

Minutes of APGAW meeting 4/5/04

A) The first presentation was from Phil Jones from the ILPH on the transportation of Equines.

ILPH Transportation Campaign

Key Messages:

The ILPH is disappointed that an agreement could not be reached on the proposed Regulation. As this provided the opportunity to gain improvements, however we were extremely concerned that journey times could become worse, with rest on the vehicle.

We will continue to campaign for improvements in the welfare of horses transported to slaughter, with our ultimate goal remaining a ban on long-distance transport of live horses to slaughter, with a move to a carcass only trade.

ILPH campaign activity –

- Continue to lobby for improvements in welfare
- Work with the UK Government, EU, Member States, exporting countries.
- Field research, to collect evidence of the need for improvements, and what should be introduced.
- Proposed scientific research into what the ideal conditions for transport of these animals should be.
- Communicate with other NGO's and industry to achieve improvements.
- Raise awareness of the campaign, to encourage change.

Current Directive

24 hours travel, followed by 24 hours rest. After 8 hours food and water must be provided.

Present Situation

Facts and Figures:

- Romania export the largest number of horses for slaughter in the EU (61,479 in 2001)
- Poland export the second largest (though for many years was the leading source country)
- Italy is the main importer of live horses for slaughter (80%-90% of the intra EU trade and 85%-95% from Third Countries) Between 120,000 and 140,000 live horses are exported into Italy every year. France imports the majority of the rest.
- In 2001, 164,791 horses were imported into and traded between countries within the EU. The number of horses traded within the EU was 28,268, and those from Third Countries were 113,172 (a ratio of 20% to 80% respectively).
- On May 1st, 10 countries will accede to the EU, many of which are either major source countries or corridor countries.
- Every year approximately 60,000 to 70,000 metric tonnes are imported into and traded between the EU.
- In 2000 2,857 metric tonnes of fresh/chilled horsemeat was exported into the EU (mainly France) from the UK.

Proposed Regulation

- The Commission's aim was to improve animal welfare and to ease enforcement across the EU, however the draft regulation, whilst containing a number of positive elements, the overall position (in particular no finite journey time and no rest off the vehicle) would mean a decline in welfare of horses.
- The Scientific Committee put forward a number of recommendations, some positive - including reduced journey times, and some negative, such as rest on board the vehicle. We do have concerns as the scientific research was undertaken on competition horses.
- Positive provisions
 - Training
 - Individual Stalls
 - Restrictions on unbroken horses and ponies
- Negative Provisions
 - Journey times (9-12 (rest on board the vehicle)-9)
 - Inadequate welfare checks on route
 - Provision of water, feed and rest
 - Fitness to travel
 - Journeys by sea

livery yard, based around the care of horses should exhibit, and should be responsible for ensuring, a good level of husbandry.

Riding establishments are licensed, as are boarding establishments for cats and dogs. There appears to be no reason why other similar businesses should be considered the exception. With the Government currently encouraging farmers to diversify into the horse industry and an increase in 'new' horse owners using livery facilities, there is the potential for the blind leading the blind into welfare problems.

The BHS started to look at ways of encouraging improved standards, and with the backing of the British Equine Veterinary Association, the International League for the Protection of Horses, the RSPCA, the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Home of Rest for Horses, launched its new Approved Livery Yard scheme in July 2002. Since then the number of approved Livery Yards has increased year on year.

Livery Yards are crucial to equestrianism in this country and it is essential that the facilities available are equal to the rising standards of horsemastership and equitation among owners generally.

Once a livery yard had applied to be included in the scheme the premises are visited by an experienced inspector who will carry out an extensive and detailed inspection. This helps them to determine whether they reach the essential high standards required to be included in the scheme.

By joining the scheme the livery yard can display the distinctive green plaque and can benefit from access to a wealth of professional experience. In addition to this the yard can provide its clients the confidence and security that being approved offers. There is the potential to attract new clients who will recognise the 'kite marked' yard as one that reaches required national minimum standards. The yard will also have its details published in the "Where to Ride and Train" book and will also appear on the BHS website.

Once a yard is approved the BHS can offer assistance with a variety of matters including drawing up contracts between owners and proprietors, through to finding the right insurance at realistic and competitive rates. As a leading insurance firm also sponsors the scheme proprietors are entitled to 25% discount. The Society can also offer advice on how to deal with a variety of situations such as complaints.

A consistent set of standards countrywide, together with an annual inspection, can only be welcomed, in particular by horse owners who will now have access to a comprehensive list of member establishments, thus simplifying their search for adequate facilities with responsible people who realise their responsibilities to welfare requirements as well as business.

Only last week The British Horse Society announced that a leading manufacturer of equine pasture equipment has offered sponsorship of such approved yards. It is hoped that there will be an improved level of welfare for the animals on approved establishments due to the sponsorship and subsidised prices of Rag Forks. The forks have been developed to aid removal of poisonous weeds from pasture and there has been much interest from the general public, proprietors and the media.

There are now over 800 riding schools and livery yards across the UK, Ireland, Belgium, Hong Kong, Spain, Italy, Dubai, Malaysia and the USA.

We, in The British Horse Society offer a Quality Assurance service to all establishments who register with us..... and furthermore encourage other new and existing businesses to seek to raise standards throughout the country and to ensure the welfare of all horses and ponies.



There was a discussion on both items. It was noted that a meeting will be sort with the EPC Minister regarding passports and that the Livery standards issue may be covered within the new Animal Welfare Bill and that we should await the draft Bill.

The reception was announced for October 27th 2004

Date of the next meeting 29.06.04