

United States Rules for Working Equitation

APPENDIX E

FEI CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR THE

WELFARE OF THE HORSE

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The FEI requires all those involved in international equestrian sport to adhere to the FEI Code of Conduct and to acknowledge and accept that at all times the welfare of the Horse must be paramount. Welfare of the horse must never be subordinated to competitive or commercial influences. The following points must be particularly adhered to:

1. General Welfare:

a) Good Horse management

Stabling and feeding must be compatible with the best Horse management practices. Clean and good quality hay, feed and water must always be available.

b) Training methods

Horses must only undergo training that matches their physical capabilities and level of maturity for their respective disciplines. They must not be subjected to methods which are abusive or cause fear.

c) Farriery and tack

Foot care and shoeing must be of a high standard. Tack must be designed and fitted to avoid the risk of pain or injury.

d) Transport

During transportation, Horses must be fully protected against injuries and other health risks. Vehicles must be safe, well ventilated, maintained to a high standard, disinfected regularly and driven by competent personnel. Competent handlers must always be available to manage the Horses.

e) Transit

All journeys must be planned carefully, and Horses allowed regular rest periods with access to food and water in line with current FEI guidelines.

2. Fitness to compete:

a) Fitness and competence

Participation in Competition must be restricted to fit Horses and Athletes of proven competence. Horses must be allowed suitable rest period between training and competitions; additional rest periods should be allowed following travelling.

b) Health status

No Horse deemed unfit to compete may compete or continue to compete, veterinary advice must be sought whenever there is any doubt.

c) Doping and Medication

Any action or intent of doping and illicit use of medication constitute a serious welfare issue and will not be tolerated. After any veterinary treatment, sufficient time must be allowed for full recovery before Competition.

d) Surgical procedures

Any surgical procedures that threaten a competing Horse's welfare or the safety of other Horses and/or Athletes must not be allowed.

e) Pregnant/recently foaled mares

Mares must not compete after their fourth month of pregnancy or with foal at foot.

f) Misuse of aids

Abuse of a Horse using natural riding aids or artificial aids (e.g. whips, spurs, etc.) will not be tolerated.

3. **Events must not prejudice Horse welfare:**

a) Competition areas

Horses must be trained and compete on suitable and safe surfaces. All obstacles and competition conditions must be designed with the safety of the Horse in mind.

b) Ground surfaces

All ground surfaces on which Horses walk, train or compete must be designed and maintained to reduce factors that could lead to injury.

c) Extreme weather

Competitions must not take place in extreme weather conditions that may compromise welfare or safety of the Horse. Provision must be made for cooling conditions and equipment for Horses after competing.

d) Stabling at Events

Stables must be safe, hygienic, comfortable, well ventilated and of sufficient size for the type and disposition of the Horse. Washing-down areas and water must always be available.

4. **Humane treatment of horses:**

a) Veterinary treatment

Veterinary expertise must always be available at an Event. If a Horse is injured or exhausted during a Competition, the Athlete must stop competing and a veterinary evaluation must be performed.

b) Referral centres

Wherever necessary, Horses should be collected by ambulance and transported to the nearest relevant treatment centre for further assessment and therapy. Injured Horses must be given full supportive treatment before being transported.

c) Competition injuries

The incidence of injuries sustained in Competition should be monitored. Ground surface conditions, frequency of Competitions and any other risk factors should be examined carefully to indicate ways to minimise injuries.

d) Euthanasia

If injuries are sufficiently severe a Horse may need to be euthanised on humane grounds by a veterinarian as soon as possible, with the sole aim of minimising suffering.

e) Retirement

Horses must be treated sympathetically and humanely when they retire from Competition.

5. **Education:**

The FEI urges all those involved in equestrian sport to attain the highest possible levels of education in areas of expertise relevant to the care and management of the Competition Horse.

This Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse may be modified from time to time and the views of all are welcomed. Particular attention will be paid to new research findings and the FEI encourages further funding and support for welfare studies.