



**Ministry of Environment
and Food of Denmark**
Danish Veterinary and
Food Administration

Voluntary initiative on equines

Responsible ownership and care of equidae

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The voluntary initiative on equines Status

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- ✓ At the meeting of the Platform on 7 October 2019 the 'Guide to good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of horses' is presented for dissemination
- ✓ The guide on donkeys and donkey hybrids will soon be finalized by the voluntary initiative group on equines
- ✓ Fact sheets based on the horse guide is under preparation



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The members

Member States:

- ❖ Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the Netherlands

Business and professional organisations:

- ❖ ISAE, FVE, and Copa-Cogeca

Civil society organisations:

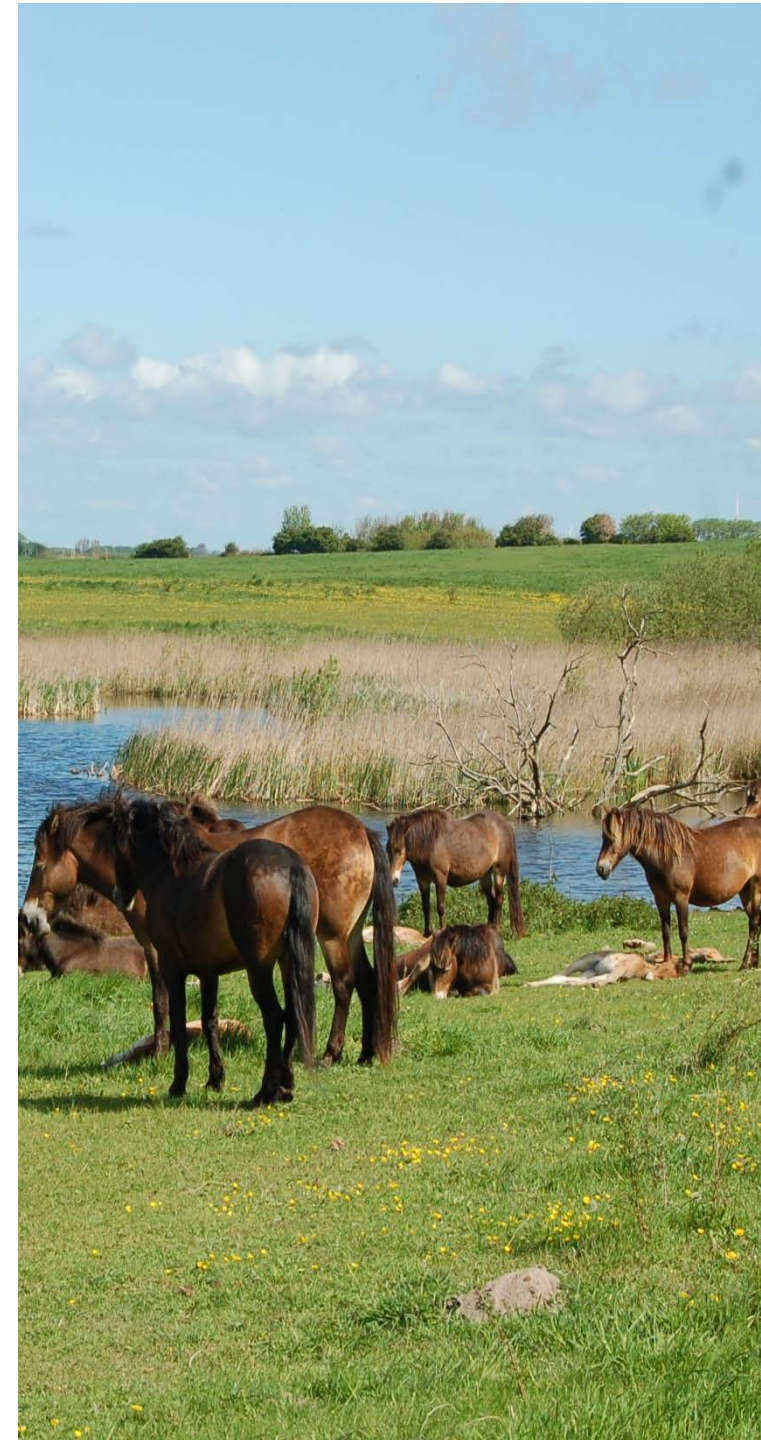
- ❖ World Horse Welfare, Eurogroup for Animals, and Animal's Angels

Independent experts:

- ❖ Two experts

Secretariat:

- ❖ Eurogroup for Animals and World Horse Welfare



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The work

The discussion paper 'Guide to good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of horses' was the basis, and voluntary initiative group also took reports on the EU equine sector into account particularly

- Removing the Blinkers
- The Resolution of the European Parliament of 14 March 2017 on responsible ownership and care of equidae (2016/2078(INI))
 - ✓ As both address equines, it was clear that the group's work should cover both horses and donkeys – this means
 - ✓ A guide for horses
 - ✓ A guide for donkeys and their hybrids
 - ✓ Fact sheets



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The guides

- ✓ The guides address areas where there are no specific EU-legislation
- ✓ Horses, donkeys and donkey hybrids are kept and used in a number of different contexts. Therefore the aim has been to design the guides in such a way that no matter in which context these animals are kept and used, most of the recommendations of the guides will apply.
- ✓ The guides does not in detail address working equines, as a standard addressing these equines has already been includes in the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Chapter 7.12)
- ✓ The guides are not meant to replace, contradict or put in question any existing guide, guideline, charter or legislation
- ✓ The guides are addressed to persons, who owns or in other ways are engaged in the keeping etc. of horses and donkeys and donkey hybrids

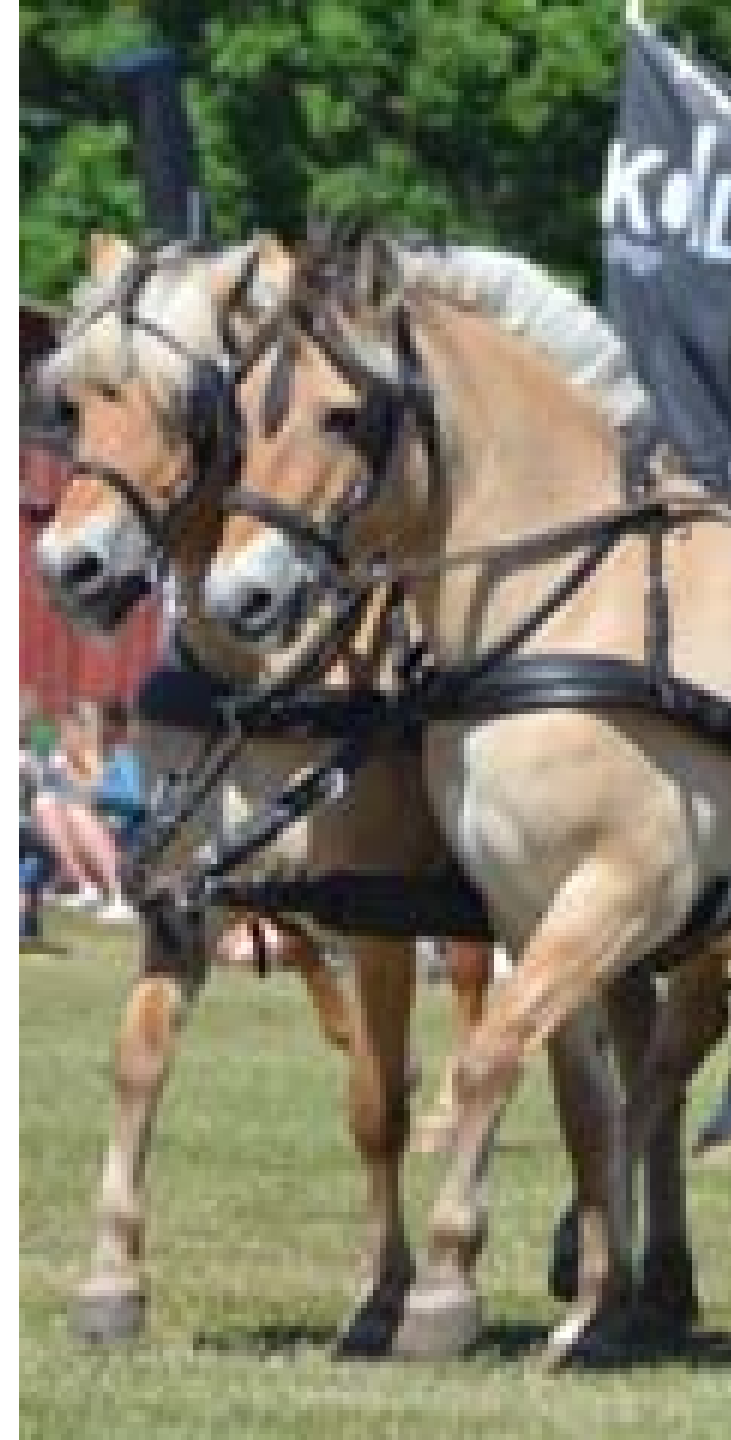


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The guides

❖ The structure of the guides:

- A short introduction and indication of the scope.
- A chapter on biological characteristics and behaviour
 - ✓ The idea of having a chapter on biological characteristics and behaviour is to give the background for and thus a better understanding of the recommendations.
 - ✓ The chapter on biological characteristics and behavior also mentions a number of abnormal behaviours, which are indicators that the environment or conditions, in which equines are or have been kept, do not fully fulfil their need
- Chapters with recommendations, which was assessed as important by the group.
- An annex with a glossary
- An annex on body condition scoring, as body condition is an important animal based indicator.

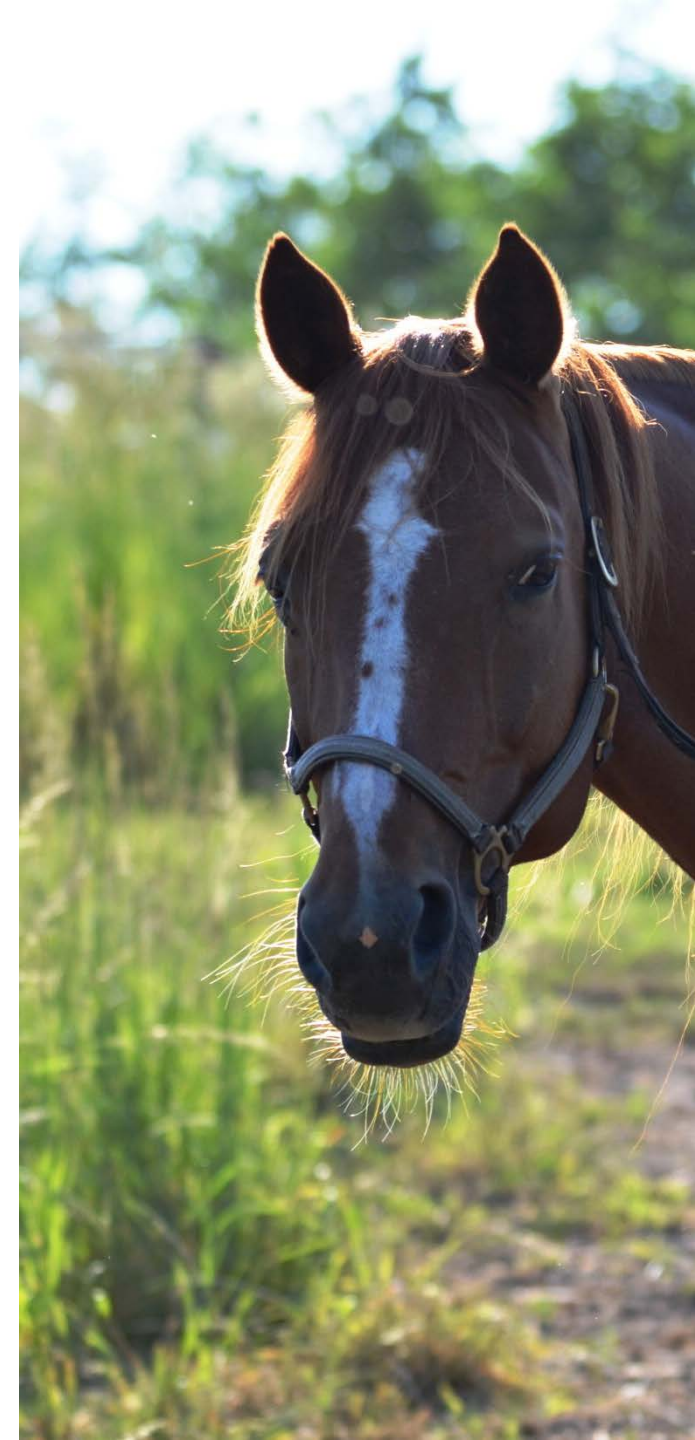


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The guides

The chapters with recommendations cover the following:

- ✓ Contact with other equines
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Turnout
- ✓ Care
- ✓ Handling and training
- ✓ Doping (*only horses*)
- ✓ Equipment
- ✓ Working equines
- ✓ Equines used for sport, leisure, tourism or for other purposes
- ✓ Mutilations
- ✓ Breeding
- ✓ Assessment of the welfare of the equine
- ✓ End of life considerations



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The horse guide

The horse guide was finalised by the voluntary initiative group in the spring and a consultation period, which gives Platform members a possibility to comment, was initiated

The consultation period resulted in a number of comments. All comments have been scrutinised carefully, but for different reasons not all could be taken into account. This could for instance be because the comments suggested

- to amend parts of the text, where the group sometimes after lengthy and difficult discussions reached a compromise
- to amend the text in a way that has been proposed to the group and rejected
- to add new substantial contents, which would need to be discussed in the group
- to add figures, which could initiate again a discussion on figures



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The horse guide

Examples of areas where the text represents a compromise

- ❖ Indoor housing – Individual (loose) boxes
 - The size of the box – figures or no figures?
 - The compromise is a recommendation that a box should be dimensioned to fit the size of the horse, so that the horse can lie down in a natural lateral position (photo to illustrate), turn around and get up unimpeded, and stand in a natural position

- ❖ Different terminology
 - Not recommended (e.g. tie-stalls as a housing system)
 - Should be avoided (e.g. very tight noseband)
 - Should be discouraged (e.g. use of hobbles on pasture)
 - Should be strongly discouraged (e.g. tail docking, hot iron branding)



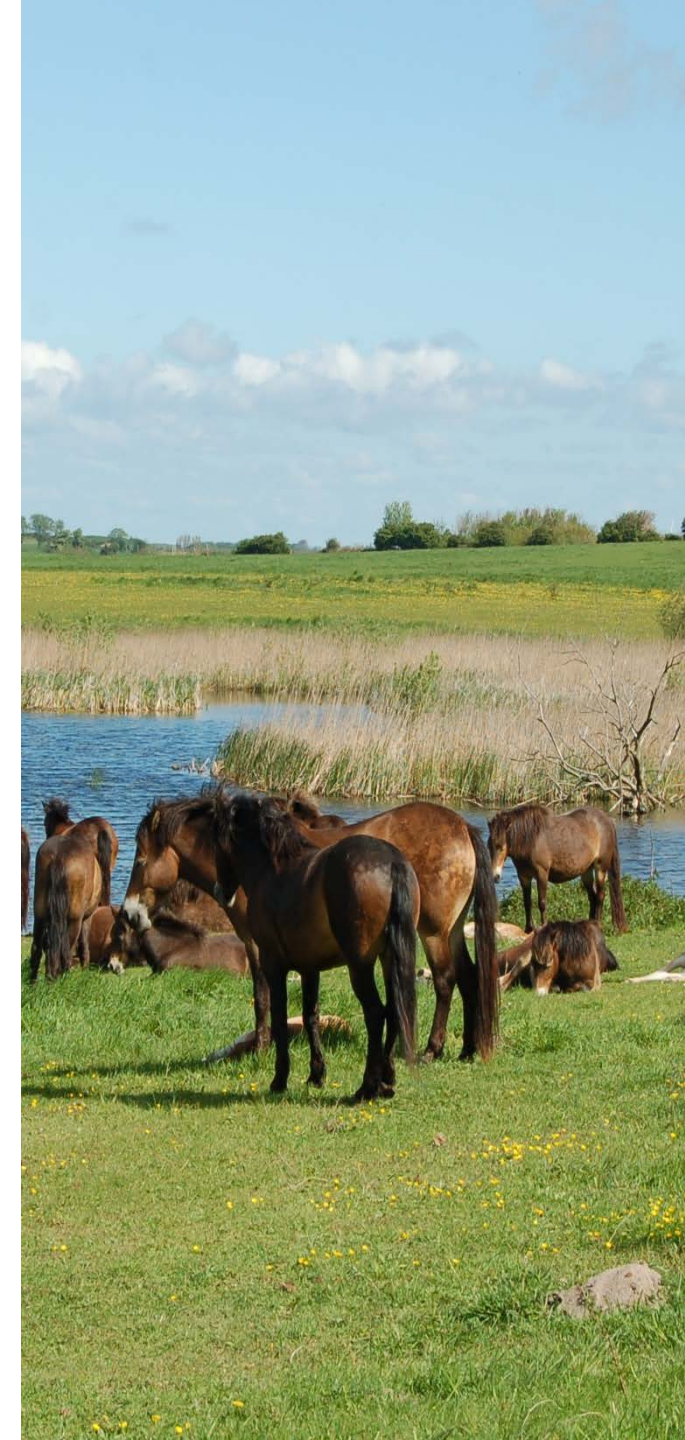
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The horse guide

Examples of areas where the text represents a compromise

- ❖ Access to a paddock or pasture.
 - The compromise is a recommendation that all horses should be given access to a paddock or pasture, where possible together with other horses.
 - This wording is carefully chosen, so that it both recommend access to paddock or pasture, but at the same time allow for the necessary flexibility in relation to how different groups of horses are managed. For instance when considering the risk of injuries, it may be decided not to give certain horses (e.g. racehorses) access to paddock or pasture.

- ❖ The terminology in the chapter on end of life considerations
 - Here the group chose to use killing instead of euthanize, as the term euthanize has very different meanings in different countries



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Closing remarks

- ❖ The aim of the guides is to support responsible keeping, care, training and use of equines, and thus improve equine welfare in the EU and beyond.
- ❖ To this end it is my hope that you – the Platform members – will be in a position to agree on the dissemination of the ‘Guide to good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of horses’
- ❖ The guide should be a living document that can be updated at some point
- ❖ Finally - the possible support from the Commission for the translation and dissemination of the guides would be a great added value





Thank you – questions?