



**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

Background

May 2015 – June 2019

- ✓ Actually it started in May 2014 with a Commission meeting, which aimed to explore issues affecting equines and the multifaceted equine sector in the European Union
- ✓ At the second meeting of the EU Platform one of the sessions focused on equines – this was the incentive for announcing the establishment of the voluntary initiative group
- ✓ Terms of reference was drafted and Platform members were invited to indicate interest in becoming a member or nominate a candidate.
- ✓ The voluntary initiative group was established and held its first meeting in April 2018
- ✓ The group has held five meetings



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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 later one experts

Secretariat:

- ❖ Eurogroup for Animals and World Horse Welfare



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The work

The subgroup has taken reports on the EU equine sector into account, particularly

- Removing the Blinkers
- The Resolution of the European Parliament of 14 March 2017 responsible ownership and care of equidae (2016/2078(INI))

Key areas of work include

- The discussion paper 'Guide to good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of horses'
- As both Removing the Blinkers and the Resolution of the European Parliament address equines, it was clear that the group's work should cover both horses and donkeys – this means
 - ✓ A guide for horses and a guide for donkeys and their hybrids
 - ✓ Fact sheets



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The guides

The guides present recommendations to good animal welfare practice

- ✓ The guides address areas where there are no specific EU-legislation
- ✓ 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)
- ✓ Nor does the guides address in detail other specific uses of horses and donkeys. 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 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 guides are structured so that they first give a short introduction and indication of the scope.
- ❖ Then follows a chapter on biological characteristics and behaviour, followed by chapters with recommendations on topics, which was assessed as important by the group.
 - ✓ The idea of describing the biological characteristics and behaviour is to give the background for the recommendations and thus a better understanding of them.
 - ✓ This chapter on biological characteristics and behaviour also mentions a number of abnormal behaviours, which are indicators that the environment or conditions, in which equines are or has been kept, do not fully fulfil their needs.
 - ✓ The guide also has an annex on body condition scoring, as body condition is an important animal based indicator.

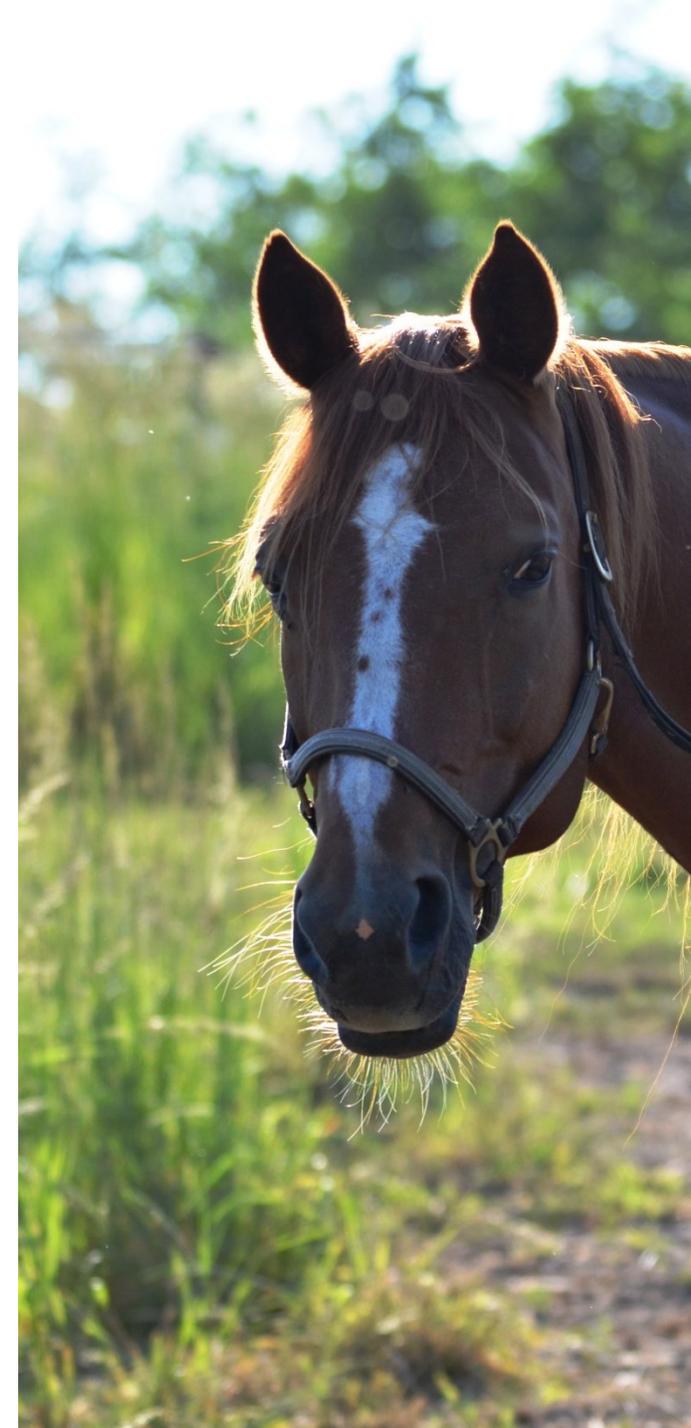


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The guides

The chapters with recommendations cover the following (may a bit of variation between the horse and the donkey guide):

- ✓ Contact with other equines
- ✓ Accommodation - *Including general considerations, indoor housing, indoor climate, light, noise*
- ✓ Turnout
- ✓ Care - *including inspection, infectious diseases and biosecurity, veterinary care, routine health care, including vaccination, endoparasite monitoring, hoof and dental care, feed and water*
- ✓ Handling and training
- ✓ Doping
- ✓ Equipment – *including saddlery and harness, mechanical equipment, restraint equipment, rugs*



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The guides

The chapters with recommendations cover the following (*continued*):

- ✓ Working equines - not in detail
- ✓ Equines used for sport, leisure, tourism or for other purposes
- ✓ Mutilations – *including tail docking, trimming of whiskers, nicking of tendons, hot iron branding and freeze branding*
- ✓ Breeding – *including responsible breeding, breeding methods, foaling and weaning*
- ✓ Assessment of the welfare of the equine
- ✓ End of life considerations

Furthermore the guides has two annexes:

- ✓ Annex – Glossary
- ✓ Annex – Body condition scoring



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What's next?

- ❖ 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 the group agreed that the guides should be adopted by the Platform according to Article 7 (6) of the Commission Decision of January 2017 establishing the Commission Expert Group 'Platform on Animal Welfare'
- ❖ The adoption procedure has started for the horse guide
 - ✓ Platform members have been consulted and comments have been received – deadline for comments was 6 June
 - ✓ The group will review the comments and revise the guide where appropriate
 - ✓ We hope for adoption at the next Platform meeting
- ❖ The guide on donkeys and donkey hybrids is expected to be finalised during the next months
- ❖ The possible support from the Commission for the translation and dissemination of the guides would be a great added value





Thank you – questions?