



Code of Practice
for the **Care and Handling of**
Horses on PMU Ranches

CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION	2
SECTION 1	Duty of Care 3
SECTION 2	Facilities & Housing 3
SECTION 3	Feed & Water 6
SECTION 4	Health Management 8
SECTION 5	Inspections 9
SECTION 6	Husbandry Practices 9
SECTION 7	Reproductive Management 10
SECTION 8	Transportation 10
SECTION 9	Change or End of Career 11
SECTION 10	Euthanasia 11
APPENDIX I	Body Condition Score System 12
APPENDIX II	Transport Decision Tree 14
APPENDIX III	PMU Stall Dimensions 16
APPENDIX IV	References & Resources for Further Information 17
	Review Committee Participants 17
	Distribution 17

PREFACE

Responsibility for the humane treatment and proper care of farm and domestic animals lies with those who have assumed stewardship of these animals. The most significant influence on the welfare of animals is the care and management provided by the person(s) responsible for their daily care. Sound animal care practices are critical to ensuring the welfare of animals and to maintaining public trust.

Codes of Practice set standards and expectations for the care and handling of farm animals. Codes promote sound management and welfare practices for housing, care, transportation and other animal husbandry practices. They also serve to inform the public about responsible agricultural practices.

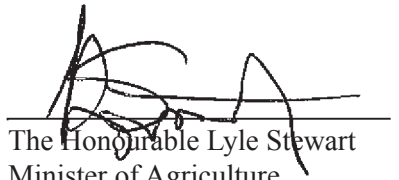
The *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Horses on PMU Operations* was first published by the Province of Manitoba in 1990. Subsequently, in 1998, the *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Horses* was developed by Canadian Agri-Food Research Council. Changes in both producer and industry needs have resulted in a need to occasionally review and amend both Codes.

APMU Study Committee initiated by Manitoba Agriculture and Wyeth Organics developed the original Code of Practice. Periodic reviews and revisions are now overseen by an Equine Ranching Code of Practice Review Committee comprised of equine ranchers, veterinary practitioners, and industry experts.

We are pleased to support this Code of Practice in recognition of the assurance that it provides for the proper care and handling of all animals involved in equine ranching.



The Honourable Ralph Eichler
Minister of Agriculture
Manitoba



The Honourable Lyle Stewart
Minister of Agriculture
Saskatchewan

INTRODUCTION

Animal welfare considerations are important for keeping and raising animals, both in Canada and internationally. Practices, which may once have been deemed acceptable, are now being reassessed and modified according to new knowledge and changing attitudes. High standards of animal welfare are not only important legally, but also have a direct economic benefit and ensure that the horse industry has a place in the international market.

The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) *Code of Practice for the Care & Handling of Equines* (2013) outlines comprehensive requirements applicable to all horse owners in Canada. The *Code of Practice for the Care & Handling of Horses on PMU Ranches* provides additional requirements and recommendations specific to the Pregnant Mares Urine (PMU) industry.

Providing competent handling and an environment that allows horses to fulfil their basic needs are crucial elements of responsible animal care.

Elements of responsible animal care include:

- Comfort and shelter;
- Readily accessible potable water and a diet to ensure the horse's nutritional requirements are met;
- Opportunity for reasonable movement;
- Company of other animals, particularly of like kind;
- Opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behaviour;
- Prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment of abnormal behaviour, injury and disease;
- Emergency management protocols that provide for the welfare of horses in the event of an emergency (disease, power failure, fire, floods, and inclement weather), mechanical breakdown or disruption of feed/water supplies.

The recommendations in this Code of Practice are based on the best knowledge currently available. For the purposes of this document, the term *equine rancher* refers to the person(s) responsible for the daily care of equids on any given PMU ranch, typically the owner/operator. Equine ranchers meet the needs of their livestock under a variety of husbandry and management practices. We recognize that research and evaluation of various management practices and welfare issues must be supported. As scientific and technological knowledge advances, management procedures will evolve further. We encourage the pursuit of such knowledge and adoption of viable handling and management procedures.

CODE OF PRACTICE

1. DUTY OF CARE

Requirement:

- 1.1. Equine ranchers must manage their equine population responsibly, recognizing that responsible use of horses to produce medicine for the benefit of humankind includes continuously enhancing the welfare of all horses.

2. FACILITIES AND HOUSING

2.1. PASTURES AND YARDS

Requirements:

- 2.1.1. Horses must have access to shelter (constructed or natural) that protects them from the harmful effects of extreme weather conditions.
- 2.1.2. Adequate bedding must be provided when environmental conditions require it.
- 2.1.3. On an annual basis, all stored or accumulated manure must be disposed of in accordance with local and provincial environmental regulations. Manure must not be carried over from one collection season to the next.
- 2.1.4. Manure must not be stored or accumulated in the turnout area.
- 2.1.5. Every equine rancher must provide a turnout area for indoor-housed horses. The turnout area must be properly fenced, have adequate shelter and drainage, and provide at least 1000 sq ft of space per mare. The turnout area must be maintained in good condition, free from equipment, machinery, debris and refuse of all kinds.
- 2.1.6. Every equine rancher should have adequate pasture to maintain the well-being and health of the herd. Under conditions where an equine rancher cannot supply adequate pasture for the horse herd, supplementary feed must be given to maintain the horses' health.

Recommended Practice:

- 2.1.7. Every equine ranch should provide suitable facilities for the veterinary treatment and handling of animals.

2.2. INDOOR HOUSING

Requirements:

- 2.2.1. Every equine rancher must provide horse stables of sound construction that are constructed and maintained to provide weather proof accommodations which keep barn temperatures above freezing.
- 2.2.2. Every equine rancher must provide an individual stall for each pregnant mare in the barn.
- 2.2.3. Every individual stall must be of sufficient size to allow each horse to lie down in a normal resting posture and step forward in comfort (See Table 2.1 and Appendix III).

TABLE 2.1: STALL SIZES

HORSE SIZE*		MINIMUM TIE STALL WIDTH (Centre to Centre)		RECOMMENDED MIN. BOX STALL SIZE	
lbs	kg	ft	cm	ft ²	m ²
Up to 1300	Up to 590	4	122	121	11.24
1301 – 1700	591 – 770	4.5	137	144	13.37
≥1700 or 16H	≥771 or 16H	5	152	182	16.90

* Maximum weight at any given time during the collection season.
The partitions should be constructed in a manner similar to illustrations in Appendix III.

- 2.2.4. The partitions of every stall must be soundly constructed to prevent injury to any horse.
- 2.2.5. Every individual stall must be equipped with a manger at a height suitable for the size of the horse in the stall (See Appendix III).
- 2.2.6. Every stall and manger must be maintained in a proper state of repair to prevent injury to the horse.
- 2.2.7. All ceilings and overhead supporting beams must be solid at a minimum height of 9 ft (274 cm).
- 2.2.8. All alleyways within a collection barn must meet the requirements outlined in Table 2.2.
- 2.2.9. All horse stables must have a source of natural lighting (windows or skylights).
- 2.2.10. Each collection barn must have an adequate source of artificial lighting to permit effective observation of horses.

TABLE 2.2: Head-to-head stall arrangement
(indicates inside measurements)

		Imperial	Metric
Feed Alleys	Minimum	6 ft	183 cm
Rear Alleys (2)	Minimum	8 ft	244 cm

Rear-to-rear stall arrangement:

Feed Alleys (2)	Minimum	4 ft	122 cm
Centre Alley	Minimum	12 ft	366 cm

- 2.2.11. Floors in stalls must provide a non-slip surface, free from any holes or cracks that may cause injury to a horse. Floors may be composed of one or more of the following: roughened concrete, rubber matting or wood.
- 2.2.12. All floors, walls, ceilings and partitions in any horse stable must be maintained in an acceptable state of cleanliness.
- 2.2.13. All wet and soiled bedding must be removed from each collection barn at least once daily.
- 2.2.14. All mangers and utensils used for feed and water must be maintained in clean condition and be kept free from contamination.
- 2.2.15. Adequate amounts of suitable bedding material must be provided to ensure comfort, warmth, dryness, traction and protection against abrasions.
- 2.2.16. Each collection barn must be ventilated to maintain good air quality, particularly temperature and humidity.
- 2.2.17. Every equine ranch must have a written emergency action plan in place.
- 2.2.18. Every equine ranch must have a fire extinguisher in each tank room and a minimum of two adequately-sized extinguishers in every collection barn.
- 2.2.19. Between each urine collection season, the collection barn must be thoroughly cleaned. Cleaning should result in removal of all visible organic material. Under the direction of the attending veterinarian, cleaning may need to be followed with disinfection of certain surfaces.

Recommended Practices:

- 2.2.20. The area where mares are stabled should be partitioned to exclude the entry of other animals and poultry.

- 2.2.21. All alleyways within a horse stable should be of concrete and be of such a width that they can be maintained to provide for:
 - a) safe movement of horses and attendants, and
 - b) proper transportation of feed and waste materials.
- 2.2.22. Horses housed indoors should not be exposed to air drafts.
- 2.2.23. Box stalls should have a minimum floor area as outlined in Table 2.1.
- 2.2.24. At least one box stall should be provided per thirty mares being housed in the collection barn.
- 2.2.25. The box stall area should be heated or maintained above 0°C.

3. FEED AND WATER

Requirements:

- 3.1. A good supply of water that is safe and palatable for horses must be available to the horse herd at all times.
- 3.2. All horses must be provided water in amounts meeting or exceeding the National Research Council Nutrient Requirements of Horses (2007) and as indicated in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1: Expected Daily Water Intake of Horses*

Body Weight		Minimum		Average		Maximum	
lbs	kg	CDN gal [§]	litres	CDN gal	litres	CDN gal	litres
1200	545	4	18	6	27	8	36
1500	680	5	22.5	8	36	10	45
1800	818	6	27	9.5	43	12	54

* adapted from: *Nutrient Requirements of Horses, 6th Edition, National Research Council, 2007.*

§ Canadian Gallon = 4.54 Litres

- 3.3. All horses must receive a diet that is adequate to ensure their nutritional requirements are met. In addition, immature horses must receive a diet that is adequate for growth.
- 3.4. Forage must be free from visible mould and excess dust. Concentrates must be clean and free from excess dust and contaminants.
- 3.5. All horses must have access to salt and mineral mixtures, either provided in the ration or free-choice.

- 3.6. All horses (including broodmares throughout breeding, gestation, and lactation) should be maintained at a body condition score (BCS) of 5-7. Corrective action must be taken at a BCS of 4 or lower and at a BCS of 8 or higher. (See Appendix I).

Recommended Practices:

- 3.7. Water quality should be analysed annually to ensure it is suitable for livestock consumption. All new water sources or wells should be tested before use. Water testing should be repeated if unusual conditions occur such as drought, flooding, changes in water smell/clarity/taste, changes in animals' eating or drinking habits, or loss of performance.
- 3.8. Roughage should be tested for nutrient content at a reputable feed laboratory.
- 3.9. Rations for horses should be formulated in accordance with the current recommendations of the National Research Council, Nutrient Requirements of Horses (2007).
- 3.10. Horses housed indoors should be fed in a way that allows them to exhibit natural feeding behaviours by maximizing the amount of time horses have access to forage.
- 3.11. Change of feed should be done gradually, particularly transitions from pasture to preserved forages.

General Nutrition Information:

Protein is a major component of the tissues of the body. Protein requirement is greatest in young, growing animals and lowest in mature animals maintaining themselves.

During the last 60 days of gestation, a diet containing 9 to 11% protein is required so high quality hay may need to be fed. Mineral should be fed according to feed analyses and ration formulation. The amounts of mineral mix fed may need to be increased by 50 to 100 percent above maintenance.

Salt should be provided at a level sufficient to maintain proper metabolism and fluid balance. The amount needed is about 0.15 to 0.30% of dry matter intake, or about 0.5 - 2 ounces (15 – 60 gm) per day according to the body weight of the mare.

Vitamin A requirements for maintenance are 30 IU/kg BW per day but increase to 60 IU/kg BW per day for mares during later pregnancy and lactation. Vitamin D requirements for horses other than growing horses are 6.6 IU/kg BW per day. Vitamin A and D supplementation may be required if the diet does not provide sufficient amounts. Good quality forage and pasture are good sources of vitamin A and carotene, but supplementation may be required when weathered or mature hays are used. Cereal grains contain little to no vitamin A or D.

4. HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Requirements:

- 4.1. Every rancher must have all of the horses on the equine ranch included in a herd health program with a licensed veterinarian.
- 4.2. In consultation with the attending veterinarian and the AAEP Vaccination Guidelines, all horses must receive regionally appropriate vaccines.
- 4.3. In consultation with the attending veterinarian, every equine rancher must implement a parasite control program to prevent parasite related disease. The program should address internal and external parasites in all horses, as well as manure and pasture management.
- 4.4. Every equine rancher must maintain a health record of each horse on the farm. Health records must document the animal(s) treated, treatment administered, date, reason for treatment, dosage, and withdrawal time (see 4.11).
- 4.5. All surgical and dental procedures must be performed by a licensed veterinarian with appropriate analgesic.
- 4.6. Horses that are sick, injured or in pain must receive appropriate treatment without delay or be euthanized without delay.
- 4.7. Where the condition of any horse requires veterinary attention, veterinary advice or care must be obtained as soon as possible.
- 4.8. Horses showing signs of dental problems must be examined and treated.
- 4.9. No equine rancher shall collect urine from any mare that is physically disabled or clinically ill.
- 4.10. Any equipment or harness found to be causing or interfering with treatment of a wound or abnormal condition of the mare must be adjusted or removed immediately to provide relief. If necessary, appropriate and timely treatment must be provided.
- 4.11. Mares receiving medication must be unharnessed to prevent collection of urine during the withdrawal time recommended by the attending veterinarian.

Recommended Practice:

- 4.12. Every equine rancher should have a biosecurity and infectious disease control plan in place. At a minimum, the plan should address equine entry onto the premises, equine health monitoring, outbreak response, and quarantine procedures.

5. INSPECTIONS

Requirement:

- 5.1. The company purchasing urine must have an inspection program in place to ensure all contracted ranchers remain in compliance with the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Horses on PMU Ranches*, the relevant federal and provincial legislation for the health and welfare of animals, and the NFACC *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines*.

6. HUSBANDRY PRACTICES

Requirements:

- 6.1. Electric prods must not be used on horses on equine ranches.
- 6.2. No tail, pastern, leg or other restraints shall be used to facilitate urine collection.
- 6.3. Halters must be properly fitted for the individual horse.
- 6.4. Horses housed in tie stalls must have a tie shank long enough to permit them to feed and lie down in a normal posture, and to stand with the head fully raised.
- 6.5. Hooves must be trimmed as often as is necessary to maintain hooves in functional condition, and must not be allowed to grow to excessive lengths causing injury or discomfort to the horse.
- 6.6. All horses must be groomed as is necessary for their welfare. Burdocks causing discomfort or injury must be removed without delay.
- 6.7. All equipment and harness used for the purpose of urine collection must be of a design and construction approved by the Equine Ranching Code of Practice Review Committee.
- 6.8. Any equipment and harness used in the collection of urine must be properly fitted and maintained.
- 6.9. All collection equipment and harnesses must be kept clean and in good repair.
- 6.10. Every horse on an equine ranch must be given the opportunity for turnout as is necessary for its individual welfare as determined by the rancher, the field auditor and the attending veterinarian.

Recommended Practices:

- 6.11. Equine ranchers should handle all horses with care, gentleness and patience.
- 6.12. Training of horses and foals should be done quietly and carefully to minimize stress and the chance of injury.

- 6.13. Horses may be wintered outdoors provided they have adequate fat cover, are fed properly, and have shelter from the wind.
- 6.14. Stallions may be group housed, provided they are compatible and there is sufficient space to allow subordinate horses to escape aggression.

7. REPRODUCTIVE MANAGEMENT

Requirements:

- 7.1. Weaning is necessary in order to facilitate handling and training of foals and to allow the mare to regain body condition. Foals are typically weaned at approximately 4+ months of age, but must not be weaned until they are at least 3 months of age.
- 7.2. The weaning area must have adequate shelter of appropriate size, be well drained, and properly bedded.
- 7.3. Facilities and fencing used during weaning must be safe and made of strong materials free from protrusions.
- 7.4. For the purpose of sale, equine ranchers must not remove weaned foals from their premises prior to September 1st or the Labour Day weekend, whichever comes first.

Recommended Practices:

- 7.5. Equine ranchers should employ weaning methods that minimize stress on the mare and foal.

8. TRANSPORTATION

Each person responsible for transporting animals, or arranging for their transport, must ensure that no part of the transportation process causes injury or undue suffering to the animals. The requirements for animal transport in Canada are described in the *Health of Animals Regulations*, Part XII. The *NFACC Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Transportation* provides additional guidance and requirements including load density limits for loose horses in transit.

Requirements:

- 8.1. Any apparatus (including ramps, chutes or gangways) used to load or unload horses must be constructed and maintained so as not to cause injury to a horse.
- 8.2. All transport vehicles used for horses must be of sound construction and must be properly maintained. The stalls and compartments must be safe and made of strong materials free from protrusions capable of causing injury to a horse.

- 8.3. Transport vehicle floors must provide secure footing. The transport vehicle must be bedded with adequate clean straw, wood shavings, or other bedding material to provide for the comfort and safety of the horses being transported.
- 8.4. Horses must be individually assessed for fitness for transport before being loaded or transported. To evaluate fitness, consult the Transport Decision Tree (Appendix II). Unfit horses must not be transported except for veterinary treatment on the advice of a veterinarian.
- 8.5. Each horse must be able to assume a natural stance, standing with 4 feet on the floor, and have a full range of head and neck movement without touching the ceiling of the transport vehicle. As a guide, the minimum headroom for horses in transit can be approximated by multiplying the withers height by 1.25.
- 8.6. Horses must be transported to their destination without delay and must be provided with adequate amounts of suitable feed and water at such intervals as may be necessary for their comfort and welfare.

Recommended Practice:

- 8.7. Foals require special care and attention during transport. Foals should be in continuous transit for no longer than 12 hours, after which time they should be provided with rest, feed and water for at least 6 hours prior to continuing the trip.

9. CHANGE OR END OF CAREER

Requirement:

- 9.1. The welfare of the horse must be of paramount importance when making change or end of career decisions for horses. Refer to Section 9 of the *NFACC Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines*.

10. EUTHANASIA

Requirement:

- 10.1. When required by reason of health, condition or age, equine ranchers must arrange for prompt, humane euthanasia for horses requiring it. Chapter 10 of the *NFACC Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines* provides specific guidance on determining humane endpoints and methods of euthanasia for horses

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONDITION SCORE SYSTEM

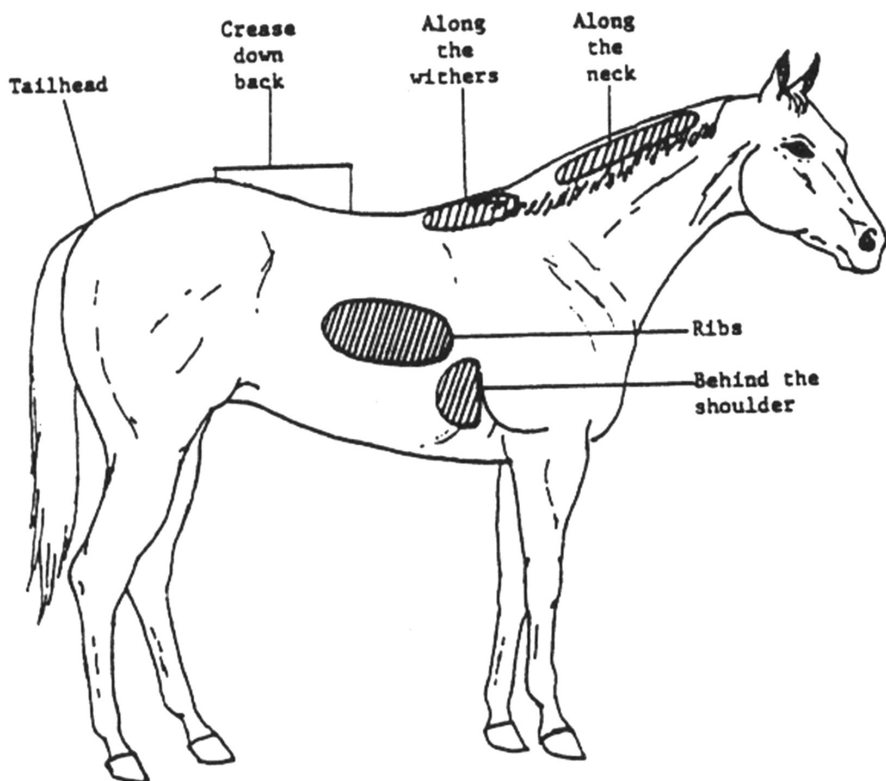
ScoreDescription

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. POOR | Animal extremely emaciated. Spinous processes, ribs, tailhead, and hooks and pins projecting prominently. Bone structure of withers, shoulders and neck easily noticeable. No fatty tissues can be felt. |
| 2. VERY THIN | Animal emaciated. Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes, transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded. Spinous processes, ribs, tailhead, and hooks and pins prominent. Withers, shoulders and neck structures faintly discernible. |
| 3. THIN | Fat built up about halfway on spinous processes; transverse processes cannot be felt. Slight fat cover over ribs. Spinous processes and ribs easily discernible. Tailhead prominent, but individual vertebrae cannot be visually identified. Hook bones appear rounded, but easily discernible. Pin bones not distinguishable. Withers, shoulders and neck accentuated |
| 4. MODERATELY THIN | Negative crease along back. Faint outline of ribs discernible. Tailhead prominence depends on conformation, fat can be felt around it. Hook bones not discernible.
Withers, shoulders and neck not obviously thin. |
| 5. MODERATE | Back level. Ribs cannot be visually distinguished but can be easily felt. Fat around tailhead beginning to feel spongy. Withers appear rounded over spinous processes. Shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body. |
| 6. MODERATE TO FLESHY | May have slight crease down back. Fat over ribs feels spongy. Fat around tailhead feels soft. Fat beginning to be deposited along the sides of the withers, behind the shoulders and along the sides of the neck. |
| 7. FLESHY | May have crease down back. Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable filling between ribs with fat. Fat around tailhead is soft. Fat deposited along withers, behind shoulders and along the neck. |
| 8. FAT | Crease down back. Difficult to feel ribs. Fat around tailhead very soft. Area along withers filled with fat. Area behind shoulder filled in flush. Noticeable thickening of neck. Fat deposited along inner buttocks. |
| 9. EXTREMELY FAT | Obvious crease down back. Patchy fat appearing over ribs. Bulging fat around tailhead, along withers, behind shoulders and along neck. Fat along inner buttocks may rub together. Flank filled in flush. |

APPENDIX I

BODY CONDITION SCORE SYSTEM

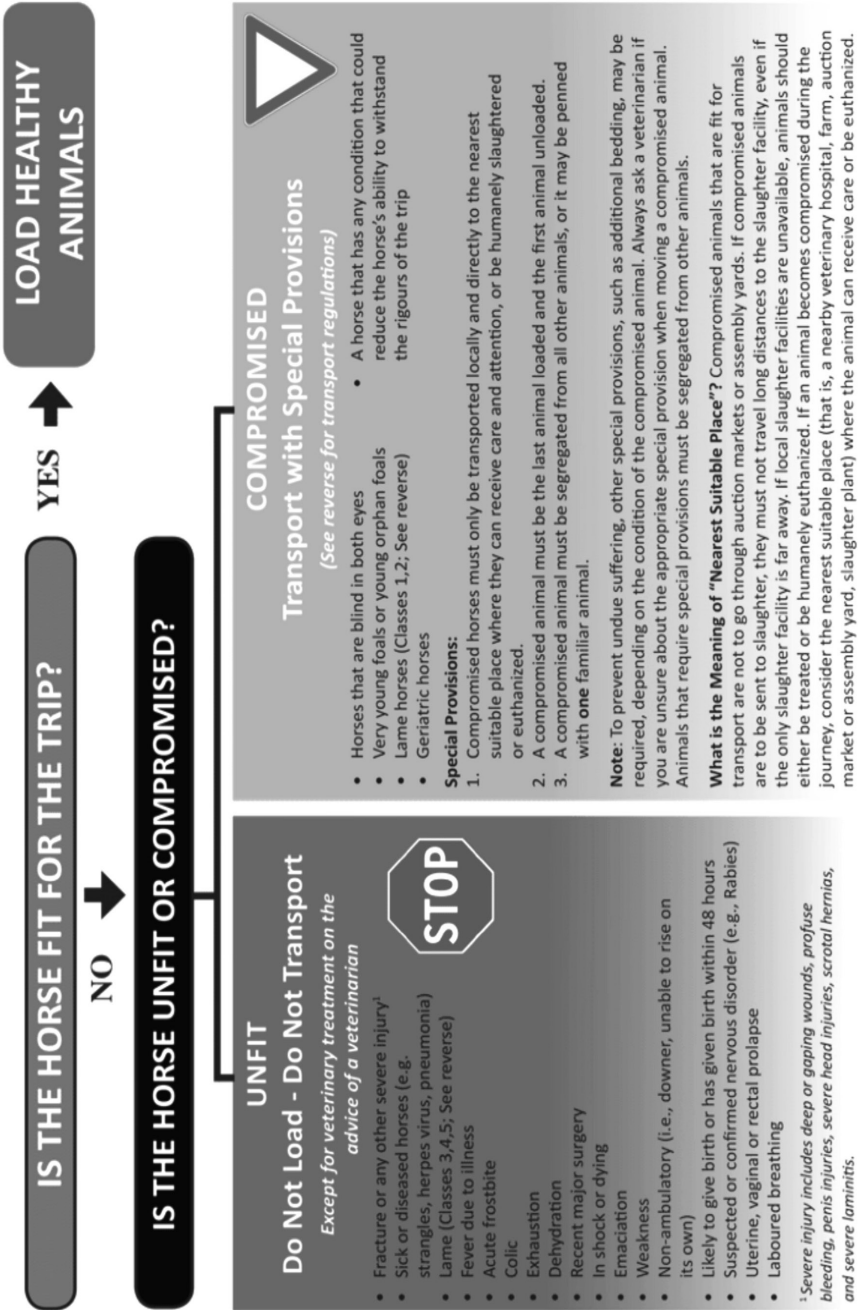
Diagram of areas emphasized in condition score.



Henneke, D.R., G.D Potter, J.L. Kreider and B.F. Yeates. 1983. Relationship between body condition score, physical measurements and body fat percentage in mares. *Equine Veterinary Journal* Vol. 15: 371-372

APPENDIX II

TRANSPORT DECISION TREE



Content for the Transport Decision Tree was created by the Equine Code Development Committee and is based on the *Health of Animals Regulations*.

Guidelines for Dealing with Compromised Horses

Federal Transport Regulations (as of 2012)

www.inspection.gc.ca

DO

- Segregate animals of different species or substantially different weights and ages; or if incompatible by nature (i.e., stallions, jacks); mares with suckling foals; and horses with shoes on their hind legs.
- Ensure that animals segregated in trucks receive extra protection from cold and wind chill; supply ample bedding.
- Provide proper ventilation, drainage and absorption of urine.
- Have sufficient headroom for animals to stand in a natural position.
- Either strew the vehicle with sand or have the vehicle fitted with safe footholds, in addition to proper bedding.
- Ensure that animals unloaded for feed, water and rest remain at the rest stop for a minimum of five hours or longer to ensure all animals receive feed and water.

DO NOT

- Continue to transport an animal that is injured, becomes ill, or is otherwise unfit to travel beyond the nearest place it can be treated.
- Mishandle an animal at loading or unloading.
- Use electric goads or prods.
- Load or unload animals in a way that would cause injury or undue suffering.
- Crowd animals to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering.
- Transport livestock in trailers not designed for the safe handling of that species or class of livestock.

Lameness Classes

These categories can be used to determine the status of an animal's mobility, from normal to non-ambulatory.

Transport as Soon as Possible

Class 1

Visibly lame but can keep up with the group.

Class 2

Unable to keep up; some difficulty climbing ramps. Load in rear compartment.

Do Not Load or Transport*

Class 3

Requires assistance to rise, but can walk freely.

Class 4

Requires assistance to rise; reluctant to walk; halted movement.

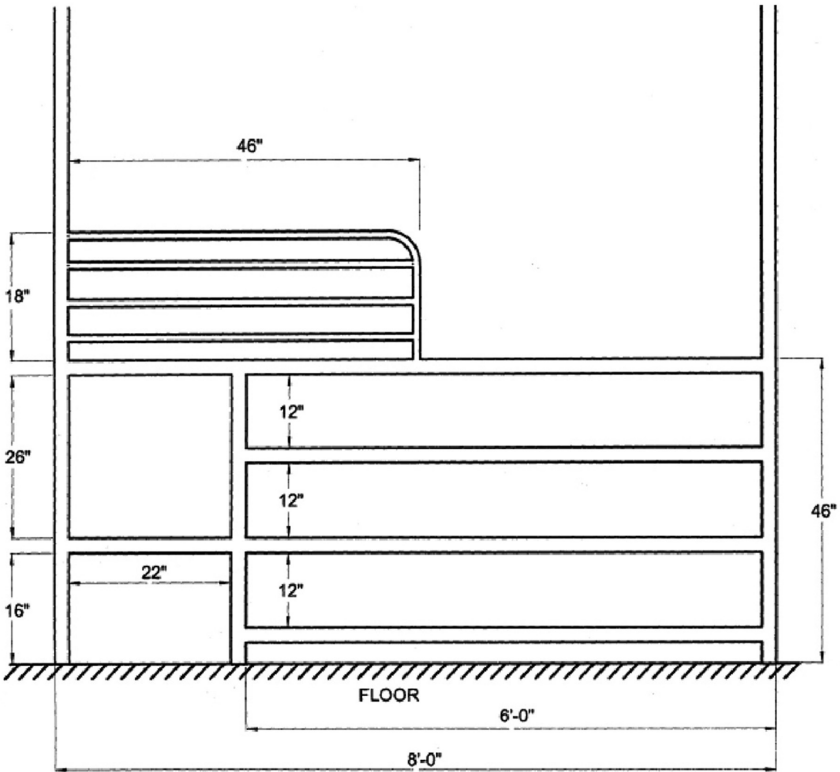
Class 5

Unable to rise or remain standing.

* Any animal, including Lameness Classes 3, 4 or 5, may be transported for veterinary treatment on the advice of a veterinarian.

Content for the Transport Decision Tree was created by the Equine Code Development Committee and is based on the Health of Animals Regulations.

APPENDIX III PMU STALL IMPERIAL



All measurements given above are minimum requirements taken from inside the stall. Larger stalls are permitted. Partitions may be partially solid.

MATERIAL USED: Main structure 2 - 3" pipes or square tubing; for headstall 1" pipe or square tubing.

FRONT OF MANGER: 26" HIGH
BACK OF MANGER: 24" HIGH
BOTTOM OF MANGER: 22" WIDE

STALL WIDTH:

Mares up to 1300 lbs	4 feet	Centre to Centre
Mares 1301 to 1700 lbs	4½ feet	Centre to Centre
Mares over 1700 lbs	5 feet	Centre to Centre

APPENDIX IV

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

American Association of Equine Practitioners. Equine Welfare Position Statements. <https://aaep.org/equine-welfare/equine-welfare-position-statements>

American Veterinary Medical Association. AVMA Policies. <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>

National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC). Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines (2013) <http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/equine>

Canadian Agri-Food Research Council. 2001. Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Transportation. <http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/transport>

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Animal Welfare Position Statements. <http://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-advocacy/animal-welfare-position-statements>

North American Equine Ranching Information Council. <http://www.naeric.org/>

Nutrient Requirements of Horses. 2007. 6th Revised Edition. National Research Council of the National Academies. Washington, D.C.

Henneke, D.R., G.D. Potter, J.L. Kreider and B.F. Yeates. 1983. Relationship between body condition score, physical measurements and bodyfat percentage in mares. Equine Veterinary Journal Vol. 15: 371-372

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