



National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

25 January 2013

Dear Stakeholder

CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ANIMAL WELFARE (EQUINES) CODE OF WELFARE

The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) is consulting on the draft *Animal Welfare (Equines) Code of Welfare*, and invites you or your organisation to make a submission. The closing date is Tuesday 12 March 2013.

Codes of welfare advise owners or persons in charge of animals about how they can comply with their obligations under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to meet the animals' physical, health and behavioural needs and to alleviate pain and distress. The Act's obligations are written in general terms and it is codes of welfare that contain the detailed minimum standards of care and recommendations for best practice. Minimum standards in codes of welfare have legal effect as they may be used in evidence in the prosecution of offences under the Act. Demonstrating compliance with minimum standards may be used in defending a prosecution.

The draft code of welfare applies to all horses, ponies, donkeys and crossbreeds of these that are kept for any purpose in New Zealand including those kept as companions (pets), those kept for breeding, for sport, entertainment or as working animals. This code also applies to unbroken and undomesticated horses contained for management purposes.

The proposed minimum standards relate to stockmanship and animal handling; restraint and containment; saddlery and equipment; the provision of food, water and shelter; housing facilities; behaviour and health; breeding; identification; and pre-transport requirements.

This code was originally drafted by the New Zealand Equine Health Association. It sets out NAWAC's assessment of the expectations of New Zealanders for the welfare of equines and has been reviewed by representatives of interested and affected parties. NAWAC has determined that the draft code meets the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act for release for public consultation and is now seeking public feedback before finalising the code.

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Submissions

Comments are invited on any aspect of the draft code. In your submission, please specify those aspects that you support or oppose, the reasoning behind your comments, and any alternatives to the provisions of the draft code you wish to recommend.

As part of your submission, we would particularly welcome your comment on the following questions:

1. Do you consider a code of welfare for equines to be necessary? Are there any alternatives which would achieve the same outcome as having a code of welfare? If so what are they?
2. Do you agree that the minimum standards in this code are the minimum necessary to ensure that the physical, health, and behavioural needs of equines will be met? For example, do the minimum standards reflect good practice (not just current practice), current scientific knowledge and available technology? If not, what alternatives do you suggest? Please state your reasons.
3. Do you agree the example indicators given are appropriate to describe how to measure or assess the achievement of the intended outcome of the minimum standards? If not, what alternative(s) do you suggest? Please state your reasons.
4. Do you agree that the recommendations for best practice in this code are appropriate? If not, what alternatives do you suggest? Please state your reasons.
5. Do you think this code would change existing arrangements for the management of equines? If so, how, and to what extent?
6. Will complying with this code involve costs for you or your business? For example, costs may include converting existing animal facilities or employing new staff.
7. What barriers do you see to the implementation of the proposed code and how might they be resolved?
8. What benefits do you see from having this code? Benefits may include, for example, increased certainty about animal welfare requirements or market gains.
9. What other impacts would this code have on New Zealand society, the economy, or the environment?

NAWAC will carefully consider all submissions received, and other matters that it is required to consider under the Animal Welfare Act, before finalising the code and recommending it to the Minister for Primary Industries for issue. Your submission and responses to the above questions will help both NAWAC in its analysis and the Minister's consideration of the code.

Please note that submissions are public information and may be the subject of requests under the Official Information Act 1982. If you consider that any or all of the information in your submission should be treated as confidential or commercially sensitive, please state this clearly in your submission. Any decision to withhold information requested under the Official Information Act may be reviewed by the Ombudsman.

The draft code is available through the MPI Animal Welfare website at: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare, or by request to animalwelfare@mpi.govt.nz or the postal address below. The draft code can also be inspected at the Ministry for Primary Industries, Pastoral House, 25 The Terrace, Wellington.

Please address your submission to aws submission@mpi.govt.nz or:

NAWAC Secretary
Animal Welfare
Ministry for Primary Industries
PO Box 2526
Wellington 6140
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Please also use this address if you no longer wish to receive draft codes of welfare when they are released for public consultation.

Public consultation closes on 12 March 2013.

Yours sincerely



John Hellström
Chairman, NAWAC