

14-Day Welfare Check

Understanding the role of systematic
health evaluations

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GLOBAL
EQUESTRIAN
GROUP



Intended Audience

This white paper is directed towards stakeholders in the equestrian industry who manage multiple horses, including professional equestrian training centers, riding schools, and the general public with an interest in equine welfare. The document outlines best practices when conducting a 14-day welfare check on horses.

Introduction

At Global Equestrian Group, we have implemented a new self-monitoring protocol known as the '14-day welfare check'. The check was launched back in 2023 as an initiative to improve horse welfare. This initiative ensures standardized and consistent examinations across all horses, identifying potential issues such as injuries, infections, and other health concerns early on. The 14-day Welfare check is in addition to daily welfare inspections by riders and grooms, along with 3-5 annual veterinary examinations, providing an additional layer of care.

Guidelines

The guidelines for the 14-day welfare check are crafted to ensure a consistent and thorough examination of each horse, from A-Z. This process involves carefully adjusting the horse's gear for better inspection access, conducting systematic checks for any signs of abnormalities or distress, and accurately documenting the findings to maintain a thorough record of each horse's health status.

To uphold the highest standards of objectivity and ensure precise documentation, a stable manager, groom, and administrative staff member is required during each check. This collaborative approach guarantees all observations are documented, and any potential for bias is minimized, ensuring that each horse receives the best possible care and attention.

Guideline for 14-day check of horses

Loosen the belly straps on the blanket during the winter.

Lift the blanket on each side of the horse and check the skin on the flanks thoroughly.

Check the girth area on both sides.

Feel all four legs, fetlocks and down to the hoof thoroughly for any skin infections, warmth, swelling and similar.

Check the mouth both from the outside and from the inside by opening up the corner of the mouth.

If the horse has old scars or tissue then note this, but mark it as a scar/tissue, so it is clear, that it is not a current wound.

Note if there are any other things to be aware of such as watery eyes, swollen glands, nasal discharge, etc.

For those using a double bridle: Check the area where the curb is to ensure there are no wounds, swellings etc.

Film video of thmas sigtenbjerggaard training as well as showing him riding gently.
AW Topics: Leadership visibility.

General

The Stable Manager is responsible for the check and that the guidelines are followed. The Groom assists the Stable Manager with the check, and the administrative staff member ensures all data is documented correctly.

Be thorough and double-check if needed.

Its better to note too much than too little.

Data Collection

Data collection is overseen by an administrative member to guarantee consistency and to ensure that detailed information and observations from each check are carefully documented. This structured approach allows for precise monitoring and analysis over time.

DRF Guideline - Helgstrand Dressage

General information:

The Excel sheet provides an overview of the data collected during the 14-day welfare checks. The document is designed for customization, allowing each stable or riding school to insert additional data points as required for their specific needs. For those interested in adopting or adapting this protocol, our template is available for download.

User Guide:

To use the template, start by entering the horse's name and the date of the check in the designated fields. Then, proceed to fill in the relevant information for each category as you complete the 14-day check.

Date	Name of horse	Head	Mouth		The horse's flank, hindquarters, and girth area		Mud fever or sores on legs			
			Left	Right	Left	Right	LF	RF	LB	RB
March 5 th	Valverdos								Mud fever	
	Viva Vegas									
	Parero						Mud fever	Mud fever		
	Viva la vida						Mud fever			

Other remarks	Check done by

[Download the template](#)

Benefits and Challenges in Implementation

Implementing the 14-day welfare check offers notable benefits, including enhanced monitoring for early detection of health issues and systematic data collection for improved equine welfare management. However, challenges may arise, such as the need for significant resource allocation for training and execution, and ensuring consistency in documentation across staff. Successfully overcoming these challenges can lead to a robust framework for maintaining high standards of horse care.

Starting with available resources and gradually scaling up the 14-Day Check can make implementation more manageable, ensuring some level of monitoring is in place even in resource-limited scenarios. The primary benefit is establishing a baseline of health data, which can create a sustainable model for horse care that prioritizes both immediate and long-term health outcomes.

Positives

Consistent monitoring: Ensures regular and uniform health assessments for every horse.

Early detection: Identifies health issues early, allowing for quick treatment.

Check the girth area on both sides.

Benchmarking: Enables comparison over time, identifying trends or recurring issues that need addressing.

Negatives

Resource Intensive: Requires significant time and personnel.

Training Requirements: Staff need thorough training to maintain consistency and accuracy, adding to initial costs.

Limited Applicability: In smaller facilities with fewer horses, the extensive overview provided by the protocol might not be as essential since individual care and monitoring are more manageable.



Conclusion

The 14-day welfare check serves as a practical tool, offering a methodical approach to accumulate valuable data on equine health. This protocol, while not groundbreaking, stands as a testament to the commitment towards improving equine welfare through regular and comprehensive health assessments. It highlights the importance of integrating such practices alongside other welfare measures to ensure a thorough understanding and enhancement of horse welfare standards.