



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 1992

NO. 9 OF 1996

CODE OF PRACTICE - APPROVAL

Under section 22 of the Animal Welfare Act 1992, I approve the document entitled **Appendix 4: Commercial Horse Riding Establishments** as a variation to the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses in the ACT which was approved on 6 December 1993 and which appeared in the ACT Gazette on 8 December 1993.

Date. *19 January 1996*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Humphries', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

GARY HUMPHRIES
Minister for the Environment, Land and
Planning

VARIATION TO THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE WELFARE OF HORSES IN THE A.C.T. (Gazetted 8 December 1993)

APPENDIX 4

COMMERCIAL HORSE RIDING ESTABLISHMENTS

The *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses in the ACT* provides for the care and management of horses in general, including those kept at commercial horse riding establishments. However, because of the potential intensity of work for horses in commercial establishments, it is appropriate to provide additional requirements for such establishments.

1. Managerial Responsibilities

The manager of a riding establishment is responsible for:

- * the welfare of the horses held;

Note: Where a horse not owned by the riding establishment is used in a business, a written agreement between the horse owner and the establishment should be drawn up setting out the extent of any responsibility remaining with the owner for the feeding, grooming and rugging, watering, health care and exercise of that horse.
- * supervising staff, whether they work full or part-time, and whether they work for fee, reward or as volunteers; and
- * collecting and maintaining records relevant to each horse (see Section 7).

2. Equipment

- 2.1 All equipment which may affect the safety and welfare of horses and riders should be designed and maintained to avoid injury and disease.
- 2.2 Tack should be appropriate for and fit each horse on which it is used.
- 2.3 Saddle blankets should give enough padding, and be clean and dry.
- 2.4 Saddles that touch the mid-line of the horse's back or that have broken trees must not be used.

3. Nutrition

- 3.1 If a horse is used for even light work for extended hours in a day or consistently over a long period, daily feeds need to take account of the work level.
- 3.2 If horses are working during the day, they should have water at regular intervals.

4. Care

4.1 Horses that should not be used for work in riding establishments include:

- * horses under three years of age;
- * horses in poor body condition;
- * mares that are more than 7 months pregnant, or are in the first three months after foaling; and
- * horses known to be or suspected of being injured or sick.

4.2 Horses should be groomed before saddling; and particular care should be taken to remove sweat and dirt from areas under the saddle, girth and bridle.

4.3 Horses should, as far as possible, be ridden in a controlled manner and at a speed that is safe for horse and rider, considering the terrain, the weather, and the experience of the rider.

4.4 Horses should not be overworked. Horses that show signs of tiredness or distress during work should be rested.

4.5 When introducing new or spelled horses, the workload should be increased gradually.

4.6 Horses used continuously should be rested for a few weeks each year.

4.7 After working, stabled horses should be hosed, sponged or brushed to remove sweat and dirt.

4.8 In cold weather, horses that are wet after working should be rugged.

4.9 Horses should not be tied up by reins attached to the bit unless the attachment includes an easily breakable component such as plastic or string.

5. Health

5.1 For lengthy trail rides, some provision should be made for emergency shoeing. Temporary skin dressing and bandage material should be carried.

5.2 Vaccination against Strangles is important for young horses and an annual vaccination should be considered depending on veterinary advice.

6. Fire Safety

Stable and indoor equestrian buildings are Classified as Class 10 (a) and Class 9 (b) buildings respectively in the Building Code of Australia. They should be approved and constructed in accordance with the Territory Plan and ACT Building Act.

6.1 Precautions to improve fire safety in stables include:

- * doors and exit widths that are suitable for horses; ie, not less than 1.2 metres wide and having a minimum ratio of 1 exit for 5 stalls;
- * exit routes should not be obstructed;
- * feed and bedding stores should be fire separated from stables;
- * the provision of fire hose reels in stable buildings is recommended complying with Australian Standard AS 1228 and installed to AS 2441;
- * a water pressure of 200 kPa; this may be provided by an electric pump if gravity feed is insufficient. A water tank supply of 7000 litres should serve the fire hose reel where a town water supply is not available, (ie, 2 hours hose operation.);
- * water reticulation external to the building where a town water supply is unavailable may be in 50 mm diameter polyethylene pipe but within the building to a hose reel 25 mm diameter copper pipe is required. A joint domestic and fire supply is permitted provided the tank supply is adequate for both domestic and fire fighting requirements;
- * smoking should not be permitted in stables;
- * smoke detectors should be considered as an early warning system; and
- * staff should be familiar with the evacuation plan in case of fire.

7. Records

Appropriate records should be kept for each horse, as part of good business management and a health care program.

8. Staff

8.1 Staff should respect horses and have experience in handling them.

8.2 Staff should be aware of their responsibilities and be competent to carry them out.

- 8.3** Formal training, such as a Technical College qualification in horse husbandry, or the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) training, is an advantage for management and staff.

9. Acknowledgement

This Appendix draws heavily on the *Code of Practice for the Care and Management of Horses in Riding Centres and Boarding Stables* (1994) prepared by NSW Agriculture.