

NATIONAL EQUINE WELFARE COUNCIL (CIC)



Code of Practice

**For markets and sales involved
with the selling of horses, ponies
and donkeys**

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NEWC Code of Practice for Horse Sales and Markets

These guidelines have been developed by the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) and the Livestock Auctioneers' Association (LAA), in consultation with the LAA's members.

The guidelines are provided for auctioneers and all inspectors, from government level through to welfare organisations, who visit horse sales to ensure that high standards are consistently maintained within the industry.

Horse sales, markets and fairs attracting different types of horse (unbroken / broken / ridden) will require different styles of management to ensure welfare and safety.

For the purpose of this booklet horses, ponies, donkeys, hinnies and asses will be referred to as horses.

Acknowledgements

The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) are to be thanked for their advice in producing these guidelines.

Details of legislation

These guidelines have been produced using the knowledge available at the time of publication and may need to be changed in the light of future developments.

They do not replace the legislation, of which auctioneers and market staff must be aware, covering the welfare of horses in markets (*The Welfare of Horses and Ponies in Markets Order 1990*) or future amendments.

They are no substitute for training and education in aspects of horse handling and welfare.

- 1 Preparing for Sale
- 2 Unloading / Loading
- 3 Handling
- 4 Penning
- 5 Sale Ring
- 6 Dealing with Injuries / Emergencies

Appendix I Tying a horse

Appendix II Body condition score - horses

Appendix III Body condition score - donkeys

Where the point made in the code is a legal requirement, it is identified by the symbol * in the margin to the left of the paragraph.

Paragraphs relating to areas which should be adhered to by buyers / vendors are **numbered in bold**. These paragraphs should be written in the Conditions of Sale to ensure that all parties are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Disclaimer

These guidelines are given in good faith. Under no circumstance can the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) accept any liability for the way in which they are interpreted; or any loss, damage, death or injury caused thereby, since this depends on circumstances wholly outside of NEWC's control.

Preparing for Sale

- 1.1* All pens shall be clear of debris, clean and in a condition suitable to house horses.
- 1.2 Gates and general maintenance of the pens should be checked on the morning of the sale to ensure nothing is present which may injure horses.
- 1.3 Procedures should be in place that will allow drovers the opportunity to give feedback to management about the standards of the penning / flooring and other equipment.
- 1.4* The auctioneer must provide a supply of drinking water. However, it is the responsibility of the owner of the horse to supply clean water to individual horses. Where the owner of the horse cannot be found and horses are clearly in need of water the auctioneer must provide water.
- 1.5 The person in charge of animal welfare should be present in the market at all times whilst horses are on the premises during a sale day. He or she should also be easily identifiable as the welfare officer (either by an armband, waistcoat or similar article, but different to those worn by the drovers).
- 1.6 Wherever possible animals should be booked in for sale in advance to ensure adequate penning. For those horses not booked in, it should be made clear that if there is insufficient space they will be turned away.
- 1.7* The market should be able to be fully enclosed and a procedure for shutting the site and for managing loose horses should be in place and understood by all staff.
- 1.8 First arrival and last departure times should be published prior to the sale and adhered to.
- 1.9 Where horses are wearing head collars, these should be of a minimum standard so as not to cause injury or pain to the horse.

Unloading / Loading

- 2.1 Unloading / loading bays should be kept free of parked vehicles unless unloading / loading is taking place.
- 2.2 Unloading / loading bays should be suitable for all types of livestock vehicles used.
- 2.3 When unloading single / groups of un-broken horses ideally the sides of raceways leading from the unloading / loading bay into the market pens should not be see through.
- 2.4 **Markets:** unloading / loading bays must be used where provided. The unloading / loading of un-broken horses in car parks and on road sides must not be allowed
Sales: where possible broken horses should be unloaded / loaded in suitable areas. Halter broken horses must be unloaded in specified areas.
- 2.5 When unloading / loading occurs in a place other than an unloading bay, it must be under the supervision of market staff at all times.
- 2.6 Ideally, entry onto sale premises should be supervised by a senior member of market staff or other qualified person. He / she will identify sick / injured animals, those not fit for sale and have the authority to refuse entry to the sale (see section 6).
- 2.7 Procedures should be in place to deal with a horse that is injured or visibly ill on arrival (see section 6).
- 2.8* At least one casualty pen, situated near the unloading / loading bays, should be identifiable, available and ready for immediate use.

Penning

- 3.1 Individual markets should assess their capacity. Numbers entered in the sale should not exceed this.
- 3.2* Tied horses should not be penned with loose horses, except in the case of a mare with her foal at foot.
- 3.3* Horses of significantly different sizes should not be penned together unless previously kept together.
- 3.4* Shod horses must not be penned with unshod horses unless previously kept together or unless they are effectively secured by the head and separated.
- 3.5* Stallions and colts should be penned individually but in sight of others.
- 3.6* Overcrowding of pens is not acceptable under any circumstances. Horses should be allowed space for free movement although not excessive space, which may allow aggression to develop.
- 3.7 Each pen should be identifiable. On arrival each lot can then be placed in an allocated pen.
- 3.8 A guide to pen capacity should be held by the market office and known by all staff.
- 3.9** Persons likely to purchase large numbers of horses should be allocated specific collection pens of a suitable size.
- 3.10** Adequate feed should be provided by the vendor if horses are brought onto the site before 7am and by the purchaser if they remain on market premises for more than 3 hours after the end of the sale (defined as the last fall of the hammer).
- 3.11 When feed is provided, enough should be given in suitably spaced piles to prevent excessive aggression within the group.
- 3.12 When horses are kept on market premises overnight, regular, appropriate inspections should be carried out by the AHWO¹ at least last thing at night and first thing in the morning.

- 3.13* Mares with foals at foot should be penned individually.
- 3.14* Donkeys and horses should not be penned together unless stable companions.
- 3.15* Horses must be never be tied to pens in alleyways; if they must be tied it should be in allocated pens. Details of tying can be found in Appendix I.
- 3.16* Clipped horses must be protected from the weather by suitable means, either rugs or shelter.

It should be noted that whilst a horse may have a placid temperament in their usual surroundings, exposure to sale, unfamiliar surroundings, noise and large groups of people may unsettle the horse and make it more difficult to handle than usual. Where possible, the provision of a quiet pen away from the main area will help settle the horse and make it safer for the handlers.

Horses have specific requirements for penning which differ from the average cattle pen.

- Ideally pens should have solid sides or close rails which prevent trapped legs.
- Water should be placed in buckets or other suitable containers. Horses will not use pressure operated taps.
- Gates should be well maintained and noise free. The banging of gates may frighten horses and make them difficult to handle.

Handling

- 4.1 All drovers should be clearly identifiable as members of staff (e.g.: armbands, waistcoats, jumpers or caps).
- 4.2 Horses should only be handled by competent staff with relevant training and / or experience.
- 4.3 Ideally public access should not cross raceways used by drovers moving the horses. Members of the public should be discouraged from congregating in raceways.
- 4.4 Ideally raceways should be clear and brightly lit at all times, with the relevant doors and gates fully opened.
- 4.5 Handling aids, if carried, should be used only as an aid in movement. Excessive use is not acceptable.
- 4.6 Horses should be moved in a calm and considerate manner around the market.
- 4.7* Horses must not be hit with any stick, whip, crop or other instrument.
- 4.8** Horses must only be ridden or displayed in the designated area, not up and down public walkways.
- 4.9** Children should be kept under control at all times.
- 4.10** Any person riding an animal on the sale premises must wear a protective riding hat to the appropriate British Standard.

- 5.1 The alley leading to the ring and entrance into the ring should be clear of all obstructions, especially people.
- 5.2 Where possible, the exit from the ring should be separate from the entrance.
- 5.3 When the entrance and exit cannot be different, it should be well organised and controlled by a member of market staff. In the case of led / ridden horses, no horse should be allowed access to the ring until the previous one has left.
- 5.4 For sale-rings smaller than 50m² only the vendor and one representative should be allowed to handle the horse in the ring at any one time. Up to three representatives may be allowed in larger sale-rings. These numbers should only be exceeded if problems arise with the horse.
- 5.5** The auctioneer has the right to insist that only drovers move horses around the ring.
- 5.6** Calm and considerate handling should be used at all times. Noise should be kept to a moderate level. Where horses show a clear level of distress the auctioneer holds the right to withdraw the horse from the ring.
- 5.7 The floor surface of the ring should be constructed and maintained to prevent slipping and be cleaned at regular intervals. Ideally a good covering of shavings / woodchip or rubber matting will also be provided.
- 5.8* The fence around the sale-ring should pose minimum risk to horses or people.
- 5.9 The entrance and exit from the ring should be kept clear at all times.
- 5.10 Markets may wish to allocate an area close to the ring for registered buyers only.

Dealing with Injuries / Emergencies

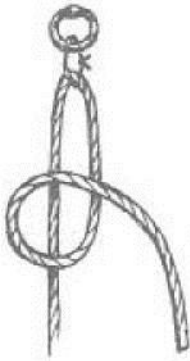
- 6.1 Horses showing any sign of ailment or injury should be examined by a vet as soon as possible and at least before entering the sale-ring.
- 6.2 The market welfare officer should manage a situation involving accidental injury to a horse on sale / market premises.
- 6.3 Every market should have a suitable Horse First Aid Kit available for use by an owner. This should contain bandages, antiseptic spray and disinfectant solution.
- 6.4 Every market should have a procedure for any casualty horse that may need destroying humanely.
- 6.5 Staff should know where to find details of the local vet and farrier who have agreed to attend in an emergency.
- 6.6 Staff should know the procedure for dealing with horses unfit for transportation under *The Welfare of Animals Transport Order 1997*.
- 6.7 Details of Local Authority Inspectors and the Government's Local Divisional Veterinary Manager and how to contact them should be on prominent display.

Appendix I - Tying Horses up

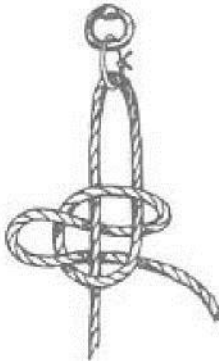
When tying up horses, a quick release knot must be used at all times.

The rope should be passed through a small loop of string rather than directly to the bar or ring that the horse will be tied to. Should the horse panic the string will snap and the horse will not damage itself.

Quick release knot



Step 1



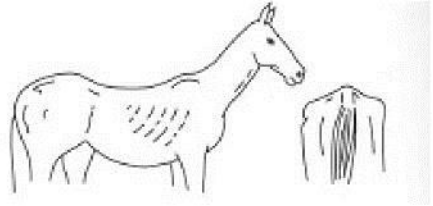
Step 2



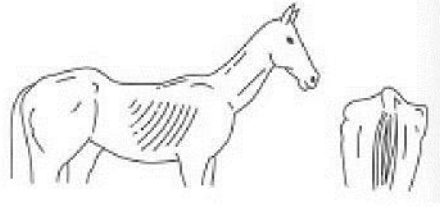
Step 3

Appendix II - Body Condition Scoring - Horses

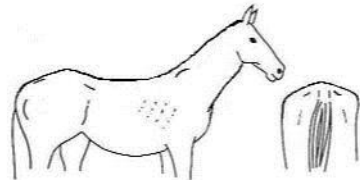
0 Very Poor



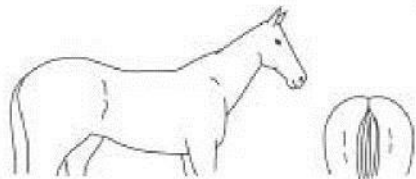
1 Poor



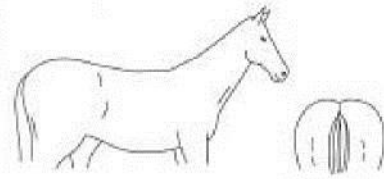
2 Moderate



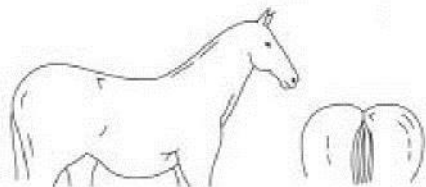
3 Good



4 Fat



5 Very Fat



Appendix II - Body Condition Scoring - Horses

C/S	Pelvis	Back and Ribs	Neck
0 Very Poor	Angular, skin tight. Very sunken rump. Deep cavity under tail.	Skin tight over ribs. Very prominent and sharp backbone.	Marked ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.
1 Poor	Prominent pelvis and croup. Sunken rump but skin supple. Deep cavity under tail.	Ribs easily visible. Prominent backbone with sunken skin on either side.	Ewe neck, narrow and slack base.
2 Moderate	Rump flat either side of back bone. Croup well defined, some fat. Slight cavity under tail.	Ribs just visible. Backbone covered but spines can be felt.	Narrow but firm.
3 Good	Covered by fat and rounded. No gutter. Pelvis easily felt.	Ribs just covered and easily felt. No gutter along the back. Backbone well covered but spines can be felt.	No crest (except for stallions) firm neck.
4 Fat	Gutter to root of tail. Pelvis covered by fat. Need firm pressure to feel.	Ribs well covered - need pressure to feel.	Slight crest Wide and firm.
5 Very Fat	Deep gutter to root of tail. Skin distended. Pelvis buried, can- not be felt.	Ribs buried, cannot be felt. Deep gutter along back. Back broad and flat.	Marked crest very wide and firm. Fold of fat.

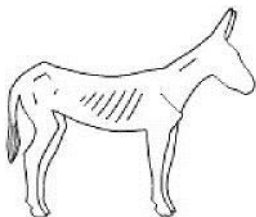
(Based on the Carroll and Huntington Method)

To obtain a body score, score the pelvis first, then adjust by half a point if it differs by one point or more to the back or neck.

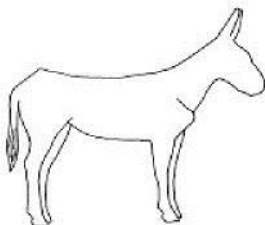
Appendix III - Body Condition Scoring - Donkeys

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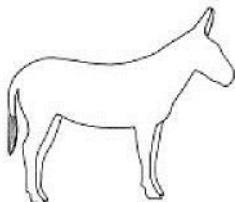
1. POOR



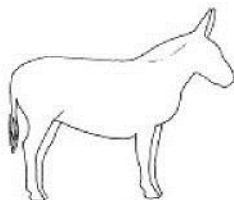
2. MODERATE



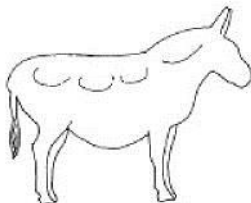
3. IDEAL



4. FAT



5. OBESE



Fat deposits may be unevenly distributed especially over the neck and hindquarters. Some resistant fat deposits may be retained in the event of weight loss and/or may calcify (harden). Careful assessment of all areas should be made and combined to give an overall score.

Appendix III - Body Condition Scoring - Donkeys

C/S	NECK AND SHOULDERS	WITHERS	RIBS AND BELLY	BACK AND LOINS	HIND-QUARTERS
1. POOR	Neck thin, all bones easily felt. Neck meets shoulder abruptly, shoulder bones easily felt.	Dorsal spine of withers prominent and easily felt.	Ribs can be seen from a distance and felt with ease. Belly tucked up.	Backbone prominent, can feel dorsal and transverse processes easily.	Hip bones visible and felt easily (hock and pin bones). Little muscle cover. May be cavity under tail.
2. MODERATE	Some muscle development overlying bones. Slight step where neck meets shoulders.	Some cover over dorsal withers. Spinous processes felt but not prominent.	Ribs not visible but can be felt with ease.	Dorsal and transverse processes felt with light pressure. Poor muscle development either side midline.	Poor muscle cover on hindquarters, hip bones felt with ease.
3. IDEAL	Good muscle development, bones felt under light cover of muscle/fat. Neck flows smoothly into shoulder, which is rounded.	Good cover of muscle/fat over dorsal spinous processes, withers flow smoothly into back.	Ribs just covered by light layer of fat/muscle, ribs can be felt with light pressure. Belly firm with good muscle tone and flattish outline.	Cannot feel individual spinous or transverse processes. Muscle development either side of midline is good.	Good muscle cover in hindquarters, hip bones rounded in appearance, can be felt with light pressure.
4. FAT	Neck thick, crest hard, shoulder covered in even fat layer.	Withers broad, bones felt with firm pressure.	Ribs dorsally only felt with firm pressure, ventral ribs may be felt more easily. Overdeveloped belly	Can only feel dorsal and transverse processes with firm pressure. Slight crease along midline.	Hindquarters rounded, bones felt only with firm pressure. Fat deposits evenly placed.
5. OBESE	Neck thick, crest bulging with fat and may fall to one side. Shoulder rounded and bulging with fat.	Withers broad, unable to feel bones.	Large, often uneven fat deposits covering dorsal and possibly ventral aspect of ribs. Ribs not palpable. Belly pendulous in depth and width.	Back broad, unable to feel spinous or transverse processes. Deep crease along midline bulging fat either side.	Cannot feel hip bones, fat may overhang either side of tail head, fat often uneven and bulging.

Half scores can be assigned where donkeys fall between scores. Aged donkeys can be hard to condition score due to lack of muscle bulk and tone giving thin appearance dorsally with dropped belly ventrally, while overall condition may be reasonable.

Important Contact Details

Please fill in the details below, so that all contact details are readily available in the case of an emergency.

Market Name:

Animal Health and Welfare Officers:

Trading Standards Officer:

Local Divisional Veterinary Manager:

Market Manager:

Vet on call:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Farrier on call:

Address:

Telephone Number:

National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC)

Founded in March 1977 the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) was set up to encourage equine welfare organisations to unite in their work and speak with one voice on welfare matters of concern and importance throughout the equine world.

Further copies of this code are available on request from:

info@newc.co.uk

Telephone 02476 840 703

