

## **Annex A**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **The Welfare of the Horse**

The following Code of Conduct has been prepared by the FEI for inclusion on all schedules for international Events, it has been adapted briefly to represent a Code for use by the BEF and its members more widely.

The FEI, BEF and its members expect 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 and must never be subordinated to competitive or commercial influences.

1. At all stages during the preparation and training of competition horses, welfare must take precedence over all other demands. This includes good horse management, training methods, farriery and tack, and transportation. More specifically:
  - a. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. Horses and competitors must be fit, competent and in good health before they are allowed to compete. This encompasses medication use, surgical procedures that threaten welfare or safety, pregnancy in mares and the misuse of aids. More specifically:
  - a. Any surgical procedures that threaten a competing Horse's welfare or the safety of other Horses and/or Athletes must not be allowed.
  - b. Mares must not compete after their fourth month of pregnancy or with foal at Foot.
  - c. 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. This involves paying careful attention to the competition areas, ground surfaces, weather conditions, stabling, site safety and fitness of the horse for onward travel after the event. More specifically:
  - a. 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. All ground surfaces on which Horses walk, train or compete must be designed and maintained to reduce factors that could lead to injury.
  - c. 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. 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. Every effort must be made to ensure that horses receive proper attention after they have competed and that they are treated humanely when their competition careers are over. This covers proper veterinary care, competition injuries, euthanasia and retirement. More specifically
  - a. 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. 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. 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. 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. Horses must be treated sympathetically and humanely when they retire from Competition.
5. Any action or intent of doping and illicit use of medication constitutes a serious welfare issue and will not be tolerated. After any veterinary treatment, sufficient time must be allowed for full recovery before Competition.
6. The BEF and its members urge all involved with the sport to attain the highest levels of education in their areas of expertise.