



**FEI™**  
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
ABU DHABI (UAE) 10-13 NOVEMBER 2024

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**35. WORLD HORSE WELFARE**





WorldHorseWelfare



# Safeguarding the horse: tradition, evolution and action

Roly Owers MRCVS  
World Horse Welfare

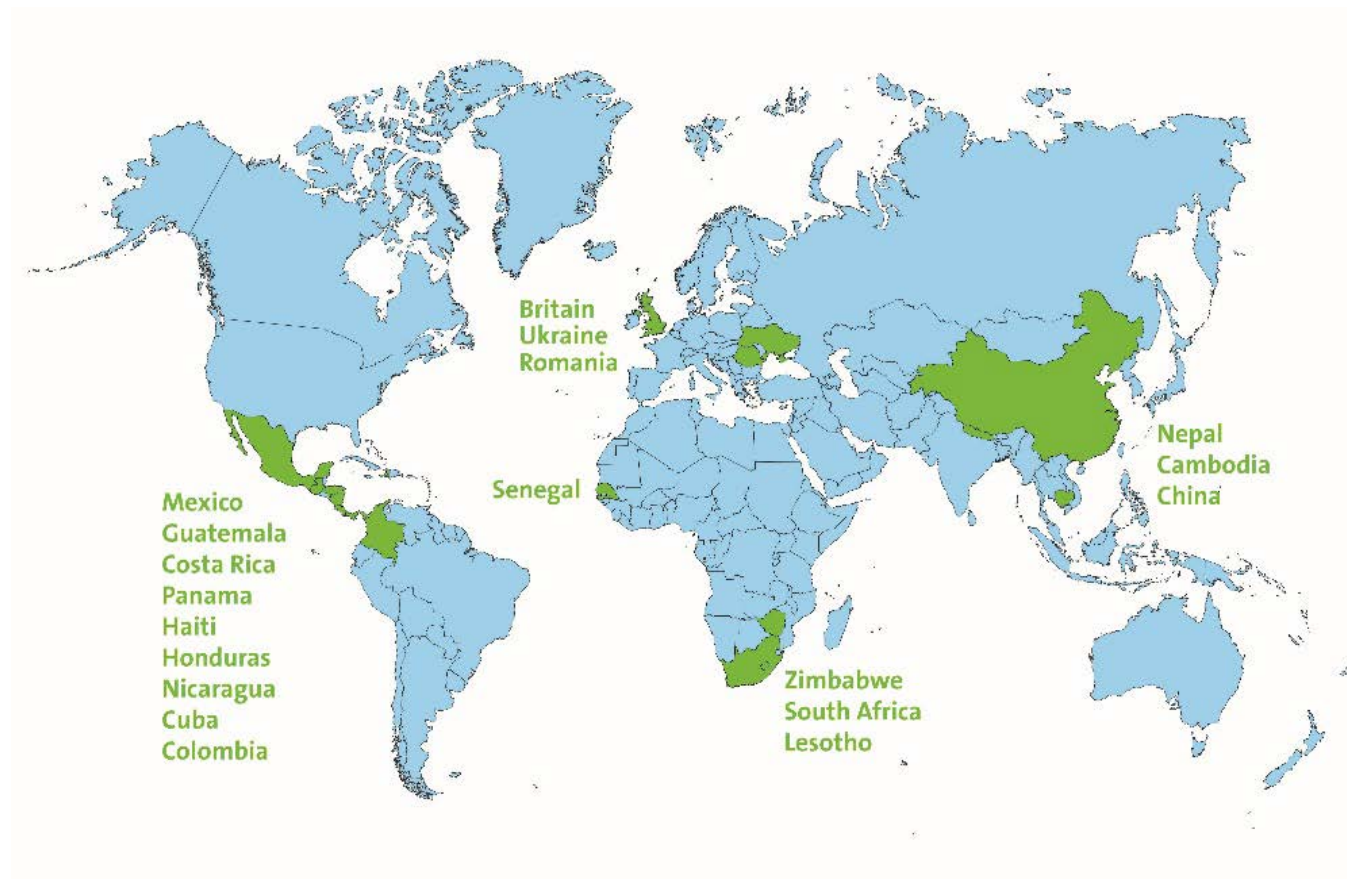




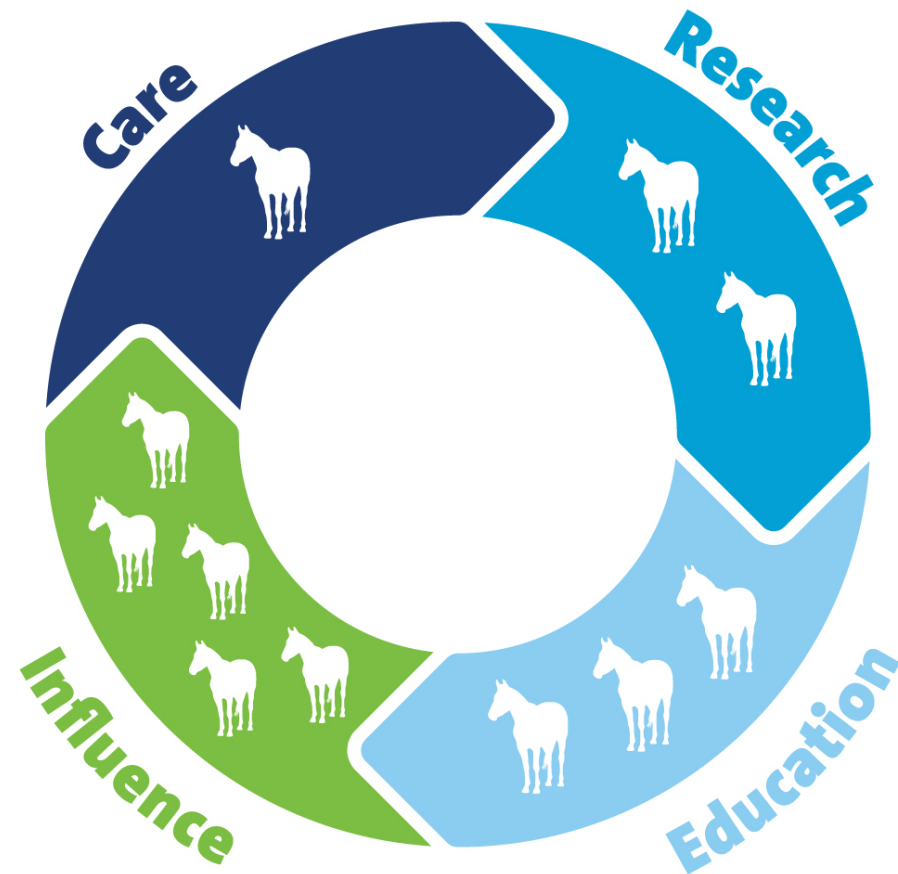
# World Horse Welfare

Founded in 1927

*We work to improve welfare by strengthening the horse-human relationship*

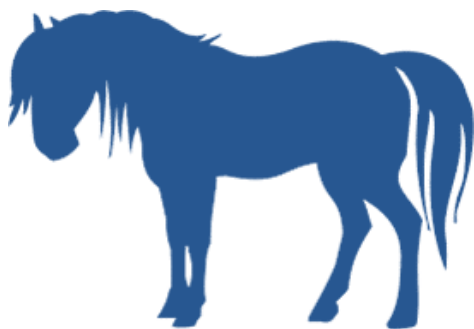


# What we do



# We help horses across all roles

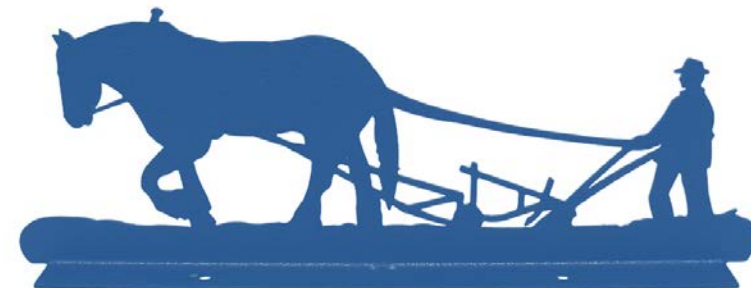
Horses in need



Sport and Leisure horses



Horses used in work and production



# We influence policy worldwide



World Organisation  
for Animal Health  
Founded as OIE



UNITED NATIONS



AFRICAN UNION



# We support ethical and responsible horse sport

- Welfare advisor to sport regulators
  - International Equestrian Federation (FEI) – Code of Conduct for Welfare of Horse
  - FEI’s Equine Ethics & Wellbeing Commission
  - International Horse Sport Confederation (IHSC)
  - British Horseracing Authority (BHA)
  - Informally to other national federations
- Associate Member of British Equestrian
  - Member of Equine Welfare and Ethics Advisory Group



FÉDÉRATION  
ÉQUESTRE  
INTERNATIONALE





# FEI Equine Welfare Strategy

A woman wearing a riding cap and jacket is looking towards the head of a horse. The horse is wearing a bridle with a tag. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

## Welfare vision:

### A Good Life for Horses

To acknowledge and respect the natural needs of horses within the context of international equestrian sports

## Welfare mission:

We serve as the guardians of FEI horse welfare with the overall mission to lead, drive and develop the highest standards of equine welfare in equestrian sport globally.

We do this by formulating and implementing rules, guidelines, educational programs and other initiatives, and if necessary, applying sanctions to ensure the standards we expect.

# A. EEWBC-REPORT

24+6(early) Recommendations

6 Areas of priority  
32 Key issues  
(Fig 1 p. 10)



# B. Suggested approach

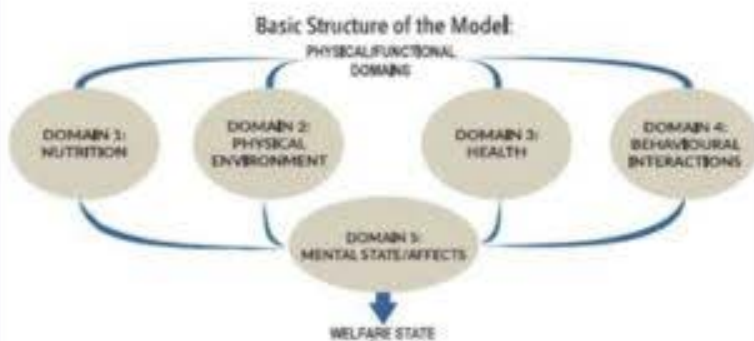
(Fig 12 p.25)



# C. Tools for action:

## I) The Five Domains

(Mellor et al., 2017, 2020)



## II) The 6 Enablers

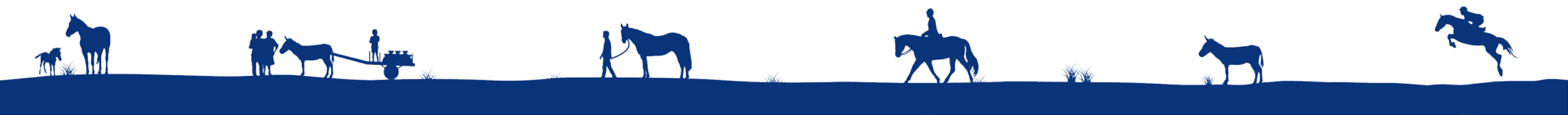
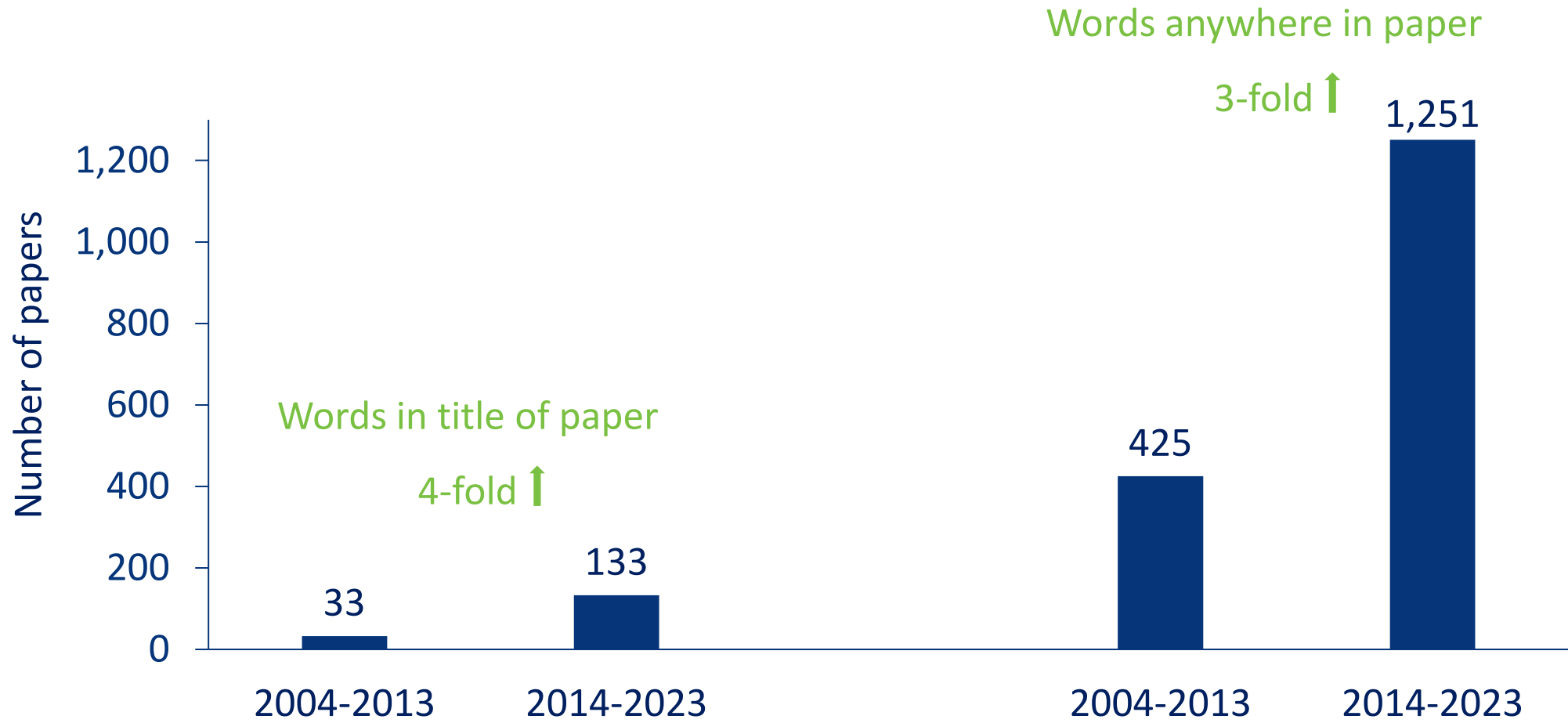
(fig 7 p. 19)



FEI Support / Strong National Federation and International Equestrian Stakeholder Engagement / Knowledge of Equine Ethics and Welfare / Consideration of Public Opinion

# Scientific papers published 2004-2023

(containing the words 'horse', 'horses', or 'equine' and 'welfare')



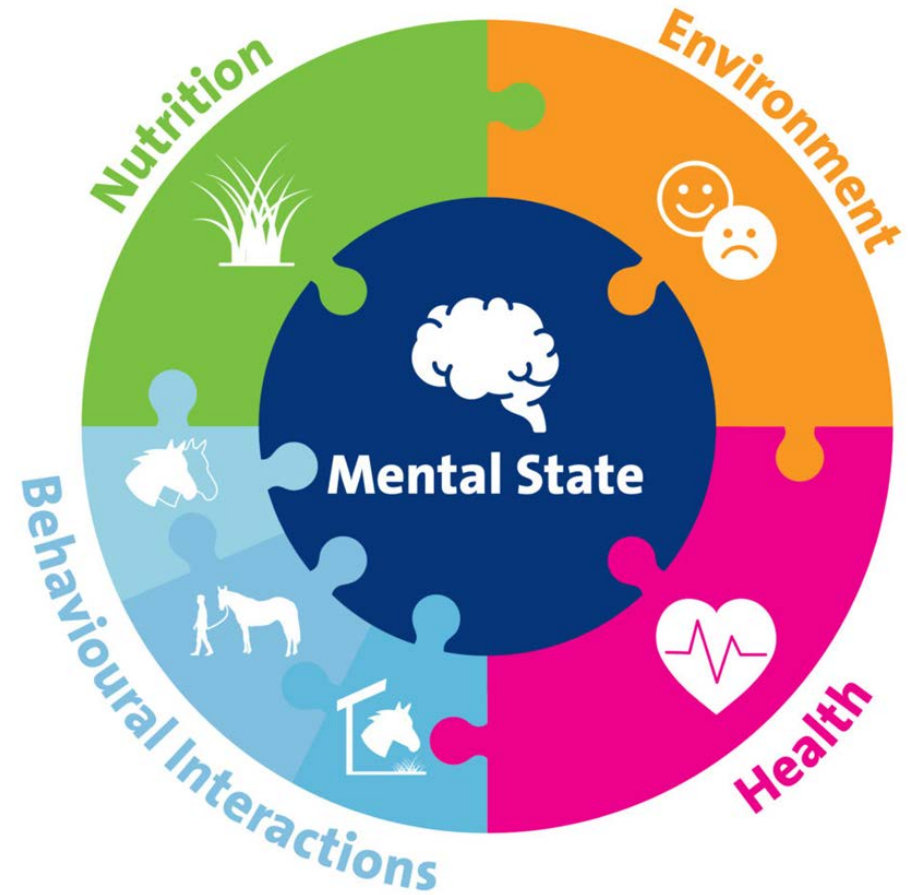




**Our goal is to  
provide a  
positive  
mental state**



# The Five Domains of animal welfare



Horses need:  
*Freedom*  
*Forage*  
*Friends*







# NEWS

Home | InDepth | Israel-Gaza war | US election | Cost of Living | War in Ukraine | Climate | UK | World | B

Science & Environment

## Horses recognise human emotions

nature

Female horses spontaneously identify a photograph of their keeper, last seen six months previously

The Guardian

## Beware the long face: horses remember your mood



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#GoodLife4Horses

nature

Exploratory behaviour towards novel objects is associated with enhanced learning in young horses

Research: Horses Exhibit Their Cognitive Skills By Asking Humans For Help With A Problem

Japanese study offers evidence of how horses use visual and tactile signals to get humans' attention and action



# Ethics /'eθ·ɪks/

A system of accepted beliefs that control behaviour, especially such a system based on morals – Cambridge Dictionary

- Ethical approach is to ask first:
  - “Should I do this?”
- If answer is ‘yes,’ then ask:  
“I am going to do this – how can I make the experience the best for the horse?”





# Equine welfare science

# Human factors

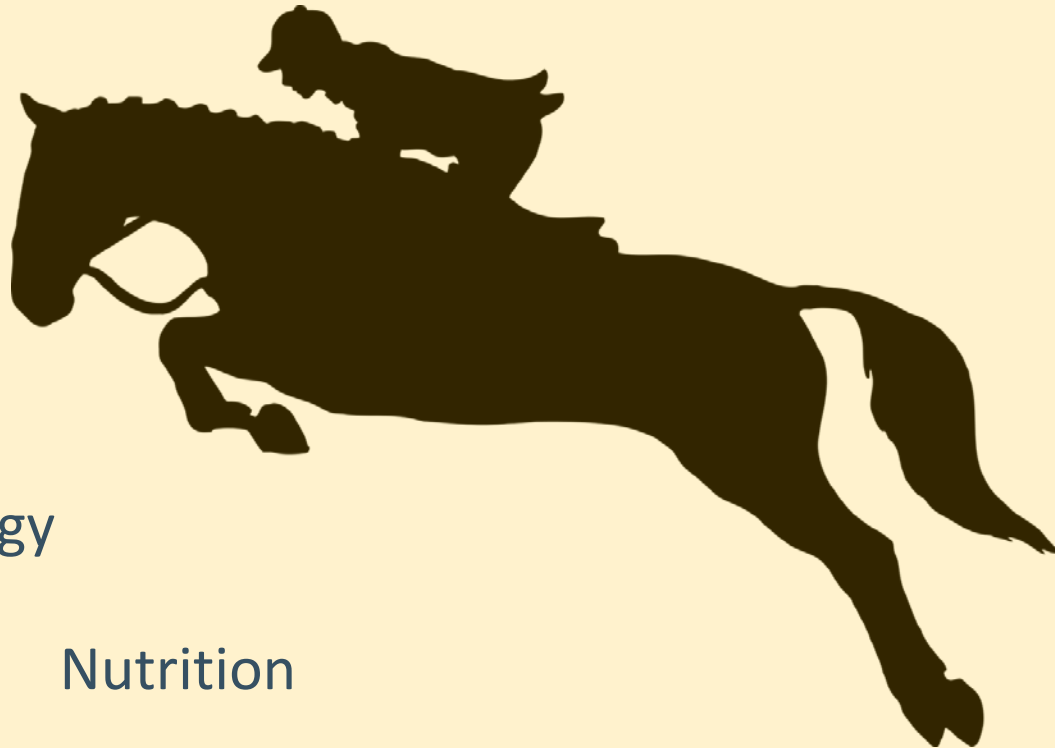
Behaviour

Human-animal  
interactions

Human behaviour  
change

Ethology

Learning



Social  
psychology

Cognition

Ethics

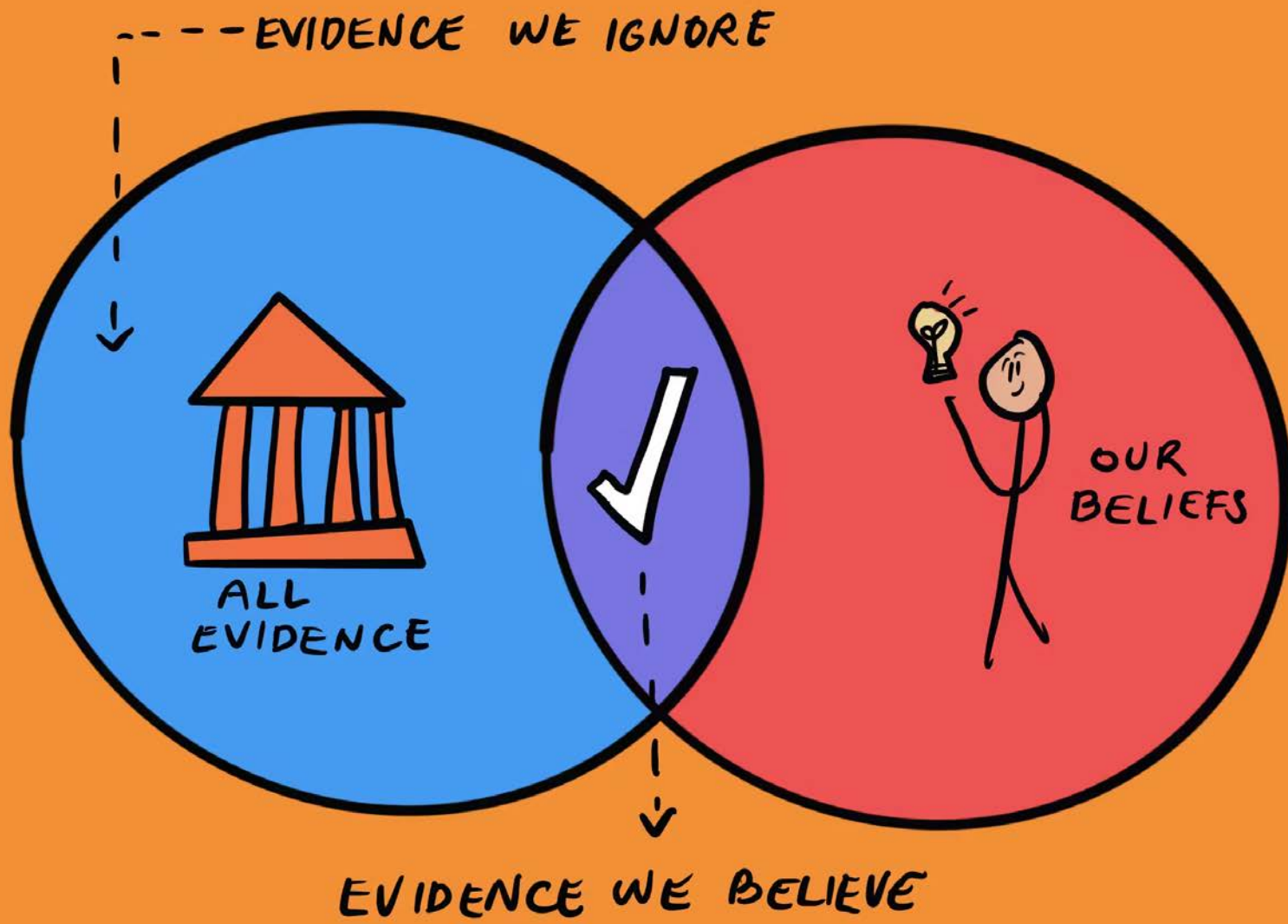
Physiology

Nutrition

Physical health

Affective state (happy  
vs unhappy)





EVIDENCE WE IGNORE

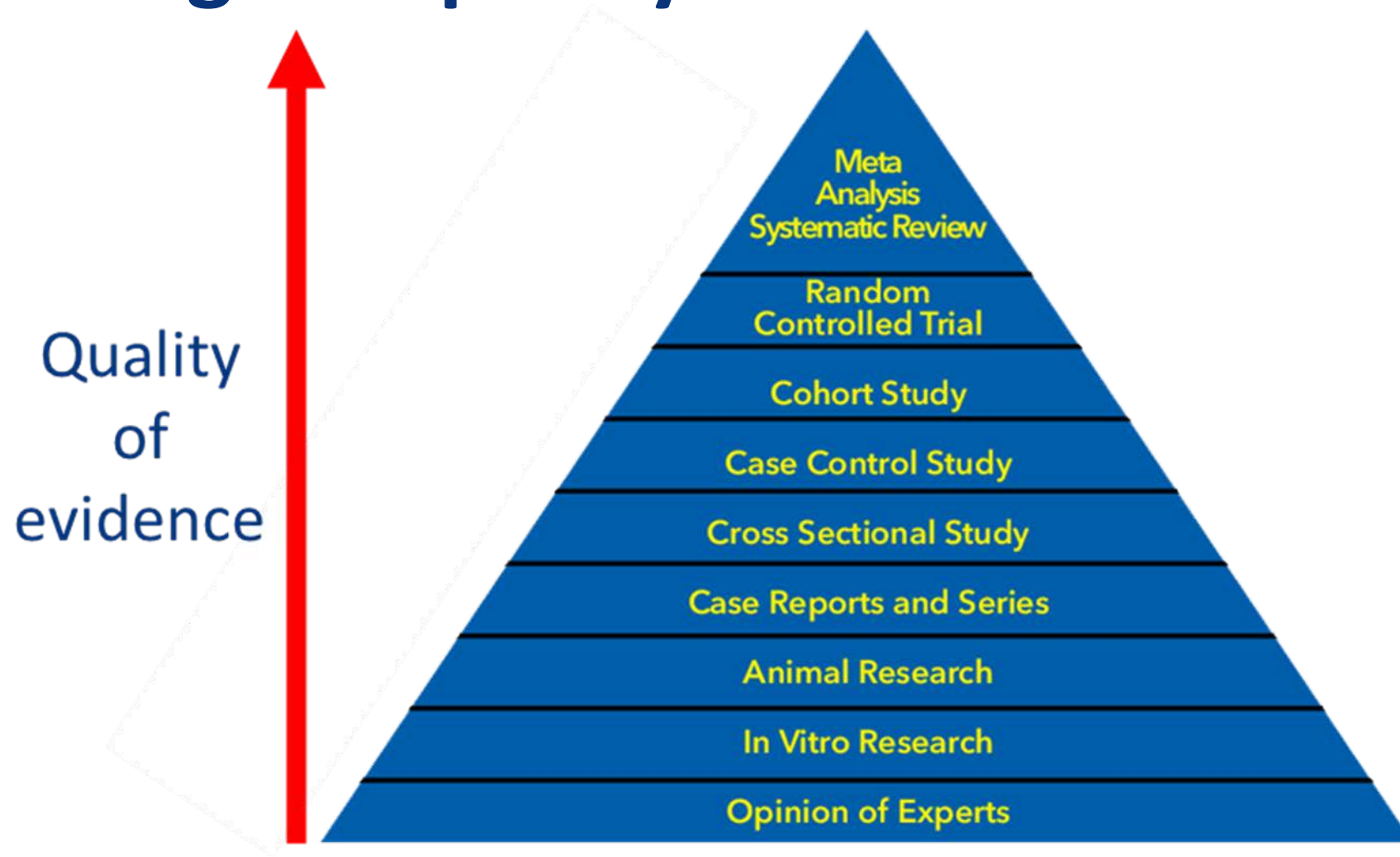
ALL EVIDENCE

OUR BELIEFS

EVIDENCE WE BELIEVE



# Need more good quality research







## The Precautionary Principle









*Proactively safeguarding  
our horses will help  
safeguard our sport for  
the future.*





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Thank you.  
@rolyowers  
@horsecharity