

Equine Sector 2017 Mid-Term Manifesto for the Horse

The equine industry in the UK is both vibrant and valuable, contributing **£8bn** a year to the economy. With around **1m** horses, the sector has a gross output of **£4.3bn** a year and is the second largest rural employer after agriculture. There are **1.3m** regular riders and a latent sector of **3.1m** former riders would like to return to the saddle, meaning that our infrastructure must be robust enough to support this desire to be active.

Horses are distributed all around the country and the number of horse owners per constituency is known. Horse riding engages a higher proportion than other sports of people with disabilities, women participants and participants over the age of 45. Nearly 40% of those taking part in equestrian activity do not participate in other forms of physical activity.

UK has one of the highest quality equine industries in the world, and is internationally recognised as the leading source of equine expertise, resulting in export markets with overseas trade valued at over **£500m** and growing, with rapidly developing markets in the Far East.

Many pieces of legislation concerning the horse have their origins within the EU. EU Exit, as well as the demand on diminishing Defra resource, heralds an opportunity for the Equine Sector Council to provide continuity of expertise, advocacy and leadership on behalf of this distinct and responsive animal sector, focusing on the three key areas below:

1. Improving Health & Welfare post Brexit: Enhancing protection from serious disease incursion, improving availability of medicines and improving ability to deal with welfare abuses and animal health legislation breaches.

- a) Introduce domestic legislation to enforce Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/262 on Equine Identification without delay; including retrospective microchipping of all horses, Local Authority-issued Fixed Penalty Notices and direct online notification of change to key passport information direct to the central equine database
- b) Increased biosecurity efforts to minimise the risk of introduction of equine disease, maintaining the notifiable disease status of Contagious Equine Metritis and Equine Viral Arteritis
- c) Support UK compliance with the elements of the EU Animal Health Regulation that promote improved equine health and welfare and UK trade competitiveness during EU Exit negotiations
- d) Introduce mandatory CCTV in abattoirs and improve conditions for horses being transported in and through the UK
- e) Encourage responsible use of antimicrobials and anthelmintics within the equine sector whilst enhancing the armoury of available equine veterinary medicines
- f) Finalise the transition to the proposed Levy Replacement for horseracing that captures a fair return from betting to enhance the improvement of racing and breeding, and sustain our position at the forefront of equine veterinary research
- g) Restrict legal use of fireworks to defined days of cultural celebration and support the enforcement of the existing Fireworks Regulations 2004

2. Improving equestrian trade and government partnership: maximising the potential of our equestrian businesses and increasing the significant benefit they bring to the UK economy by forging new links with the Department of International Trade.

- a) Work actively with Government to maintain existing markets and open up new export opportunities by ensuring that barriers are removed through negotiation and co-operation; in particular to the challenging but lucrative new markets in Asia
- b) Reduce internal and external administrative and tariff barriers so that they don't interfere with the operation of UK trade and commerce
- c) Work with industry to enhance support for export trade fairs, including partnership on export oriented fairs that take place in the UK
- d) Change the VAT status of riding hats, so that they are equally rated with cycling and other safety headwear products
- e) Work with companies to encourage and incentivise apprenticeships and to train staff to attain relevant qualifications in order to raise the UK skill base and ensure continued availability of industry-essential overseas workers
- f) Retain the flexibility to permit a single combined lifetime equine identification document that supports international trade in purebred and competition horses



3. Increasing participation in recreational riding and horse sports by making riding easier and safer to take up and inspiring future medal winners.

- a) Fair and consistent rating for riding schools, equestrian centres and livery yards so that they can operate economically and offer more people the experience of taking up horse riding for wellbeing, sport, fitness and recreation
- b) Ensure access to off road riding and new route dedication provides for horse riders so that they are considered equally and in full partnership with cyclists and walkers
- c) Support for the providers of training in horse care and safety so that provision of information for those taking part in our sport can be encouraged to do so in the safest way
- d) Introduce statutory notification forequestrian premises to improve public safety, disease surveillance, business continuity and equine welfare
- e) Strengthen the Highway Code and driving tests to educate all road users about the importance of protective headwear, high visibility clothing and to improve awareness of drivers to the presence of horses on the road

Fig. 1: The Distribution of Horse Owners across the UK

