

Health Management



The health status of the horse plays a major role in its welfare. Every owner should take steps to become knowledgeable about key management practices that support health.

Important aspects of health management include pest and insect control, vaccinations, parasite control, care of sick, injured or compromised horses, dental care, lameness, and monitoring of Body Condition Score on a regular basis. Once health management plans are in place, it is also important to train all staff and caretakers in disease prevention and recognition. Ensure training includes: detecting the need for facility maintenance, regular monitoring of horses for any health issues and maintaining records along with emergency contact information.

An important new addition to the code is the requirement that any horse that is sick, injured or in pain must receive treatment without delay. If treatment cannot be given or if treatment will not prevent further suffering, then the horse must be humanely euthanized so that suffering ceases.

The Horse Health Check and the Body Condition Score are two helpful tools that can be learned by staff and caretakers. Learning the Horse Health Check is an effective way to have the knowledge to quickly assess the horse. Potential health conditions can be picked up at an earlier stage so that measures can be implemented to prevent the problem from becoming worse. Doing regular body condition scoring detects fluctuations in the horse's weight and allows you to make changes before matters are cause for major concern. The Code specifies that any horse that scores a 1, 2 or 3 requires intervention to prevent further weight loss and correct the issues causing the weight loss. At the other end of the scale, horses scoring an 8 or 9 also require intervention to set up proper nutritional management to reduce the weight safely.

Another important part of being a responsible horse owner is the establishment of a working relationship with an equine veterinarian. This helps to foster good communication about an annual health program that is customized to the needs of your horses and the risks of your region.



The new Canadian Code of Practice helps each of us as horse owners to make better decisions about health management for our horses, whether for the herd or for the single horse owner. These decisions then lead to management practices that will support health and reduce disease. Check out the [new Code Decoder tool](#) from Equine Guelph to ensure that you are covering all the bases for health management of your horses and assess your own practices.

Learn more about the Equine Code of Practice – visit – [Health Management](#)

Sign up for our [free e-newsletter](#) which will deliver monthly welfare tips throughout 2015 and announce tools to aid all horse owners in carrying out their 'Full-Circle-Responsibility' to our beloved horses.

In partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Equine Guelph is developing a 'Full-Circle-Responsibility' equine welfare educational initiative which stands to benefit the welfare of horses in both the racing and non- racing sectors.