



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

A large, high-resolution image of the Earth as seen from space, showing the curvature of the planet and the blue oceans. The image is centered in the background of the slide.

The future of horse sports – an international perspective

Prof. Madeleine Campbell

BVetMed (Hons) MA (Oxon) MA (Keele) PhD DipECAR

DipECAWBM (AWSEL) PGCert (Vet Ed) FHEA FRCVS

European and RCVS Specialist in Animal Welfare
Science Ethics and Law

Professor of Veterinary Ethics, Nottingham SVMS

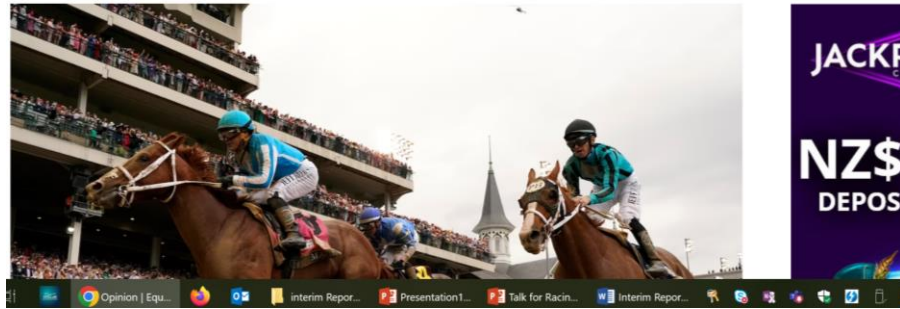


Does horse sport have a future?

Context

Opinion | Equine athletes must be spared from some of the worst abuses

May 12, 2023 at 2:09 p.m. EDT



Grand National sparks animal welfare debate after three horses die at Aintree - video



German modern pentathlon coach thrown out of Olympics for punching horse

- Kim Raisner had tried to assist Annika Schleu on Saint Boy
- Schleu left ring in tears as she failed to control mount



WorldHorseWelfare

Search



Contact Us >

DONATE

REHOME

About Us - What We Do - Visit Us - Support Us - Rehome - Advice - News - Shop -

home > news > when does use become abuse with horses? world-class gathering tackle complex question

News

Latest News

Rescue Stories

Blog

ADVICE/EDUCATION, EVENTS, SOCIAL LICENCE

When does use become abuse with horses? World-class gathering tackle complex question

Trying to identify and define where use of horses becomes abuse was explored at World Horse Welfare's 25th conference.

Posted on 14/11/2022

Read our stories!

Get our latest news and rescue stories straight to your inbox



Marc Bekoff Ph.D.
Animal Emotions

The Unknown Emotional and Physical Lives of Sport Horses

The upcoming Olympics highlight shortcomings in current regulations.

Posted June 28, 2022 | Reviewed by Ekue Hagan



KEY POINTS

- Many who enjoy watching equestrian sports and love horses do not know how the horses are treated behind the scenes.
- Author Julie Taylor argues there isn't much that people can reasonably demand from sport horses without detracting from their wellbeing.
- Seeing horses living naturally in their family or bachelor bands without interference of humans could help reverse their image as sport animals.



The context, 2024

GB's Dujardin given provisional ban and out of Games



Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024

THE CHRONICLE
OF THE HORSE

News Sports Features Magazine Forums Marketplace Advertising

Updated: Helgstrand Removed From Danish Team After TV Exposé

Medal-winning rider appealing eight-month suspension over training video



Becky Murray
17 September, 2024 16:39



Advertisement

IONOS

Create your website in seconds with AI

Your digital partner

Start now

'The horses don't choose to take part': should equestrian sports be removed from the Olympics?

A video of dressage champion Charlotte Dujardin whipping a horse caused shockwaves last week - and it wasn't an isolated incident in the sport

By [Elle Hunt](#)

2

Global surveys in English, French & Spanish

28,000

Respondents from the equestrian community from 116 countries

14,000

Respondents from the general public across 14 countries

....And such concern is international, and is coming from those within horse sport as well as those outside of it

Key findings were:

- Two in five (40%) only supported the continued involvement of horses in sport if their welfare is improved, while 60% said there should be more safety and welfare measures in place in horse sports.
- 16% felt their confidence in protection of horse welfare in sport had been impacted negatively over the past 2-3 years in response to media coverage.
- Over half (52%) felt that horse welfare should be prioritised more in communications.
- One in five (20%) did not support the continued involvement of horses in sport under any circumstances.

These equestrians that were not included in the survey

The Public survey showed that 67% of the public respondents said that they were concerned about the involvement of horses in equestrian sport. Not only were people concerned about whether horses enjoyed being involved in sport, the public wanted to see improvements in welfare standards.

The majority of equestrians have concerns regarding equine wellbeing (75% of respondents).

It is not just 'the public' but also those inside sports which use animals who have concerns

In the public space, the use of animals in sport is being singled out and being treated as ethically different from every other human use of a non-human animal



Fighting Animal Abuse
& Promoting a Cruelty-free Lifestyle

[The Issues](#) [Veganism](#) [Get Involved](#) [News](#) [Events](#) [Shop](#) [Education](#) [About Us](#)

[Home](#) [News](#) [Cruelty of Equestrian Sports: The Olympics Must Go Animal-Free](#)

Cruelty of Equestrian Sports: The Olympics Must Go Animal-Free

Posted on the 24th July 2024

Charlotte Dujardin, a dressage champion for Team GB, has withdrawn from the 2024 Paris Olympics. This is due to recently-surfaced footage, taken four years ago of her whipping a horse repeatedly around the legs.

🕒 11 mins to read

Survey indicates strong veterinary support for tougher rules on animal sports

PVA PROGRESSIVE
VETERINARY
ASSOCIATION

Racing

The PVA believes that horses and greyhounds are subjected to harsh and inhumane treatment in the name of sport and entertainment; racing-induced injury due to excessively difficult jumps or inappropriate speeds and terrain are common and more often than not lead to euthanasia, and the use of whips and training techniques that cause prolonged stress are key issues. We hold the position that it is fundamentally unnecessary to exploit animals for entertainment in today's society, when countless alternatives exist.



The use of animals in sport is being presented as the same as other uses of animals in 'entertainment'

PVA

PROGRESSIVE VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

Animals in entertainment

Racing

The PVA believes that horses and greyhounds are subjected to harsh and inhumane treatment in the name of sport and entertainment; racing-induced injury due to excessively difficult jumps or inappropriate speeds and terrain are common and more often than not lead to euthanasia, and the use of whips and training techniques that cause prolonged stress are key issues. We hold the position that it is fundamentally unnecessary to exploit animals for entertainment in today's society, when countless alternatives exist.

Blood sports

Each year tens of millions of 'game' birds are raised and killed for sport. The conditions in which these birds are raised and released raises serious welfare concerns, their inaccurate shooting can lead to a prolonged and painful death, and the management of these animals has a significant impact on wildlife and the surrounding environment. Despite the banning of hunting animals with hounds, recent hard evidence has documented that fox hunting continues under the guise of 'trail hunting'. The PVA believes that hunting with hounds should be terminated through a combination of legal measures, increased punishments for offenders, and pressure from the veterinary profession so to do.

Fashion

The PVA views animals used in fashion as part of entertainment in that use is frivolous and many other alternatives are available. Farming of animals specifically for fur (rabbits, chinchillas, mink) or crocodilians for leather are key examples which the PVA opposes and methods of euthanasia are often extremely inhumane.

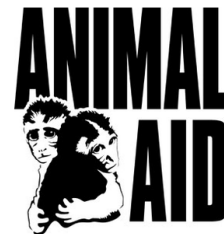


NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT | EUROPE

Should the use of animals in sports be banned?

Anne-Sophie Brändlin
04/29/2024

From dog races to bullfighting and circus shows — animals have historically been used in sports and for entertainment. But critical voices to curb or even ban their use are getting louder.



Fighting Animal Abuse
& Promoting a Cruelty-free Lifestyle

The Issues Veganism Get In'

Sport and Leisure

Horse racing

Circuses



3. The discussion is progressing from sport to riding more generally (but not to keeping dogs as companions) – it's a 'slippery slope'

UK NEWS WEBSITE OF THE YEAR 2024

The Telegraph News Sport Business Money Opinion Ukraine US election Travel Health Lifesty

UK news Tory leadership Politics World Health news Defence Science Education Envir

Why it might be time to stop riding horses

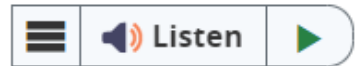
The Charlotte Dujardin scandal was the latest in a long line of equine controversies and, perhaps, we should get out of the saddle for good



Should there be a future for horse sport?




Ethical analysis of using animals in sport




Research Article

Ethical Justifications for the Use of Animals in Competitive Sport

Madeleine L.H. Campbell 

Received 15 Aug 2022, Accepted 24 May 2023, Published online: 28 Jul 2023

 Cite this article

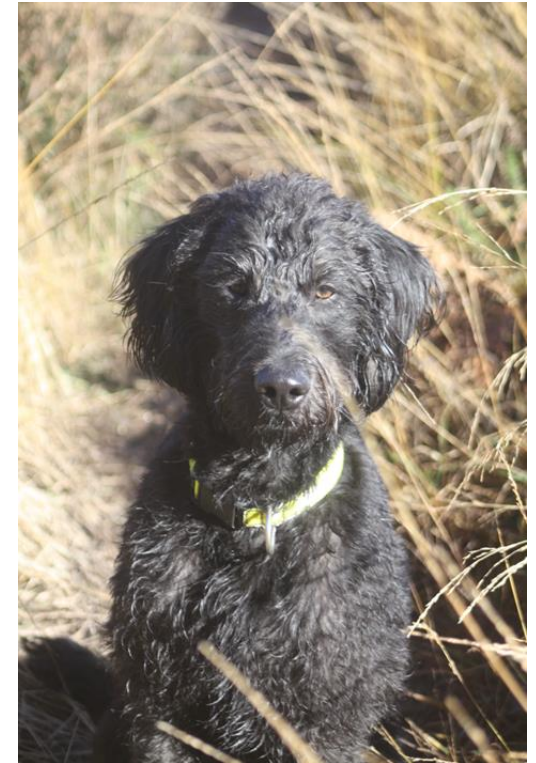
 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17511321.2023.2236798>



‘When deontology, utilitarianism and virtue ethics are each used to consider the question ‘Is the use of animals in sport ethically justifiable?’, only absolutist rights theory leads to a negative conclusion’



There is nothing ethically distinct about using animals in sport



- Track fatality rate for licensed greyhound racing in GB in 2023 = 0.03%
- Track fatality rate for all BHA racing = 0.18% in 2023

Article | [Open access](#) | Published: 28 April 2022

Life tables of annual life expectancy and mortality for companion dogs in the United Kingdom

[Kendy Tzu-yun Teng](#) , [Dave C. Brodbelt](#), [Camilla Pegram](#), [David B. Church](#) & [Dan G. O'Neill](#)

[Scientific Reports](#) 12, Article number: 6415 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

males (11.07 years; 95% CI: 11.01–11.15) at age 0. Life tables varied widely between breeds. Jack Russell Terrier (12.72 years; 95% CI: 12.53–12.90) and French Bulldog (4.53 years; 95% CI: 4.14–5.01) had the longest and shortest life expectancy at age 0, respectively. Life table



(There is nothing ethically distinct about some competitive sports compared to others)



King: Let's talk about dog care and 'ling'

March 6, 2018 Published: March 6, 2018



‘Two wrongs don’t make a right’



‘Vets must be strong advocates for animal rights’

Steven McCulloch, European veterinary specialist in animal welfare science, ethics and law, argues that the veterinary profession must support animal rights, but not the abolition of animal use.

ANIMAL rights are moral or legal entitlements that animals either have or ought to have. Generally, the veterinary profession is seen as being opposed to animal rights, but I believe that this opposition is misplaced and based on a narrow and problematic understanding of rights. Indeed, this stance actually contributes to the widespread suffering of the very patients we are charged to protect. Instead, I would argue that the profession should be a strong advocate for rights and lead the debate on what sorts of rights animals should have.

What do I mean by the vet profession being opposed to rights? Many of us will have been involved in conversations dismissing animal rights, but perhaps one particular glaring omission of rights is in the BVA’s animal welfare strategy ‘Vets speaking up for animal welfare’.¹ Despite its 28-page discussion of welfare, duties, ethics and law, it neglects a single mention of animal rights.

The concept of animal welfare can be used to lay the groundwork to discuss the nature and purpose of animal rights. The species we use in society, which the profession has a duty to protect, are sentient, meaning they have conscious subjective awareness and welfare interests. They have lives that can go well or badly and that matter to them.

There are two main theories of rights. First, the interest-based theory holds that rights are valid entitlements to protect important interests. Given the vet profession

recognises that animals are sentient and have welfare interests, under this theory it would support rights to protect those interests.² The second is the choice-based theory, which holds that a subject must be rational and autonomous to have rights. The choice-based theory denies that animals have rights because they are insufficiently rational and autonomous.

As a profession, how should we judge between these two theories? Given that rights are entitlements to protections, it seems logical that animals with welfare interests, not just rational animals, deserve rights. In contrast, under the choice-based theory, the subjects most vulnerable and in need of protection – young children, the severely mentally disabled and animals – are denied rights.

So, why do vets object to animal rights? Since the 1980s, the term ‘animal rights’ has been used to argue for the abolition of animal use. The abolitionist animal rights position holds that animals have fundamental rights against suffering and being killed.³ For example, given that farming involves killing animals, fundamental rights would lead to abolition of the livestock industry and veganism.

Veterinary bodies are right to not support abolition. The *raison d’être* of the vet profession is to protect public health and safeguard animal welfare. Veganism, while a growing trend, represents a small minority of the population. If the BVA, for example, were to support abolition of farming then another organisation would simply fulfil its role. In a liberal democracy, it is wider society that must decide which sorts of rights animals have. The veterinary profession should have a key role in the debate, but it cannot determine the outcome.

Steven McCulloch
Steven McCulloch is a senior lecturer in human-animal studies at the University of Winchester, and head of research at the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation.

“
Dismissing rights contributes to the pitiful enforcement of welfare laws

References

- 1 BVA, Vets speaking up for animal welfare. BVA animal welfare strategy. 2016. <https://bit.ly/435cuFT>. Accessed 13 June 2023
- 2 McCulloch SP. On the virtue of solidarity: animal rights, animal welfare and animals’ rights to wellbeing. *J Anim Wel Law* 2012; 5–15
- 3 Feinberg J. Rights, Justice, and the Bounds of Liberty: Essays in Social Philosophy. 1980. Princeton University Press.
- 4 Kurki VA. Legal personhood and animal rights. *J Anim Ethics* 2021; 11:47–62
- 5 Bowles E. The Enforcement problem: the case for stronger enforcement of farmed animal protection laws in the United Kingdom. 2022. <https://bit.ly/440B2zq>. Accessed 13 June 2023



Changing Rein

Karen Luke and Meta Osborne



Join friends, Karen Luke and Meta Osborne, as they take a lighthearted and lively look into the serious task of making equestrian sport and racing sustainable i...

[More](#)



Jo Hockenhull





To safeguard animal welfare, rather than 'advocating for animal rights' we should ask the question 'is it possible for animals being used for purpose x to have a 'good life' (or at least a 'life worth living')?'



144. The male chicks hatched in layer hatcheries cannot be said to have a life worth living. Although they typically have an appropriate ambient temperature and are protected from disease, they are often not provided with a source of hydration and opportunities to enjoy positive welfare are entirely absent. These chicks do not experience maternal care, they live in an entirely artificial environment and they have no opportunities to exercise choice or to explore their surroundings. It would be ethically desirable to reduce the number of chicks experiencing this low quality of life to the minimum number possible given the current state of technology. The female chicks have similarly low welfare while within the hatchery and, moreover, are likely to be waiting in trays contained within wheeled modules for onward transportation for several hours or even overnight. However, for females, this poor welfare may potentially be offset by opportunities for positive welfare during their future lives.



What should the future of horse sport look like?



animals



Article

An Ethical Framework for the Use of Horses in Competitive Sport: Theory and Function

Madeleine L. H. Campbell

Citation: Campbell, M.L.H. An Ethical Framework for the Use of Horses in Competitive Sport: Theory and Function. *Animals* **2021**, *11*, 1725. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11061725>



The use of horse in sport is ethical provided that

Ethical approach

- Negative welfare effects are minimised and positive welfare effects are maximised
- Avoidable, unnecessary risks are identified and mitigated against
- Governing body regulations and the law are complied with



Welfare: ‘lives worth living’ and ‘good lives’

Negative welfare effects are minimised and positive welfare effects are maximised

Viewpoint

Viewpoint

Lives worth living?

To date, animal welfare measures have focused primarily on the avoidance of cruelty and the provision of basic needs. **Christopher Wathes**, chairman of the Farm Animal Welfare Council, argues that it is important to take animals’ positive experiences into account as well

‘THE question is not, ‘Can they reason?’ nor, ‘Can they talk?’ but rather, ‘Can they suffer?’
– Jeremy Bentham, English philosopher, 1748-1832.

Bentham’s dictum has been the foundation of British policy on the welfare of farm and other animals for the past two centuries. Indeed, an historical review of British legislation reveals only minor changes in the expectation that animals should not suffer, once it was recognised that they were more than chattels. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 in England and Wales and similar legislation in Scotland now requires that an animal’s needs are provided. These needs are based on the Farm Animal Welfare Council’s (FAWC’s) ‘Five Freedoms’. These were first promulgated in 1979 and have their origins in the 1965 Brambell inquiry into the welfare of animals kept under intensive livestock husbandry systems. The Brambell inquiry concluded that more was needed to protect animal welfare than just preventing wanton cruelty.



welfare is a logical development in man’s humane treatment of farm animals. At first sight, the notion of ‘a life worth living’ may seem strange when considering a farm animal. Yet, it is very familiar to many veterinarians and farmers who are often called upon to cull, in a swift and humane manner, animals in ill health. Regularly, judgements are made about an animal’s welfare, such that if it’s not

and negative experiences are counted. Traditionally, veterinarians and stockmen have been keen observers of negative experiences and associated affective states, such as pain, anxiety, fear and discomfort. The FAWC’s proposal entails equal consideration of positive experiences and their affective states too (for example, play

‘Quality of life may be compromised by the powerful economic and other forces that combine to determine an animal’s collective experiences’

and contentment), as the best observers have always done. There is also a role to develop the concept of ‘iceberg indicators’ of welfare; that is, the key physiological, behavioural and psychological signs of wellbeing that indicate that all is well, such as body condition, normal behaviour and alertness. Just as the sighting of an iceberg signals that 90 per cent of its bulk is below the water line, and we ignore its tip at our peril, so iceberg indicators are critical signs





Can we recognize negative welfare impacts?

Sue Dyson: Double video explanation of equine ethogram for recognizing lameness and pain





Can we recognise positive impacts?



feeding stallions Follow Him and Sky
communicating through "social bars" whi
r stalls for social contact at Gut Schör

Gut Schönweide





Are there 'lines' we need to reconsider?

'Faster, higher, stronger?'





Time for a re-think?

- Tack
- Dressage tests
- Dressage judging – a ‘behavioural indicator’ judge? AI?
- Showjumping – number of rounds? Heights?
- Eventing – order?
- Young horse classes?





The future of horse sport should be one in which every horse lives a 'good life'

- We use welfare and behavioural science to consider impacts on the horse's lived experience (beyond the Five Domains; ethograms)
- Minimisation of negative welfare impacts is non-negotiable
- We strive to better understand positive welfare impacts and to make opportunities for experiencing those available to horses (big or small)
- We research risks to keep making currently unavoidable risks avoidable, and then we mitigate them.
- We recognise and celebrate the mutually beneficial relationship between horse and human





How do we realise that future?

- Honesty – about where we are and where we need to go.
- Explain ‘good lives’ and how we enable them
- Call out ‘bad actors’
- Regulators
- Everyone else – ‘safeguarding’; ‘shared responsibility’
- A ‘Community of Practice for the Ethical Use of Animals in Sport’:
 - Riders, regulators, vets, welfarists and competition organisers from countries including Australia, NZ, Asia, Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Northern America, representing all FEI equestrian sports, horseracing, polo, carriage driving, endurance, the Pony Club, the BHS, BETA, greyhound racing, and sleddog racing. **Please join us!**

Madeleine.Campbell@Nottingham.ac.uk



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

A photograph of the Earth from space, showing the curvature of the planet and city lights at night. A white rectangular box is superimposed over the image, containing the text "Questions?".

Questions?