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Designated by  
the EU Commission

WOAH online event on the welfare of working equids  
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## EU Reference Centers for Animal Welfare

Art. 95 of **'The Official Controls Regulation'**:

*"The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, designate European Union reference centers for animal welfare that shall support the activities of the Commission and of the Member States"*



## Core activities and Centers



### Coordinated assistance

Support, Networking & Questions to EURCAW (Q2E)



### Science and best practices

Scientific Reviews



### Indicators

Animal Welfare Indicator Factsheets



### Training

Training materials - Training standards



### Communication

Website, newsletters & professional networks





# 1 The Management Team



Harry Blokhuis  
Leading Partner



Birgitta Staaf Larsson  
Partner, Secretariat



Lena Tuominen  
Secretariat



Alison Hanlon  
Partner



Isabelle Veissier  
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## 2 Current Outputs on Equine Welfare



### Reviews:

- Welfare of working equids
- Confinement & restriction of movement & social contact
- Enrichment (environmental, relational, sensory, physical & occupational)

### Factsheets:

- Confinement in domestic horses
- Environmental enrichment
- Fitness for transport





## 2 Current Outputs on Equine Welfare

### Q2E:

- Social contact & freedom of movement
- Fasting intervals
- Small trailers for horse transport

### Training Toolkits:

- Environmental enrichment for ruminants & equines





### 3 Definition of 'Working Equids'

'A working equid is defined as an equid that performs physical activity in service of the person(s) who owns, keeps or hires them. Working equids may be used in production (e.g. in agriculture, for carrying or pulling loads and transporting of firewood and other supplies, horse skidding), leisure (e.g. in tourism industry for transporting people, riding schools) and sport activities (e.g. performing riding exercises, competitions, races, equine assisted therapies).'





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## Recommendations from the Review on Working Equids

- Access to feed and water

Diet is balanced and tailored according to age, workload and body condition

Sport horses are offered small quantities of feed 2-3 h before intensive exercise

Clean, fresh water ad libitum

- Access to shelter and resting areas

At temperature  $< 4^{\circ}\text{C}$ , extra bedding, blankets or shelter should be provided

- Protection from heat and cold stress

Thermoneutral zone:  $5 - 25^{\circ}\text{C}$

No horse events when temperature  $> 30^{\circ}\text{C}$

When temperature  $> 35^{\circ}\text{C}$ , working hours between 13.00-17.00 should be avoided.



**3**

## **Recommendations from the Review on Working Equids**

- **Behavioural needs**
  - Social contact
  - Companionship
  - Free movement
  - Access to shelter and roughage
- **Preventive health care**
  - Daily hoof checks
  - Parasite control based on faecal egg counts
  - Vaccination protocols
  - Annual dental checks
  - Analgesia during painful husbandry procedures



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## Recommendations from the Review on Working Equids

- **Workload**

Restrictions: under 3 years of age, 3 months before foaling  
Horses carry less than 20% and donkeys carry less than 30% of their body weight

Equids work a maximum of 6 h/d with a minimum 30 min break in the middle and are given 2 d of rest per week

- **Equipment**

Equipment is checked every 3-6 months for wear and tear and adjusted or replaced

- **Personnel**

Clear communication, positive reinforcement and the gradual development of skills

Professional workers are continuously trained to stay informed about equine welfare and best practices



## 4 Future Activities on Equine Welfare

### Reviews

- Quality of care in ruminants and equines
- Restricted access to pasture and inadequate grazing in ruminants and equines

### Factsheets

- Assessing welfare of working equids
- Assessing the maintenance of social bonds
- Assessing effective stunning at slaughter
- Assessing welfare during painful procedures in equines

### Training Toolkits

- Working Equids
- Confinement in horses



Source: INRAE/CATTIAU Gilles

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your attention**



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