Humane Handling Guidelines for

HORSES

Standards for the Care of Unfit Animals

Alberta’s Equine Industry
Promoting Horse Well-Being
“We support and accept the standards of humane care prepared by the Alberta Equine Welfare Group and will use these standards in the implementation of our enforcement program.”
Morris Airey, Director of Enforcement, Alberta SPCA

“The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association fully endorses the standards of humane care practices set out by the Alberta Equine Welfare Group in this booklet.”
Duane Landals, DVM, Registrar, AVMA

Important
Do not market or ship horses that are classified as “unfit to undergo transport.”
Use this booklet to help define whether the horse is unfit to be transported.
Humane handling of horses is a priority. Responsible animal care decisions must be made particularly with unfit animals. It is in the animal’s best interest as well as the industry’s.

**Compromised (unfit) Animal:** An animal with reduced capacity to withstand the stress of transportation, due to injury, fatigue, infirmity, poor health, distress, very young or old age, impending birth, or any other cause.

Who can be charged under humane transport laws? The shipper and/or the transporter and/or the transport company.

Federal Law says “Whoever loads or causes to be loaded” may be held liable in cases where there are problems with the transportation of livestock.

**The Owner/Shipper:**
is responsible for tendering only horses suitably fit to undergo transport. The shipper may be charged with a violation of humane transport laws.

**The Transporter:**
must assess the horses tendered by the shipper and only accept those animals suitably fit to undergo transport. The transporter and/or transport company may be charged with a violation of humane transport laws.

• Discretion must be used when tendering or accepting horses for transport. Use solid judgement based on your knowledge of transporting horses. If in doubt, consult an experienced and trustworthy person for assistance.

• Recommend horses are not on the truck any longer than 24 hours.

**The Auction Market:**
must ensure all personnel working with horses are instructed in acceptable, humane handling techniques. Horses must be moved through facilities with patience and as quietly as possible to reduce stress and minimize the risk of injury.
TIPS FOR HANDLING HORSES

The more you understand the nature of horses the easier it will be to handle them.

- **Horses have a natural instinct to flee** from danger; In a panic situation even a well trained horse will revert to their flight instinct.

- **Blindspots** - Use caution when approaching because horses have blindspots very close to the front of their face and directly behind the horse.

- **Loud noises or sudden movements** may startle a horse. Speak to the horse in a calm reassuring tone before approaching.

- **Horses are highly sensitive to touch.** DO NOT use any type of electric prod typically used on cattle. Horses respond very well to flagging (a stick or whip with a plastic bag tied to the end) used to encourage movement without actually touching the horse.

- **Always be aware of the potential danger** when working with horses and take precautions to ensure the safety of yourself and that of others.

- **Sounds of Horses:** Nickers are usually friendly, soft and most submissive; Neighs are stronger and are more assertive; A horse will call out loudly when panicking; Squeals are most often made when a horse first meets another horse; Mares and foals can identify each other by the sounds they make; Snorts show apprehension or dislike and are often followed by bolting (flight instinct).
BROKEN LEG

CHECK POINTS

• Fractured limbs, pelvis, or any other fracture that hampers mobility.
• Refusal to bear weight on affected limb.
• Limb is held at an unnatural angle.

Multiple fractures in the right hock.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

• Keep horse still and as calm as possible.
• **Do not transport.**
• Consult veterinarian immediately or euthanize on farm.

REGULATIONS

*Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12*
No person shall load, cause to be loaded, transport or continue to transport an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

*Alberta Animal Protection Act - Sec. 2*
No person shall cause or permit an animal to be in distress.
Humane Handling Guidelines for Horses

DOWNER (CLASS 4 LAMENESS)

CHECK POINTS

- Reluctant to walk, halted movement.
- In motion, short, stiff steps as if “walking on eggshells”.
- Refuses to put weight on affected limb.
- May have obvious physical problem (such as a broken leg).
- Requires assistance to rise.
- May show signs of pain (See definition on page 19).

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Do not transport.
- Do not move or drag a conscious animal that has gone down during transport.
- Consult veterinarian.
- Euthanize.

REGULATIONS

Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12
No person shall load, cause to be loaded, transport or continue to transport an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey. A non-ambulatory animal may be transported for veterinary treatment or diagnoses on the advice of a veterinarian.

Alberta Animal Protection Act - Sec. 2
No person shall cause or permit an animal to be in distress.

This horse’s inability to stand warrants consultation with a veterinarian.
POOR BODY CONDITION

CHECK POINTS

• Body score of 1
  (see definition on page 19).
• Very thin, weak with obvious signs of malnutrition, old age or disease.

A horse in this condition is not suitable for transport.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

• Do not transport.
• Consult veterinarian or euthanize on farm.
• Body Score of 2 - transport with special provisions direct. (See definition on page 19.)

REGULATIONS

Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12
No person shall load, cause to be loaded, transport or continue to transport an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

Alberta Animal Protection Act - Sec. 2
No person shall cause or permit an animal to be in distress.
SICK, INJURED OR DISEASED

CHECK POINTS

- Increased rate of breathing.
- Fever, slobbering, coughing, thick white nasal discharge.
- Dehydration; exhaustion.
- Look for loss of coordination, circling, paralysis or aggression.
- Bloody diarrhea, blood from the eyes, head pressing or any other suspicious symptom.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Do not move or drag a conscious animal.
- **Do not transport.**
- Do not handle - some diseases are transmissible from animals to humans.
- Contact a veterinarian immediately.

REGULATIONS

*Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12*

No person shall load, cause to be loaded, transport or continue to transport an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

*Alberta Animal Protection Act*

Animals unfit for transport 10(1)

No person shall load or transport animals that, by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause, would suffer unduly during transport.

*Reportable Disease Regulation*

There are some diseases in horses that must be reported by law including rabies, equine infectious anemia, vesicular stomatitis and anthrax.
LARGE HERNIA

CHECK POINTS

- Impedes movement (includes conditions in which hind leg of animal touches the hernia when walking).
- Is painful to the touch.
- Has an open skin wound, ulceration or obvious infection.

Scrotal hernia

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Contact a veterinarian.
- Vet transport (see definition page 19) only.

REGULATIONS

*Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12*
No person shall load, cause to be loaded, transport or continue to transport an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

*Alberta Animal Protection Act*
Animals Unfit for Transport 10(1)
No person shall load or transport animals that, by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause, would suffer unduly during transport.
PREGNANT MARES

CHECK POINTS

• Obvious signs of pregnancy.
• Exhibits late stage signs: Relaxation of the vulva; Udder appears full; Wax-like beads or milk droplets on tips of teats.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

If mare displays late stage signs, outlined in Check Points, do not transport.

REGULATIONS

Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12
No person shall load or cause to be loaded and no one shall transport or cause to be transported an animal if it is probable that the animal will give birth during the journey.

Alberta Animal Protection Regulation
Transportation of Animals
(3) no person shall load or transport livestock that is likely to give birth during transport unless the livestock is being transported for health reasons.
VERY YOUNG

CHECK POINTS

- Very young weaned foals.
- Less than 30 days old.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Transport with special provisions.

Must be segregated from the rest of the herd.

REGULATIONS

*Alberta Animal Protection Regulation*

*Transportation of Animals*
- Duty to Keep Livestock Segregated
  
  15(f) livestock of the same species but of substantially different weight or age are segregated from one another.

- Livestock Market and Assembly Stations
  
  Sale of Young Livestock
  
  7(1) The following may not be present at a livestock market:
  
  (a) a weaned foal that is less than 30 days old.

*Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Horses*

- Segregation
  
  10.4.1 Different species and animals of significantly different age or weight must be partitioned separately from each other when transported. Small or young horses must be partitioned separately from mature horses.
MARE WITH FOAL

CHECK POINTS

- Mare with a suckling foal by her side.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Must be segregated from the rest of the herd.

REGULATIONS

Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12
Every mare with its suckling offspring shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.

Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Horses
10.4 Segregation
10.4.2 Suckling foals must be transported in the same compartment as their dams and must be separated from other animals.
LAMENESS

CHECK POINTS

• There are numerous reasons why a horse may become lame.
• Perform a visual examination to try to determine any obvious cause of the lameness.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

• May be transported only if it can rise, stand and walk under its own power.
• Lameness Class 2 (see definition on page 19) may be transported special provisions in the rear compartment of a commercial unit or small trailer.
• Lameness Class 3 (see definition on page 19) **not recommended for transport** except to veterinary clinic.

REGULATIONS

*Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12*
No person shall load, cause to be loaded, transport or continue to transport an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

*Alberta Animal Protection Act - Sec. 2*
No person shall cause or permit an animal to be in distress.
STALLIONS & AGGRESSIVE HORSES

CHECK POINTS

- Flattened ears; Aggressive, dominant behaviour.
- May try to mount other horses.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Transport with special provisions.
- Must be segregated from the rest of the herd.

REGULATIONS

*Alberta Animal Protection Act*
Transportation of Animals

- Duty to Keep Livestock Segregated

15. A person transporting livestock must segregate the livestock during transport as follows:

(a) livestock of the same species that are incompatible by nature and livestock of different species are segregated from one another;

(e) a mature stallion is segregated from all other livestock, including other mature stallions;

*Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Horses*

10.4 Segregation

10.4.3 Mature stallions, aggressive horses and animals incompatible by nature must be partitioned separately from other horses.
**OTHER PROBLEMS**

Blind horses should be haltered, handled individually and transported with special provisions: with a familiar pen mate or with a compatible horse in the rear compartment.

Wet horses may be tendered for transport but hauling wet horses on a cold day is not acceptable.

**REGULATIONS**

*Health of Animals Regulations - Part 12*
No person shall load, cause to be loaded, transport or continue to transport an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

*Alberta Animal Protection Act*
Animals unfit for transport 10(1)
No person shall load or transport animals that, by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause, would suffer unduly during transport.
Euthanasia is the humane termination of the life of an animal. It must be done by trained individuals using acceptable industry practices.

ACCEPTABLE INDUSTRY PRACTICES

For a horse to receive a humane death it must be rendered immediately unconscious and go on to die without regaining consciousness. Therefore most recommended methods of euthanasia involve agents that affect the brain very rapidly.

Acceptable

i. Lethal injection of barbiturate - Veterinarians ONLY
ii. Gunshot
iii. Penetrating Captive Bolt

Shooting is a humane method of killing provided that the shot penetrates the brain and does significant damage. Knowledge of the anatomy is essential.

Shooting a horse should only be done by persons well versed in handling firearms and licensed to use firearms and only in jurisdictions that allow for firearm use.

In the Trailer

If a horse becomes non-ambulatory during transit, it is unacceptable to remove the animal from the trailer. If the animal must be euthanized, it is to be done inside the trailer, unless human safety is at risk.
The preferred firearm for humanely shooting a horse from close range is a **shotgun**. A **410 gauge** is ideal, however a larger gauge may be used.

At close range, any weight of shot is acceptable. The barrel of the firearm should be 3 to 5 centimeters (1-2 inches) from the head if using a shotgun. If using a **high powered rifle (e.g. .308, .223)** the distance may be increased and still be effective.

The use of a pistol, by law enforcement officers or those properly licensed to do so, may be satisfactory, however permanent complete brain dysfunction may not be accomplished with light pistols (e.g. police .38).

If a **light pistol, .22 caliber rimfire rifle or a penetrating captive bolt** is used to render the animal unconscious, the animal’s death must be assured by a second means such as exsanguination (bleeding out).

If using a **high powered rifle or pistol**, the projectile may pass through the horse’s head. Thus the direction of shooting must be considered.

See diagrams on next page.

> “Sporadic reflex muscle spasms may follow the loss of consciousness - this is a normal part of the death process and may last from a few seconds, up to a few minutes.”

### CONFIRMATION OF DEATH

Death should be verified by:

- Absence of rhythmic breathing
- Cessation of Heartbeat
- Absence of Pulse
- Lack of Corneal Reflex (blinking response)
- To check a Corneal Reflex touch the cornea (surface of the eye). There should be no response if the animal is dead.

Verification of the process of death should occur at 30 seconds and death must be confirmed at 5 minutes.
**POINT OF ENTRY**

The point of entry is not between the eyes. The site for entry of the projectile is slightly above (approx. 2 cm) the intersection of the two diagonal lines each running from the inside corner of the eye to the base of the opposite ear.

---

**CAUTION**

Following shooting, a horse often makes a forward movement (leaps into the air).

Position of handler for an animal standing.

Position of handler for an animal in the prone position.

This shot is ONLY to be made with a shotgun using a slug. The point of entry is on the side of the head, not the frontal part.
DISPOSAL OPTIONS

DISPOSAL

The owner of a dead animal must dispose of the animal within 48 hours of its death.

- **Rendering**
  Carcass is picked up and transferred to a licensed rendering plant.

- **Burial**
  On-farm carcass disposal options are controlled through the Destruction and Disposal of Dead Animals Act (Alberta). There are several environmental conditions that must be met.

- **Natural Disposal**
  Disposing of a dead animal to allow for scavenging. Carcasses that have been euthanized with drugs (permitted use by a licensed veterinarian ONLY) cannot be disposed of in this manner as it poses a significant poisoning risk to scavengers (coyotes, birds), pets and drinking water.

- **Composting**
  On-farm composting may not be used for animals weighing more than 100 kg each. Horse carcasses may be taken to a Class 1 compost facility. Some landfills accept carcasses for a fee.

- **Incineration**
  May occur if done in accordance with the Substance Release Regulation (AR 124/93) or the Code of Practice for Small Incinerators. This is generally not a viable option for horse owners in Alberta.

*Any animal that is confirmed or suspected of dying from an infectious or reportable disease must be disposed of in accordance with the federal Health of Animals Act or Alberta’s Livestock Diseases Act.*
**DEFINITIONS**

**BODY SCORE** (rated on a scale of 1 to 9; of importance here 1 to 3)

1. **Poor** - Extremely emaciated. Spinal vertebrae, ribs, tail-head and point of the hip and buttock are prominent. Bone structure of withers, shoulders and neck easily noticeable. No fat can be felt anywhere.

2. **Very Thin** - Emaciated. Slight fat covering over base of spinal vertebrae, transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded. Spinal vertebrae, ribs, tail-head, point of hips and buttocks are prominent. Withers, shoulders and neck structure faintly evident.

3. **Thin** - Fat built up about halfway on spinal vertebrae, transverse processes cannot be felt. Slight fat cover over ribs. Spinal vertebrae and ribs easily discernible. Tail-head prominent, but individual vertebrae cannot be visually identified. Point of hip appears rounded, but easily seen. Point of buttock evident. Withers, shoulders and neck accentuated.

**CORNEAL REFLEX** - blinking response. To check a corneal reflex touch the cornea (surface of the eye). There should be no response if the animal is dead.

**LAMENESS CLASSES:**

- **#1** - Visibly lame but can keep up with herd.
- **#2** - Unable to keep up, some difficulty climbing ramps.
- **#3** - Requires assistance to rise, but can walk freely.
- **#4** - Requires assistance to rise; reluctance to walk, halted movement.
- **#5** - Unable to rise or remain standing.

*Note: Class 4 and 5 are also called “downers”.*

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS**

- **Do Not Transport** - You must not load and haul this animal.
- **Transport** - You can load and haul this animal.
- **Transport with Special Provisions** - means special provisions within the transport unit must be made. These may include: extra bedding, loading in the rear compartment, separation from other animals, pen with familiar companion animal, giving the animal plenty of room, or other measures as appropriate.
- **Direct** - means haul direct to nearest suitable abattoir.
- **Short-haul** - For the purpose of these guidelines Short-haul is under 4 hours.
- **Long-haul** - For the purpose of these guidelines Long-haul is over 4 hours.
- **Vet transport** - transport special provisions to the nearest appropriate veterinary hospital for treatment.
- **Euthanasia** - the humane termination of the life of an animal. Must be done using accepted industry practices (see page 15).

**NON-AMBULATORY ANIMAL** - an animal that cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

**PAIN** - signs of pain include heavy breathing; glazed eyes; trembling of the affected limb.

**SHOCK** - a state of system shut down; may exhibit profuse sweating; dehydration; horse does not respond to handler; will not get up.
APPENDIX #1
RECOMMENDED CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE & HANDLING OF HORSES

EXCERPTS from the Code:

Section 5 Handling

5.1.1 Horses should be handled quietly, with care and patience, to avoid injury, pain or distress.

5.1.2 Handling and restraining devices must be used humanely and with regard to the horse’s natural movement, temperament and physical capabilities.

5.1.3 A properly equipped handling area should be available to facilitate the treatment of horses.

5.1.5 All halters, leads and lariats and other materials used to restrain or handle horses must be equipped with a method of quick release in case a horse becomes entangled in the equipment. Chutes used to restrain horses should have break out walls to assist horses that go down during handling.

Section 10 Transportation

10.1 General

10.1.1 Each person involved in the preparation of horses for transport and in the transporting of horses by any mode should be knowledgeable about horse behaviour, adhere to the principles of animal welfare and comply with appropriate regulations.

10.1.2 The handler should have easy access to each horse.

10.1.3 The driver is responsible for the continued care and welfare of the horses during transport.

10.1.4 Drivers should start, drive and stop their vehicles as smoothly as possible. They should practice defensive driving to avoid sudden stops. Drivers should negotiate turns in the smoothest possible manner.

10.1.5 The transportation of horses from point of origin to a final destination should be completed as safely and as quickly as possible.

10.1.6 Each load should be checked before departure and periodically during transportation. During roadside inspection, the driver should evaluate all animals for signs of discomfort. When the welfare of horses is likely to be compromised due to further transport, the situation must be promptly corrected.

10.1.7 Transportation is recognized as a potential stress to horses. Horses stressed by transport should be closely observed for several days for signs of ill health.
10.3 Loading Density and Headroom

10.3.1 Horses must be provided with enough floor space in a vehicle or container to ensure that they are not crowded in a way that is likely to cause injury or discomfort. Evaluation of the trailer for sufficient space must be made prior to loading horses.

10.3.2 When the vehicle is not full, horses should be safely partitioned into smaller areas to provide stability for the horses and the vehicle.

10.3.3 Each animal must be able to assume a natural stance standing with four feet on the floor and have a full range of head and neck motion without touching the deck or roof of the vehicle or container. As a guide, it is recommended that there be at least 2.5 cm (1 in) of clearance for each hand of horse height at the withers.

10.3.4 Halters and shanks must be removed from horses immediately if they restrict breathing or otherwise cause discomfort.

10.4 Segregation

10.4.1 Different species and animals of significantly different age or weight must be partitioned separately from each other when transported. Small or young horses must be partitioned separately from mature horses.

10.4.2 Suckling foals must be transported in the same compartment as their dams and must be separated from other animals.

10.4.3 Mature stallions, aggressive horses and animals incompatible by nature must be partitioned separately from other horses.

10.5 Loading and Unloading

10.5.1 Horses should not be rushed during loading and unloading. In a new situation or location, all normal, healthy horses are alert and investigative. Consequently, every change or disturbance in surroundings, such as noises, breezes, sudden movement of objects and/or flashes of light, should be avoided. Abrupt movements by drivers and loaders should also be avoided.

10.5.2 The loading/unloading surface should be level with the vehicle floor. Self-aligning docks are recommended if the loading surface and the vehicle surface are not level. A loose horse should not be required to step forward up or down a step of more than 25 cm (10 in). If backing a loose horse out into an unfamiliar environment or unloading area, the horse should not be required to step up a step of any height nor down a step of more than 15 cm (6 in).
10.5.3 Horses familiar with trailering can safely negotiate a single step of 38 cm (15 in).

10.5.4 No gap should exist between the ramp, its sides, and the stationary vehicle to be loaded.

10.5.5 If a handler leads a horse into a vehicle, there must be an avenue of escape for the handler.

10.5.6 The use of electric prods for handling horses is not acceptable.

10.5.7 All alleys and ramps should be properly illuminated. Harsh contrast in lighting should be avoided.

10.7 Feed, Water and Rest

10.7.1 Horses destined for long trips (more than 24 hours) must be fed, watered and rested for not less than five hours prior to starting their journey. Resting horses, when compatible by nature, should be able to move freely in a well bedded, protected environment. Horses resting must be put in a facility with access to suitable feed and potable water.

10.7.2 During transport, horses (excluding weanling foals) should not be without feed and water for longer than 24 hours. This time may only be exceeded if they will reach their final destination without being confined longer than 30 hours. 10.7.3 During transport, weanling foals should not be without feed and water for longer than 8 hours.

10.7.4 Any person transporting horses is obliged to plan long-distance trips taking into consideration the availability and location of facilities where horses may be unloaded, fed, watered, and cared for in a humane manner. Facilities must provide protection from extreme weather conditions.

10.7.5 Nursing foals with dams should be allowed an opportunity to nurse undisturbed at least every eight hours. Mares with nursing foals should be provided with appropriate feed and water every 12-18 hours during transportation.

10.7.6 Prior to reloading a vehicle, the interior of the vehicle should be inspected, bedding added and other corrective measures taken to assure continued safe transportation.

Reference: For the complete Recommended Codes of Practice visit www.afac.ab.ca
### CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFAC LIVESTOCK CARE ALERT LINE</td>
<td>1-800-506-2273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERTA AUCTION MARKETS ASSOCIATION</td>
<td>1-403-340-2460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERTA FARM ANIMAL CARE ASSOCIATION</td>
<td>1-403-932-8050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERTA PROCESSORS (Rendering truck)</td>
<td>1-403-279-4441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERTA SPCA</td>
<td>1-800-455-9003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERTA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION</td>
<td>1-780-489-5007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY (CFIA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Region 1-403-299-7680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Region 1-780-495-3333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION SERVICES</td>
<td>1-403-509-2088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCMP (Livestock Investigation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South 1-403-699-2614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North 1-780-289-5510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In December 2006, a diverse group representing the Alberta horse industry, AFAC, enforcement agencies and veterinarians met to discuss a strategy to address the issue in Alberta and manage public pressure related to horse welfare and horses for food in Canada. The Alberta Equine Welfare Group (AEWG) was formed to oversee and implement a plan to address horse welfare and to improve communication within the livestock industry and with the public.

The AEWG is comprised of representatives from the Alberta Equestrian Federation, Canadian Thoroughbred Society of Alberta, Horse Industry Association of Alberta, Horse Racing Alberta, Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, Alberta SPCA, RCMP - Livestock Investigation Division, meat processors, feedlot owners and horse buyers. Most are members of Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC), the organization providing project management services for the group.

AFAC was organized in 1993 by all the major livestock groups in Alberta with the goal to promote responsible animal care and talk to the public. AFAC provides training programs and booklets like this one clearly outlining acceptable ways to produce, transport and care for farm animals. For more information check out www.afac.ab.ca.
HUMANE TREATMENT OF HORSES - A PRIORITY

The Alberta Equine Welfare Group advocates the humane treatment of all horses and believes that the equine industry and horse owners have a responsibility to provide humane care throughout the life of the horse.

The Alberta Equine Welfare Group acknowledges that some horses are no longer serviceable, are infirm, dangerous, or their owners are no longer able to care for them.

The Alberta Equine Welfare Group recognizes that the processing of horses is a reality of the equine industry, and provides a humane alternative to allowing the horse to continue a life of discomfort and pain, inadequate care or abandonment.

The Alberta Equine Welfare Group encourages, fosters and provides education regarding responsible ownership and management that will reduce the number of unwanted horses.

The Alberta Equine Welfare Group supports the Alberta Equestrian Federation and Equine Canada’s position statement in regards to horses bound for processing that states horses must be:

- Treated humanely and with dignity;
- Transported to the production facility according to current national regulations;
- Euthanized in accordance with the guidelines adopted and published by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association as of February 2006.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENT AND LAYOUT
Pat Barriage

REVIEW AND EDIT
Alberta Equine Welfare Group:
  Alberta Veterinary Medical Association
  Alberta SPCA
  Alberta Farm Animal Care Association
  RCMP (Livestock Investigation)
  Alberta Equestrian Federation
  Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development
  Canadian Thoroughbred Society of Alberta
  Horse Industry Association of Alberta
  Horse Racing Alberta
  Alberta producers and processors

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

The Alberta Equine Welfare Group would like to thank those individuals and equine organizations that support this initiative and contributed financially.

DISCLAIMER

The primary purpose of this handbook is to assist producers, marketers and transporters in making responsible animal care decisions. It is important to note that while the authors have made every effort to ensure accuracy and completeness, this should not be considered the final word on the areas of law and practice. Seek the advice of appropriate professionals and experts as the facts of each situation may differ from those set out here. All information is provided entirely “as is” and the authors make no representations, warranties or conditions, either expressed or implied, in connection with the use of or reliance upon this information. The information is provided to the recipient entirely at the risk of the recipient and, because the recipient assumes full responsibility, the authors shall not be liable for any claims, damages or losses of any kind based on any theory of liability arising out of the use of or reliance upon this information (including omissions, inaccuracies, typographical errors and infringement of third party rights).
ALBERTA EQUINE WELFARE GROUP

Plus other horse industry representatives

WITH SUPPORT FROM

DIVERSIFIED LIVESTOCK FUND OF ALBERTA

June 2008