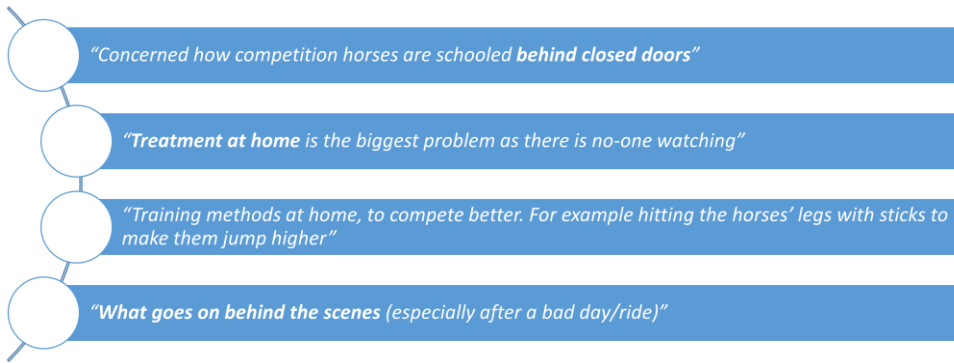
Develop and implement a robust FEI internal decision-making process to ensure that equine welfare and ethics are genuinely prioritised in the development of FEI policy and in practice.

Recommendation 8

Adopt a transparent and evidence-based approach for assessing the impact on horse welfare of new and existing items of tack and equipment in training and competition. Prioritise individual equine welfare in relation to the regulation of new and existing tack and equipment, being prepared to de-regulate tack because of risks to equine welfare.

Recommendation 9

Establish and implement a process for ensuring high standards of welfare and investigating risky practices for horses when ‘outside of competition’ through establishing something similar to human athlete checks under the WADA code.



(Some illustrative feedback from EEWc Equestrian Survey respondents 2022)

Recommendation 10

Ensure the existing Equestrian Community Integrity Unit (ECIU) is trusted and supportive, and there is an effective ‘whistle-blowing’ process for dealing with all FEI related concerns/complaints concerning equine welfare in and out of competition. Empower FEI equestrians to be ‘Active Bystanders’ and to challenge bad practice when they see it.

Recommendation 11

Ensure the existence of an effective ‘zero-tolerance’ policy which prevents, prohibits and punishes any practice that compromises equine welfare and safety during and outside of competition.

7.3 *Be Transparent*



The FEI will validate its commitment to equine welfare by being proactive in how it communicates, engaging in dialogue and providing credible information.

Recommendation 12

Proactively and positively engage with the public (including equestrian stakeholders) in matters related to equine welfare.

Recommendation 13

Develop an agreed FEI ‘welfare centric’ terminology for use when describing the way in which humans and horses interact in sport.

Recommendation 14

Develop and share a set of FEI Equine ‘Ethics and Wellbeing Position Statements’ to ensure consistent understanding and messaging in relation to the FEI’s commitment to equine welfare across the FEI family.

Recommendation 15

Proactively track and monitor ‘Social licence to operate’ and progress in relation to equine welfare, through use of a dedicated assessment tool (a ‘Social Licence Dashboard’). Measure progress against agreed equine welfare objectives and identify areas of public concern to help guide future FEI initiatives.

Recommendation 16

Require mandatory collection and publication of comprehensive lifecycle information (birth to death health/travel/event attendance/ownership/performance records) and injury statistics for horses involved in sport, alongside a trusted identification registration and traceability system.

7.4 *Be Pro-Active*



The FEI must be prepared to challenge the status quo and demonstrate a dynamic path of action towards achieving the highest standards of equine welfare, taking their stakeholders with them.

Recommendation 17

Ensure that all FEI stakeholders commit to the 'FEI Equestrian Charter' (See Figure 6). A public facing statement about the commitment equestrians make to ensuring the wellbeing of the horse.

Recommendation 18

Update the FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse to reflect the FEI's commitment to ensuring all horses have 'A Good Life', underpin the FEI Equestrian Charter, and to define what 'A Good Life' means in relation to the management and working life of horses.

Recommendation 19

Develop and disseminate a 'road map' (an implementation plan with timelines) for addressing the six priority areas of focus described by the EEWB (see Figure 1). Require and empower all FEI stakeholders to make use of the six Enablers (see Figure 7) to address the priority areas of focus within their own context (see Figure 9).

Recommendation 20

Establish and promote an equine ethics and wellbeing education programme for all equestrians. Require FEI stakeholders to complete at least two core modules related to equine wellbeing and social licence to operate preferably within their first year of association with the FEI.

Recommendation 21

Empower officials to ensure welfare is paramount, through improved mandatory training and ongoing professional development, greater support for ensuring effective enforcement and more accountability for achieving high standards of individual horse welfare at all times at an event.

Recommendation 22

Recommend evidence based acceptable transport frequency and journey length for ensuring the welfare of competition horses and sustainability of the sport.

7.5 *Be Accountable (Open to Independent Evaluation)*



The FEI will achieve higher standards of welfare and earn trust more sustainably by inviting external scrutiny.

Recommendation 23

Implement additional checks by trained professionals and officials to ensure horses are always 'Fit to Compete' by investing in more extensive and stricter health and welfare monitoring pre and post competition to prevent horses entering the competition arena if experiencing pain and/or stress.

Recommendation 24

Establish a permanent FEI Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Independent Advisory Committee to act as a 'critical friend' and provide an external perspective and independent advice related to the welfare of horses in sport.

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Additional References – Supporting Information

- Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission. Further Supporting Evidence (Tack and Equipment) (2022) <https://equinewellbeing.fei.org/assets/documents/Supporting%20information%20related%20to%20Tack%20and%20Equipment%20Early%20Recommendations%20to%20FEI%20October%202022.pdf>

9. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1:** The 6 Early Recommendations to FEI Board
- Appendix 2:** FEI EEWB Commission Stakeholder Webinars Report
- Appendix 3:** Pulse survey Questions (June 2023)
- Appendix 4:** Main Stakeholder Engagements of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission members
- Appendix 5:** Feedback from the Federations regarding the FEI's response to the proposed changes made by the EEWB Commission (August 2023)
- Appendix 6:** Response from EEWB Commission regarding the Federation recommendations regarding the wording of the Proposed Equestrian Charter

Appendix 1: The 6 Early Recommendations to FEI Board

Tack and Equipment – 3 recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Double bridles should not be mandatory in any equestrian discipline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spurs should not be mandatory in any equestrian discipline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nosebands should not be applied ‘too tight’ in any equestrian discipline – A uniform method of measurement including an agreed definition of ‘too tight’, should be used based on the available science.
Regulation – 1 recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include in the FEI General Regulations a rule to apply consistently to all disciplines to allow elimination during the field of play on horse welfare grounds
Others – 2 recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish an Education Focus Group to review existing modules in FEI Campus and propose new ones
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a Research Fund to address gaps in current knowledge regarding Equine Welfare
<p>For supporting information: https://equinewellbeing.fei.org/assets/documents/Supporting%20information%20related%20to%20Tack%20and%20Equipment%20Early%20Recommendations%20to%20FEI%20October%202022.pdf</p>

Appendix 2: FEI EEWB Commission Stakeholder Webinars Report

In June 2023, the FEI EEWB Commission held two stakeholder webinars advertised to **FEI Stakeholders** at times to allow access for different time zones. The purpose of the webinars was to enable stakeholders to ask the Commission questions about the 30 Recommendations which the Commission has made to the FEI in their interim report. These consist of the 6 early recommendations made by the Commission and the 24 further recommendations as presented at the FEI Sports Forum 2023. The Commission specifically sought feedback from stakeholders on the following three questions:

- (1) Are all of the recommendations relevant? – If not, which ones and why not?**
- (2) Are the recommendations implementable? - Why not?**
- (3) Are there any areas that have been missed? - What are they?**

Each Webinar lasted for 90 minutes and there were spaces in the webinar to allow for questions to be asked and answered by the members of the Commission who were present. The number of questions / comments received from stakeholders was not considered sizeable enough to facilitate a formal thematic analysis. What follows is therefore a descriptive summary of questions received and answers given by the Commission, both during the webinars and subsequently, in written correspondence with stakeholders.

There were a number of questions / comments relating to the function of the Commission / work of the Commission so far. These included:

Q: Who made the questions in the survey? I think they are quite "loaded"

Q: Did the EEWC receive the comments of the IDTC and IDRC regarding the recommendations?

Q: Do you believe it's realistic for the FEI as a sport governing body to facilitate checks outside of competition? Do they have the resources (financial & human) for this endeavour?

Q: Will the Commission/FEI be engaging with the European Commission on transport regulations regarding movement of horses?

Q: The independent nature of the committee will be very important

Q: What annual funding is available to the EEWB for further work on the recommendations, education, research, etc. In general there was little statement about the role of money and finances.

Q: If I understood correctly the EEWB did not and will not look at the sport rules. The EEWC will provide the recommendations/report and then it is up to the FEI to "translate" those recommendations into the sport rules. Is this correct?

The Commission responded to these and other similar questions and comments as follows:

The questions were formulated by the Commission to meet the specific task which the Commission had been given by the FEI, in accordance with methodology frequently used in industry surveys. All questions were formulated so that respondents could answer either positively or negatively.

The survey results as presented during the webinars were consistent with those previously presented by the Commission. The full survey results and all talk slides previously given have been made freely available on the EEWC website.

The role of the Commission is to provide independent, objective advice on equine ethics and wellbeing to the FEI Board. The independence of the Commission is important and it is something which the Commission has taken care to protect. The Commission makes recommendations to the FEI Board. The FEI then decides on the course of action to address those recommendations (if they chose to do so), and funds such actions. It is the role of the FEI, not the EEWC, to consider the implications of the recommendations for FEI Rules.

The Commission accepts that it will be complicated to facilitate checks outside of competition. The Commission has discussed this with the FEI legal department, and it will require further thinking by the FEI to consider how such checks can be undertaken.

There were a number of questions / comments about the concept of ‘A Good Life’ within the Commission’s recommendations. These included:

Q: Who do you envisage will define specifically what a Good Life will mean? So far everything is very general.

Q: We used the Five Domains in our principles for social license are you saying that if something is consistent with this it would also be consistent with your definition of Good Life?

Q: To my previous point you are asking people to sign up/commit to provide a Good Life -but how do I know exactly what that is?

Q: So far you have not been able to really define a Good Life so you are asking people to sign up to an unknown.

The Commission responded to these and other similar questions as follows:

The Commission is not unwilling to define A Good Life, and indeed we have stated that whilst there is much known about horse needs and positive welfare, it is also important to consider a Good Life in relation to the way in which horses are involved in Sport, and the various contexts experienced by sport horses. Good welfare is not simply about avoiding negative welfare impacts – it is also about promoting positive welfare impacts. The Five Domains model considers the animal’s own experience of its life in terms of positive and negative welfare impacts *taken across its lifetime* – it is not a question of whether one action undertaken at a particular moment in time is ‘consistent with (our) definition of a good life’. The concept of ‘A Good Life’ is constantly evolving as the evidence base provided by welfare science develops.

The Commission has provided a fuller discussion of the concept of ‘A Good Life’ and the proposed 5 Domains Approach to defining a Good Life in the fuller interim report (and will be refined further in the final report) submitted to the FEI Board. The Commission will talk to this in the Final report to the GA in Mexico, having completed the analysis of the summer 2023 pulse survey and questions from the engagement webinars requesting feedback on the concept of A Good Life and the Recommendations.

The Commission’s Recommendation regarding the Equestrian Charter has three statements (I understand, I commit and I undertake) – the last of which refers to A Good Life. Once the final report has been submitted to the FEI Board, the proposed vision of a Good Life will become clearer – and the work that is required to contextualise it for sports horses will be proposed.

There were a number of questions / comments about the concept of ‘Evidence’ within the Commission’s recommendations, which included:

Q: How do you define what constitutes ‘evidence’?

Q: Re - evidence - I agree for us it’s about research evidence The equestrian public don’t necessarily appreciate the existing evidence (as in the large amount of scientific evidence regarding what horses want and need. What needs to be explained (to them) is the difference between actual evidence and anecdotal opinion.

The Commission responded to these and other similar questions as follows:

Ethical decision making should be based in evidence derived from welfare science. Ideally, such evidence should be derived from peer-reviewed scientific research evidence - which may be either qualitative or quantitative. (Eg. Within the concept of ‘Veterinary Evidence Based Medicine’ there is an established hierarchy of evidence types, ranging from systematic reviews (at the top of the pyramid) to expert opinion (at the bottom)). To adequately safeguard the welfare of horses involved in sport, all stakeholders need to accept the need to consider objective evidence and be prepared to have their own beliefs challenged and to adapt them if the evolving scientific base suggests that it is appropriate to do so. From a public-facing, social

license point of view, it is important that those of us involved in horse sport are seen to be basing our decisions on objective scientific evidence. Where there is a lack of good quality evidence, or where contradictory evidence exists then we should adopt the 'precautionary principle' i.e., give the horse the 'benefit of the doubt' and make the decision most likely to optimise equine welfare given the uncertainty of the evidence available to us.

There was a question about 'social license'

Q: Why does the EEWB believe that the Social License should be unwritten. Wouldn't it be more actionable and meaningful if there was a written statement of terms?

The Commission responded to this question as follows:

The definition of social licence used by the EEWC is derived from various publications about what it is and why it matters. The concept of social license involves the beliefs, perceptions and opinions held by the general public and other interested or affected stakeholders. It is described as an unwritten, non-legally-binding social contract whereby the community gives industry the right to conduct its business. Just as the regulatory license has precise conditions, the social license to operate is intangible with conditions that are not universally defined, in addition to being subject to continuous change. The main drivers for granting or removing social license are the community/stakeholder perceptions of the social legitimacy and credibility of the activity or industry, and the presence or absence of trust. SLO can be granted (maintained) or removed by the public/community or stakeholder network. SLO difficulties can arise when the industry/community under the spotlight sees gaining a social license in terms of a series of tasks, terms or transactions (in effect making a deal) or where the industry/community;

- Fails to understand the public or stakeholder community concerns, and is unable to establish social legitimacy
- Delays stakeholder engagement
- Undermines its own credibility by failing to give reliable information
- Fails to respect and listen to the community
- Under-estimates the time and effort required to gain a SLO
- Over-estimates (or, worse, assumes) the quality of the relationship with the community

There were a number of questions / comments about specific recommendations, to which the Commission offered the following responses:

Q: Have you looked more into what it requires in terms of training and possible rule changes for the officials?

A: Such detail is a matter for the FEI – the Commission makes recommendations and the FEI then considers how they might be enacted.

Q: The lifecycle data is very important. From my anecdotal observation, the median age of a horse 'retiring' or having a career-ending injury seems to be getting lower and lower.

Q: How much in depth would the life cycle data have to be and is it realistic?

A: Lifecycle data is important and would be an area for future research. In relation to all research which may come out of the Commission's recommendations, stakeholders may make recommendations for funding priorities to the FEI. The Commission's interim report suggests the minimal lifecycle data which should be collected for each horse.

Q: I agree and believe that especially Stewards need to have more decision-making power.

A: Empowering officials is crucial, and a clear message of support for officials at national and international level is an important part of safeguarding welfare. We need to establish a culture where bad behaviour is not tolerated, both to protect equine welfare and because bad behaviour pulls all of equestrian sport into disrepute. Empowering the officials so that stakeholders can support them is an important first step.

Q: Re. Six Priority Areas of Focus - medical procedures masking health problems/Not fit to compete - how do you plan to proceed?

A: We have provided the Recommendation regarding additional external scrutiny at competitions.

Q: How will you define "Outside competition" - who and how to perform it?

A: Such detail is a matter for the FEI

Q: Is the Charter only for the FEI riders and coaches? Or for all equestrians?

A: For all equestrians.

Q The 5 main recommendations are really good. Some of them I think will be more challenging to carry through than others, especially outside competitions. The different countries also vary a lot when it comes to national AW regulations, including horses.

A: Agreed.

Q: Would recommendations 4, 5 and 6 be the responsibility of the national federations?

A: The national federations have a significant role to play in picking up and enacting the recommendations. They may be able to do so somewhat more quickly and most flexibly than the FEI. All of the recommendations are the responsibility not only of the FEI but also of national federations and of individual stakeholders.

Q: On recommendation 11 - Ensure the existence of an effective 'zero-tolerance' policy which prevents, prohibits and punishes any practice that compromises equine welfare and safety during and outside of competition. In making this recommendation, is the commission implying the FEI does not have an effective Zero tolerance policy because there are recidivists regarding welfare infractions. May we please see the evidence for this?

A: The Commission's Recommendation addresses the perception and concerns expressed by survey respondents as well as commentary regarding consistency and ongoing accountability expressed by equine welfare scientists and equestrians. The recommendation is aimed towards ensuring that an effective policy is extended to cover outside of competition.

Following the two webinars, recordings made of them were placed on the Commission's website for open access.

END

Appendix 3: Pulse survey Questions (June 2023)

List of questions pertaining to the Pulse Survey – June 2023		
1	In what country do you currently reside?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose in drop-down list
2	What is your age category?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-25 years • 26-45 years • 46-67 years • Over 67 years • Other
3	Which of these stakeholder groups best describe you? (You may tick up to two options)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEI Affiliated Rider/Driver • FEI Affiliated Groom • FEI Affiliated Owner • FEI Affiliated Trainer • FEI Affiliated Coach/Instructor • FEI Official • FEI Board Member • FEI Committee Member • Local competition stakeholder (owner, rider, groom, training, coach/instructions) • Leisure Rider/Owner • Equestrian Organiser • Breeding Federation Representative • Other
4	In which discipline do you most frequently participate in? (Please only tick one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumping • Dressage • Para Dressage • Eventing • Driving • Para-Driving • Endurance • Vaulting • Other
5	Given your discipline which of these six areas of focus is of most concern for your discipline? (Please only tick one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and Riding practices, Tack and Equipment • Emotional and Physical stress (including injuries) of the sport horse • Enforcement, Accountability, Horsemanship • The other 23 hours (outside of competition) • Horses treated as an object or “equipment” and not as an emotional creature • Horses being not fit to compete or masking health problems

6	Considering the past year what have you noticed about sport horse welfare? (Please only tick one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have noticed some initiatives for improving sport horse welfare • I have not noticed any initiatives to improve in sport horse welfare • I have noticed more initiatives for improving sport horse welfare • I don't know
7	The FEI's Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission has proposed a new vision to ensure a 'Good Life for Horses in Sport'. Do you agree that horses can live a Good Life when involved in sport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitely agree • Agree • Possibly • Probably not • Definitely not
8	Considering the recommendations made to the FEI addressing equine ethics and wellbeing, to what extent do you believe the recommendations will make a real difference for the welfare of the sport horse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range between 1 and 10
9	Will you be prepared to pledge to the new Equestrian Charter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Maybe
10	Have you filled in last years' survey from the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission about the welfare of the sport horse which was distributed in July and August 2022? (please only tick one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't know

Appendix 4: Main Stakeholder Engagements of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission members

Dates (Month/Year)	Event/Engagement
July-August 2022	Equestrian Community Survey in English, French and Spanish sent to FEI stakeholders, including NFs, MoUs, Board Members HQ, Athletes, Officials, OCs and Owners
August 2022	Focus groups at annual conference of International Society of Equitation Science
September 2022	Discussion and analysis of survey results with input of equine science researchers
November 2022	Presentation of survey results and early recommendations at FEI General Assembly
November 2022	Discussed at seminar in Germany with the German equestrian community
November 2022	Presentation to the European Horse Network, members of the European Parliament Horse Group and a representative of the European Commission
December 2022	Presentation to the Dutch Horse Industry partners (Sectorraad Paarden)
December 2022	Delivered presentation as part of training for officials in Chile
January 2023	Presentation on social licence and survey results to USEF followed by workshops
January 2023	Two informative sessions (one with judges and one with Stewards) during the 2023 Officials Forum in Lisbon (POR) from 13 to 17 January.
Feb 2023	Delivered presentation to the PAEC General Assembly comprising 31 National Federations
March 2023	At the panel for Horses.tv about SLO

April 2023	Meeting with IDRC and IDTC
April 2023	Met with grooms at World Cup Final in Omaha
April 2023	Presentation of GA survey results and panel discussion at FEI Driving Forum, NE
24-26 April	Presentation of interim report, Q&A and discussion at FEI Sports Forum
April/May 2023	Interviews for a variety of Dutch Horse Magazines
May 2023	Presentation at National Equine Law Conference – Why is the FEI concerned with SLO
May 2023	Round Table discussion on SLO AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners)
May 2023	Delivered presentation at Global Sports Forum for Dutch Veterinarians
May 2023	Meeting with EEF Dressage group about EEWC recommendations
May 2023	Presentation at horse economic forum to Portugal's equine society in Lisbon
May 2023	Delivered presentation as part of training for officials in Brazil
May 2023	Presentation in Poland to EEPC conference on social licence and work of EEWB
June 2023	Presentation on Equine Science Society – 'Social License to Operate – why public perception matters for horse sport' & short review article in Journal of Equine Veterinary Science
June 2023	Progress of the EEWC work highlighted at meeting of the Horse Group of the European Parliament
June 2023	Conducted pulse survey of FEI and equestrian community to gather feedback on EEWC recommendations

June 2023	Engagement with the British Equestrian Federation Ethics and Welfare Advisory Group about how the FEI Commission's recommendations apply and might be translated at national level
June 2023	Presentation to riding clubs, trainers and riders in Marbach organized by German Federation
June 2023	EEWC work highlighted in panel discussion about social licence at media event for equine sector in London
June 2023	EEWC Chair and Theo Ploegmakers met with EEF Dressage working group
June 2023	EEWC Chair - Presentation to ESNZ members
June 2023	Presentation of the Interim report and Recommendations to FEI Board and questions (webinar)
June 2023	Two webinars held with more than 100 members of FEI community on 26 and 28 June to present on recommendations, answer questions and take feedback.
July 2023	Presentation and Q&A at Equestrian Australia Conference 'Expectations from the FEI Ethics & Wellbeing Commission in Managing Future Horse Health, Safety & Welfare- what can we do better?'
July 2023	EEWC Chair -online webinar - World Sport Horse Breeders Society – A Good Life for horses- EEWC Recommendations - 'Setting the sport horse up for success'
July 2023	EEWC Chair Presentation to NZ TB Racing Welfare Committee – A Good Life for Horses – EEWB Recommendations.
August 2023	EEWC Chair - North American Veterinary Medicine Society – Online talk – A Good Life for Horses -EEWB Recommendations
August 2023	World Trotting Conference presentation on social licence and work of EEWC and interview with Travronden magazine
August 2023	Online meeting with EEF Dressage Group with Natalie W/Theo P regarding Recommendations and in particular the Double Bridle.

	General support for Recommendations but not for Double Bridle not being mandatory.
September 2023	Highlighted work of EEWC during panel discussion at annual conference of the British Equine Veterinary Association
September 2023	EEWC Chair presentation to New Zealand Equestrian Community at the ESNZ conference
September 2023	EEWC Hui with all Equestrian Sports groups/Users in NZ hosted by ESNZ – ‘One Voice’ for Horse Sports – ‘A Good Life for Horses’
September 2023	EEWC online presentation with NZ Pony Club organisation Conference
October 2023	EEWC Chair Online presentation to FEI Solidarity Meeting
October 2023	EEWC Chair in person Keynote Presentation to IFHA (Paris) on FEI Commission Recommendations
October 2023	EEWC Chair online presentation SLO, EEWC Recommendations and link to Sustainability
October 14 th 2023	Final Feedback opportunity provided to FEI Board to inform final report
October 18 th 2023	Final Feedback date from FEI staff regarding the final report
October 2023	Feedback provided via FEI from Federations regarding the proposed Equestrian Charter and wording – FEI Board forwarded to EEWC for their consideration regarding changed wording. Response from EEWC in Appendix 5.
Around 50 approaches from public by email through Commission website	All responded to and any feedback noted
Specific correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Dyson – letter to FEI and FEI Dressage technical committee regarding oral discomfort/pain and mandatory use of double bridle • International Society for Equitation Science – public statement of support for Recommendations and Concern re Double Bridle and Noseband tightness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Horse Welfare Foundation – Public statement of support for Recommendations and alignment with their own studies • Letter from IDTC and IDRC to FEI expressing concerns regarding early recommendations in relation to tack and equipment • Email from Chair of FEI Dressage technical committee to clarify the identity of the ISES – responded to by N Waran • Email from IDTC/IDRC to Theo/Commission with questions regarding the Recommendations- responded to by N Waran • Danish Animal Ethics Organisation email support for recommendations • World Horse Welfare email support for recommendations • International Grooms Association discussion and request for survey • British Equestrian Federation Welfare Advisory Committee email support • Horse Society Botswana requesting the Survey questions to use
Media Articles	Various Articles published regarding the EEWC Recommendations

Appendix 5: Feedback from the Federations regarding the FEI's response to the proposed changes made by the EEWB Commission (August 2023)

APPENDIX O – THE FEI EQUESTRIAN CHARTER

Equine welfare involves the physical, psychological, social and environmental wellbeing of the Horse, and all Horses involved in sport and leisure activities should be able to live a good life. The FEI requires all those involved in sport involving Horses adhere to the FEI Code of Conduct, and to acknowledge and accept that at all times the welfare of the Horse must be paramount by pledging to the FEI Equestrian Charter.

- I understand that it is a privilege to involve Horses in sport and this comes with responsibilities to the Horse.
- I commit to respecting the Horse as a sentient creature capable of feeling both positive and negative emotions, and to ensuring its welfare is always my priority.
- I undertake to continually develop my understanding of Horse behaviour and welfare needs, and to proactively use this knowledge to provide a good life for Horses with which I am involved.

Comments Received by 16 August 2023

CAN NF: Equestrian Canada supports the addition of the Equestrian Charter, as part of that we suggest a wording edit to 2.3 to reflect the use of evidence based research and learning as part of the continued development:

2.3. I undertake to continually develop my understanding of Horse behaviour and welfare needs, and to proactively use this knowledge to provide a good life for Horses with which I am involved.

Proposed wording: 2.3. I undertake to continually develop my understanding of Horse behaviour and welfare needs, seeking evidence-based sources of information, and to proactively use this knowledge to provide a good life for Horses with which I am involved.

GBR NF: We support the proposed FEI Equestrian Charter and will adopt this within welfare policies. However, we feel that it does not go far enough in its current form and lacks sufficient depth or detail. Attention should be given to the 'other 23 hours' out of competition, as well as the lifetime care of the horse. These general principles could be expanded further to include references to the five domains for animal welfare, as well as the three 'Fs' (friends, freedom, and forage).

We would like to request that the FEI considers expanding this wording (in consultation with the FEI's Equine Ethics and Welfare Commission) to be more all-encompassing, reflecting the equestrian's responsibility for the care of the horse, and what this effectively means in practice.

Appendix 6: Response from EEWB Commission regarding the Federation recommendations regarding the wording of the Proposed Equestrian Charter:

The commission has considered the proposals as requested by the FEI and offers the following responses:

1. We are happy with the proposed rewording from the Canadian NF.
2. We do not feel it that rewording the Charter to go into greater depth is required for the following reasons:

The Commission has provided the Charter as a method for equestrians to clearly demonstrate their active commitment to ensuring the ongoing wellbeing of the horse in sport. The Charter lacks the guidelines or detail as to how this is achieved because the Charter clearly indicates that these guidelines are in the associated Code of Conduct (Welfare guidelines for horse when in and outside sport during their lifetime – see Recommendation 18).

Equine welfare involves the physical, psychological, social and environmental wellbeing of the horse, and all horses involved in sport and leisure activities should be able to live a good life. The FEI requires all those involved in sport involving horses adhere to the FEI Code of Conduct, and to acknowledge and accept that at all times the welfare of the Horse must be paramount by pledging to the FEI Equestrian Charter.

We have suggested that the framework for contextualising the Vision of ‘A Good Life’ – and the Five Domains in relation to the sport horse needs to be developed through an FEI working group (see section 5 of the final report) and the guidelines for providing a Good Life should be reflected in the newly developed FEI Equine Welfare or Ethical Code and disseminated via co-developed education modules (as per Recommendations 18 and 20).

10. FINAL NOTE

The information contained in this report is intended to provide information including 30 recommendations to assist the work of the FEI Board. The material in the report may include the views or recommendations of third parties and does not necessarily reflect the specific views of individuals within the FEI nor the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission, nor does it indicate a commitment to a particular course of action. All information contained in the report is for Commission and FEI Board internal use only. For further information about this please contact the FEI Director General.

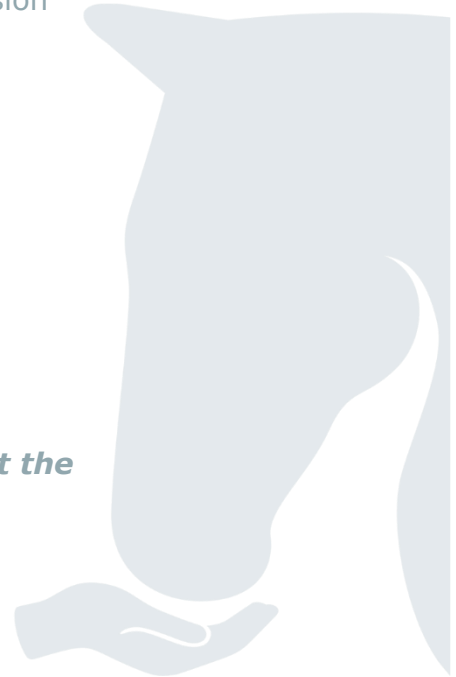
All reasonable measures have been taken to ensure the survey information referred to in this report is based on surveys that have been carried out ethically, any analysis of the available information is robust and accurate, and the interpretation of results objective and without bias. Feedback and engagement has been invited throughout the Commission's work and consideration and response to feedback has been given.

The information contained in this report does not replace or alter any FEI policy or regulations, nor other official guidelines or requirements.

Members of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission (FEI):

- Professor Natalie (Nat) Waran
- Professor Kathalijne Visser
- Dr Camie Heleski
- Professor Madeleine Campbell
- Jessica Stark
- Cayetano Martínex de Irujo
- Ken Lalo
- Theo Ploegmakers
- Cesar Hirsch
- Sabrina Ibáñez

For full survey results and other information visit the Commission website: equinewellbeing.FEI.org





On behalf of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission, I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to this work through engagement in surveys, help with analysis, workshops, discussions and general feedback.

Professor Nat Waran (Chairperson) Equine Ethics and Wellbeing