Equestrian sport and the concept of a social license

Presentation to the 2017 FEI General Assembly
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Overview

1. Introduce World Horse Welfare
2. Social license – why and what
3. Four actions to consider taking
4. An exciting announcement...
World Horse Welfare

- Leading equine charity for 90 years
- Covers full spectrum of equine world
- Works across 4 continents
- 120 employees - €10m turnover
- Education, campaigns and hands-on care
- Policy engagement
- Sport horse welfare – advisor to regulators – e.g. FEI
Changing views

• Public views evolving on use of horses in sport or work
• Partnership .... or exploitation?
• ‘Use but not abuse’ vs ‘Use is abuse’
• Lack of understanding of ethos of horse sport
• Horses belong in fields!

This is NOT the view of World Horse Welfare!
Why a social license?

Helps put focus on:

• Make right ethical choices for horses (not new...)
• Changing attitudes of society

“It is no longer just us, the horse people, who decide what is right and wrong. The pressure from society on the treatment of horses is increasing.”

– Hanfried Haring, EEF President
What is a social license?

- Unwritten, non-legally binding contract
- Society ‘gives’ right to operate
- About building trust that we behave ethically
- We ALL have responsibility to cultivate social licence
A social license in horse sport?

Why horse-racing in Australia needs a social licence to operate

November 2, 2017 7:04pm GMT
Firm foundations in horse sport

- Welfare Code of Conduct:
  
  “All those involved in international equestrian sport must adhere to the FEI Code of Conduct ... and acknowledge and accept that at all times the welfare of the horse must be paramount ... and never be subordinated to competitive or commercial influences.”

- Enforcement of rules and standards on field of play – and off of it
- Responsibility from birth to death – and in training yards
Rules can and should evolve

Tight nosebands outlawed by national federation
Action 1: do not ignore!

• If we ignore public opinion, future of equestrian sport **AT RISK**

• Lessons from Australian greyhound racing and National Hunt racing
Action 2: be proactive

- Respond to public opinion
- Actively engage with public concerns
- Demonstrate and communicate welfare provisions
- Seek independent view on whether rules protect welfare (German Federation, British Dressage)
- Be honest, transparent – and move swiftly to stamp out ANYTHING that harms the welfare of the horse
Zero tolerance required

• Acts of abuse have lasting impact on reputation

• The horse is the chief stakeholder in the social license to operate

Australian jockey Caboche suspended for punching horse

9 November 2017 | Australia

Davy Russell punching his horse was a serious blow to racing’s image
Action 3: highlight relevance of the sector

Articulate relevance of horse sport and wider horse sector

Europe: Jobs, Growth and Investment
• 7 million equidae
• €100 billion+ per annum to economy
• 2.6 million hectares of land
• Key rural employer
  ➢ Second largest rural employer in some Member States
  ➢ At least 180,000 jobs in France
Action 4: highlight horse-human partnership

- Continue to highlight uniqueness of horse-human partnership in sport
- Demonstrate our respect for horses
17 September

World Horse Day
Seeking to engage everyone

• Hope you will support the campaign
• Seeking to engage all Federations down to local riding clubs
• Website with toolkit to be available
• Aim to include racing, polo, universities, other NGOs and others involved with horses
Thank you

@rolyowers

www.worldhorsewelfare.org