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# WBFSH

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WORLD BREEDING FEDERATION  
FOR SPORT HORSES



## **Workshop** **CONCLUSIONS**

WBFSH GA-2023  
2023-10-15



## WBFSH Welfare Workshop QUESTIONS



**Q1 What are the key areas within sport horse breeding that you feel require a welfare statement(s) to support SLO?**

**Q2 Which aspects within young horse management do you feel should be prioritised within a welfare statement(s) to support SLO**

**Q3 To best support education and increase uptake of the welfare guidelines produced, what format should these take and how should they be disseminated?**



## Q1. What are the key areas within sport horse breeding that you feel require a welfare statement(s) to support SLO?



### Key Welfare Issues / Emerging Challenges

- Lack of knowledge/awareness across the industry (new breeders & non-breeders)
- Lack of communication with the non-equestrian public
- Population Growth and availability of land, environmental impact
- Economic pressures and industrialisation of the breeding industry
- Over-breeding and too much medical interference
- Non-compliance with or circumnavigation/avoidance of welfare regulations and code of practice, lack of enforcement
- Legislation and regulations not keeping up with technology (for example ICSI)
- Lack of information and oversight in the equine industry
- Lack of information on long term impact of new technologies
- Different codes of practice in different countries or regions

## Q1. What are the key areas within sport horse breeding that you feel require a welfare statement(s) to support SLO?



### Current Strengths / Good practice: Positive Measures

- Majority of breeders have the best intentions
- Advances in science can be used to support breeding of the happy equine athlete and biodiversity
- Increase dialog, education and information, based on scientific knowledge and evidence
- Implement and support existing legislation for animal welfare and regulations/codes of practice
- Studbooks to develop incorporate codes of practice in their breeding programs and rules
- Technological advance to enhance data availability, information and information sharing
- Positive social/environmental/cultural contribution of equine breeding
- Develop new legislative and regulatory measures for breeding and the sport to support welfare
- Promote the 3 F's: Feed, Friends, Freedom

**Q2. Which aspects within young horse management do you feel should be prioritised within a welfare statement(s) to support SLO?**



### **Key Welfare Issues / Emerging Challenges**

- Lack of turnout/space and socialisation of young horses
- Economic pressures engender focus on short term success and gains, demands on young horses too high
- (Necessary) exposure to stress: weaning, travel...
- Lack of data and information of long term impact of over-production and over-preparation of youngsters
- Lack of awareness and understanding among the general public
- Fragmentation of the industry
- Special requirements of horses emerging from new technologies (ICSI etc)

## Q2. Which aspects within young horse management do you feel should be prioritised within a welfare statement(s) to support SLO?



### Current Strengths / Good practice: Positive Measures

- Educate breeders, owners, trainers and riders to understand long term gains of good practice and welfare
- Implement and disseminate existing training systems (principles of riding, scale of training, ... )
- Implement existing scientific, veterinary and evidence-based knowledge and horse husbandry
- Focus on long term soundness and sustainability,
- Increase availability of farms specialised in keeping young horses as herd animals
- Draw on knowledge and experience developed over centuries and on positive examples of horse/human partnerships
- Build trust
- Legislation to support registration / regulation of practices, keepers, trainers and premises
- Implement measures in competitions (judging, fence heights, fence safety)
- Implement minimum age for ridden work
- Use digital technologies for early registration and data collection to drive knowledge
- Focus on individual empowerment, responsibility and accountability

**Q3. To best support education & increase uptake of the welfare guidelines produced, what format should these take & how should they be disseminated?**



## **Key Welfare Issues / Emerging Challenges**

- Fragmentation of the industry
- Lack of understanding among wider public
- Competition between individuals and bodies reducing cooperation and communication
- Lack of tolerance and open-mindedness
- Negativity in social media leading to defensiveness or driving practises “under ground”
- Ethics of new breeding technologies unclear
- Complexity of the issues
- Information reach and communication

**Q3. To best support education & increase uptake of the welfare guidelines produced, what format should these take & how should they be disseminated?**



## Current Strengths / Good practice: Positive Measures

- Highlight Economic/Social/Environmental/Cultural contribution of the equine industry
- Highlight and promote positive examples
- Use ambassadors (celebrities) to promote good practice and welfare
- Regulation/Licensing and/or voluntary accreditation (not one size fits all)
- Use social media to create frequent, quick and wide reach
- Manage public perception and create clear messages
- Increase dissemination of information and awareness, using digital solutions