EU Platform on Animal Welfare (PAW)

• Commission expert group

• EU Animal Welfare Guide line
  – Request for an Equine Subgroup
Equine Subgroup

• EU Guide line on horse welfare

• 14 seats
  – International organisations, business & professional organisations, civil society, independent experts
Guide to good animal welfare practice
for
the keeping, care, training and use of horses
Content

1. Introduction
2. Biological characteristics and behaviour
3. Contact to conspecifics
4. Accommodation
5. Outdoor keeping
6. Care
7. Handling and training
8. Equipment
9. Doping
10. Use, sport, leisure, tourism
11. Mutilations and trimming
12. Breeding
13. Assessment of the welfare of horses
14. Euthanasia and slaughter/ End of Life Considerations
15. EU Legislation relevant to horses
16. References
Unwanted horses: where does it all begin?
How to deal with horses in excess

“End of life” is part of the problem!
Governance of individual horses during its full life span is paramount

Coverage of basic needs and overall horse welfare should be provided to all horses

New knowledge should continuously be integrated in a modern governance of horses

If the ability to govern the basic needs of the horse can’t be met, the option of euthanasiation should be secured
Unwanted horses: why?

- Breeding of too many horses
  - Production of horses unfit for their intended use

- Attrition of horses in the riding and racing industry

- European economic situation

- Legal requirements
  - Exclusion of horses from the food chain

- Changing ethics/ culture and religion
  - Euthanisation
  - Consumption of horse meat
The position of the horse in society

- Traditional agricultural species
- Sport/leisure
- Pet-like

Public perception: ethical position

Legal position
Horse management

• Utilitarian perspective

• Animal rights movement perspective

• Others
  – deontology, contractualisme etc.
Horse management

• Utilitarian perspective

  – Animals may be used as resources when this action maximizes ‘utility’, utility being the well-being of all sentient entities

  – the use is permissible as long as animals are treated well and there is no unnecessary suffering
Horse management

• Animal rights movement perspective
  – Animal rights is the idea that animals are entitled to rights in the same way that human beings are

  – there are things we cannot do against individuals, because they are holders of moral rights

  – Example of rights include being well-cared for, not being abused
Horse management

• Animal rights movement perspective

More extreme views:

• Horses should not be slaughtered for meat, not be used for entertainment e.g. in horse races, or even not been stalled.

• Carried to the extreme, there is a view held by some that the horse should no longer be viewed as property.
There’s a clash!

• Horses are domesticated, dependent on mankind

• People without with very little knowledge of horses and their basic needs take part in the horse industry as horse owners, riders or in other functions
The position of the horse in society

• Traditional agricultural species
• Sport/leisure
• Pet-like

Public perception: ethical position

Legal position
The dynamics of the ethics and morals embedded in this new role for the horse in society tends to integrate elements from both the utilitarian viewpoint and from the animal rights movement’s perspective.
The veterinary role in relation to horses is primarily to govern the welfare, including the health of the horse.

- Preventing and treating illness and injuries
- Giving advice to horse caretakers
- Consultants for governing bodies
The changed perception of the horse: the mental complexity

• Increased knowledge about the ability of the horse to show complex behaviour in social relations
  – being able to show some degree of individual preferences
  – having a level of intellect and personality.
This means the responsibility to meet the basic needs of the horse is gradually extended.
• The horse is indisputably dependent on mankind

• Higher demands of how to meet the basic needs of the horse is often expensive

The right to euthanize a horse humanely shall be paramount to be able to govern all horses in all situations
Governance of horse welfare during the horse’s full life span is paramount

“End of life” considerations are an integrative part of securing horse welfare