



HORSE SA

ABN 80 915 482 672

PO Box 483 Plympton SA 5038

Ph +618 8294 2460 Fax +618 8294 2860

www.horsesa.asn.au www.horseslandwater.com www.horselog.net

Helen Whittle

Chairperson, HORSE SA

Ph/Fx: 8270 2232, 0414 881 606

B8 Specific requirements for the land transport of horses

General Comments on Land Transport of horses:

Transporting can be very stressful for horses. The major risk involved in transporting horses over long distances is that of travel sickness. Stress can be a pre-cursor to travel sickness. The best safeguard is awareness and good travel management.

An article on Travelling Stress by Dr John Kohnke BVSc RDA makes the following comments and are worth taking into consideration in considering requirements for horse transport:.

- *“the number of cases of severe respiratory disease associated with travelling horses in trucks and trailers has also increased over the past 10 years. Racing and equestrian horses that are transported within a couple of hours of competition without an opportunity to drain their airways, where a large amount of airborne contamination is taken into the lungs when competing, have the highest risk in trips over 12 hours in duration”.*
- *“Many cases have been reported of yearlings being travelled interstate in company with mares, and because the trip is delayed by pick-ups and drop-offs on the route, travelling time can be extended to over 24 hours. Many of these horses become infected with viruses and high risk of bacterial inhalation in the enclosed floats.*

The incidence is highest in enclosed floats, and also in horses travelling at the rear bays of the transport. The risk can be reduced when the number of air changes per minute is increased, without causing excessive draft.”

- *“Other stress factors include cramped spaces, erratic and high speed driving, swaying trailers, and lack of adequate rest stops and tying a horse’s head too high so as to reduce lung airway drainage....”*

“The risk of lung and chest complications is increased if horses are unable to put their heads down to drain respiratory cleansing secretions during and after long distance transport.”



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- *In the sport horse sector (which is growing) there is now more use of warmblood cross breeding instead of being thoroughbred based as in the past, hence a larger bodied horse is produced. This will lead to spacing being more cramped.*
- *As has been highlighted with the recent EI outbreak, there is a continual movement of horses across the country. In the sport horse & breeding areas, it is part of the business.*

*The following comments, taken from: **Horse Transportation and its Implications for Animal Welfare** By Kristi Goldman, 2002 Wally McGreevy Award Winning Essay (VEIN, Sydney Uni) are also relevant:*

- *“In Australia and around the world, horses are transported on a daily basis, most commonly by road or air. Transportation is a stressful event for many of them and this has important welfare implications. Many horses exhibit trailering problems that contribute to the stress of the experience. The orientation of horses while being transported by road may play a significant role in decreasing or increasing stress.”...*
- *“Another study of 15 mature horses (Stull and Rodiek, 2000) showed a 6% loss in bodyweight after 24 hours in transit, probably due to heat dissipation, sweat loss and decreased gut fill during the journey. Plasma cortisol and neutrophil:lymphocyte ratio increased with the duration of transportation. There were significant physiological responses in horses undergoing 24 hours in transit, including changes in muscle metabolism, stress indices, dehydration and bodyweight. These responses may increase susceptibility to disease, and elevated glucose concentrations after transportation may alter energy metabolism during an athletic endeavour performed within 24 hours after arrival.”*
- *“.. Dehydration is a significant issue, because many horses that are transported are called on to perform within a couple of hours after arriving at their destination. This has welfare implications for the horses involved, and further research on this topic is necessary.”*

Specific Comments:

Standards

General standards in Part A also apply to minimise the risk to the welfare of horses during transport.

SB8.1 Time off water must not exceed the time periods given below:

Class Maximum time off water



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(hours)

Horses over 6 months old	24	
Lactating mares	12	
Foals less than 6 months old	12	
Mares known to be more than 7.5 months pregnant excluding the last 4 weeks		12

- *Livestock may be subjected to longer periods of water deprivation during transport than in normal management situations. We acknowledge that providing water on the vehicle during transport is impractical and this governs the length of time animals can be transported.*

However, water provision is a key determinant for the welfare of livestock.

- *Given our warm climate & given that stress may cause excessive manuring & hence greater likelihood of dehydration we ask that these times be reconsidered.*
- *Although we note that the maximum times that livestock could be without water specified in Part B does not diminish the responsibility of the person in charge to assess livestock to be fit for the intended journey at various times, we maintain that the periods of time are too long for all categories.*
- *Records of water provision times must accompany the livestock for journeys reasonably expected to exceed 24 hours. This should be a provision for all commercial journeys reasonably expected to exceed 12 hours.*

SB8.2 Journey time may be extended for horses to 36 hours only under the following conditions:

- i) horses must be watered and fed on the vehicle every 5 hours
- ii) horses are not exposed to the natural elements
- iii) there must be sufficient space of 700 mm wide and 2350 mm long per stall

- *700mm may no longer be suitable as we have more larger breeds/crosses in Australia now*
- *Travel sickness is an issue with horses. It is important that a horse is able to get its head down.*

iv) flooring must be suitable

- *This requires greater definition. Eg, non slip? Rubber coated? (Is this sentence necessary given SB8.8?)*



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v) regular assessments must be made that the horses are fit for the remainder of the intended journey

- *ie every 5 hours at time of offering water?*

v) horses must be spelled for 24 hours before starting another journey.

- *It states: “Livestock can travel for a time period up to the limits for time off water specified in the species chapters of Part B, and then they must be given a **mandatory spell** with sufficient space to all lie down, access to water and food, before starting a further journey. This spell is usually performed off a vehicle but may be performed on a stationary vehicle if provisions are met.”*

This does not give the horses the opportunity to restore hoof circulation (so as to reduce the risk of laminitis or founder in susceptible horses).

SB8.3 If horses have been off water for 24 hours, they must be spelled for 12 hours before starting another journey.

If lactating mares, foals and pregnant mares known to be more than 7.5 months pregnant excluding the last 4 weeks, have been off water for 12 hours, they must be spelled for 12 hours before starting another journey.

- *Disagree with being off water for 24 hours.*

SB8.4 Mares known to be in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy must be transported under veterinary advice unless the journey is less than 4 hours.

- *Change wording to: “Mares known to be in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy can be transported only under veterinary advice unless the journey is less than 4 hours. “*

SB8.5 Horses kept in yards for more than 12 hours or that will be transported for more than 12 hours must be provided with water and feed and space to lie down before loading.

- *Agree*

SB8.6 Foals and young horses being transported for more than 5 hours must have sufficient space to suckle and lie down.

- *Agree – provided there is some way of ensuring they will not be trampled.*



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SB8.7 Moderate to severely lame horses of lameness score 4 and 5 (as specified in Table B8.2) must not be transported unless veterinary advice is obtained.

- *Add: "and they are accompanied by a signed veterinary statement."*

SB8.8 All vehicles must be constructed in a way that ensures each horse stall or pen can be accessed easily for feeding, watering and visual inspection. All vehicles must contain nonslip flooring and walls of sufficient strength to withstand horse activity.

- *Floor to have rubber coating.*

SB8.9 Fully enclosed, environmentally controlled vehicles must have effective ventilation, with fans and other equipment providing at least 12 air changes per hour.

- *Agree*

SB8.10 A vertical clearance of 2 m between the livestock crate floor and overhead structures must be provided in any vehicle used for horse transport.

- *2m is no longer sufficient as we have more larger breeds/crosses in Australia now (a 16hh horse is 162.56 cm at the wither, & my throw its head up).*

SB8.11 Unbroken stallions must be segregated from other horse categories.

- *All stallions.*

SB8.12 Electric prodders must not be used on horses.

- *Agree*

SB8.13 Dogs must not be used to move horses in livestock handling facilities.

- *Agree*

SB8.14 Horses travelling across Bass Strait must be individually stalled except mares with foals at foot which must be stalled together.

- *How to ensure foals are not trampled?*

SB8.15 The approved methods for humane destruction of horses are:

- (i) *horses* over 6 months old, a firearm aimed in the frontal position or lethal injection
- (ii) *foals* under 6 months old, A firearm aimed in the frontal position or lethal injection.



Guidelines

General guidelines are also recommended in Part A to minimise the risk to the welfare of horses during transport.

Fitness

GB8.1 Additional considerations for horse welfare should be made for long distance travel:

- for horses over 6 months old after 12 hours time off water
- for lactating mares after 8 hours time off water
- for foals under 6 months old after 8 hours off water
- for mares in the third trimester of pregnancy after 8 hours off water.
- *Times are too long given our warm climate & given that stress may cause excessive manuring & hence greater likelihood of dehydration*

These considerations should include:

- i) that the horses are fit for the remainder of the intended journey
- ii) adverse hot weather conditions are not prevailing or predicted
- iii) additional spell times during the journey
- iv) a longer spell time at the end of the journey
- v) the recent management of the horses before first loading.

GB8.2 Conditions that could cause horse welfare to decline during transport and should be considered unfit for transport might include lethargic or dehydrated horses, or horses with profuse diarrhoea, disease, fever, wounds, abscesses and lameness.

- *Add: “any signs of colic, or raised or lowered temperature.”*

A decision to transport a horse with the above conditions should be made after considering the welfare of the animal concerned and the treatment and management options.

- *Agree*

GB8.3 Mares in the last trimester of pregnancy and those in early lactation should not be transported for periods longer than 8 hours to reduce the risk of metabolic disease and herpes virus related abortions. They should be spelled for 12 hours before reloading.

- *Agree*



GB8.4 Mares in the last month of pregnancy should not be transported unless under veterinary advice,

- *And will travel with a signed veterinary statement to same?*

which should include the following provisions:

- water deprivation time should not exceed 8 hours

- *alter to 5 hours*

- feed and water should be provided immediately before loading and upon unloading
- additional space should be provided on the vehicle to enable the mare to lie down
- the mare should be separated from other horses
- veterinary advice should be sought.

- *Agree*

GB8.5 Mares that have given birth should not be transported within 7 days of foaling except when under veterinary advice or travelling for treatment. In this case, adequate space for lying down, and bedding, feed and water should be provided. Horses should also be able to be inspected.

- *Agree*
- *Provision re trampling?*

GB8.6 Horses should be at least a body condition score of 2 before transport, as described in Table B8.1 below.

- *Agree*

Table B8.1 Equine body condition score

GB8.7 Lameness assessment should be made using the lameness scoring system described in Table B8.2, below.

Table B8.2 Equine lameness condition score



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Food and water

GB8.8 Adult horses should be fed and watered every 5 hours

- *Add: “at floor level”*

and as soon as possible after unloading, with a suitable quality and quantity of feed and water to minimise colic risk.

- *Definition of adult?*
- *Assume GB8.8 applies only during ‘spelling’?*

Loading density

General standards in Chapter 5 apply to horses to ensure that the loading density is appropriate and is managed to minimise the risk to the welfare of livestock.

GB8.9 The following minimum space allowances should be provided:

Class of livestock Floor area (m²/head)

Adult horses 1.2^a

Horses 18–24 months 1.0^a

Horses 12–18 months 0.9^a

Horses 5–12 months 0.7^a

^a These figures may increase by up to 10% for adult horses and up to 20% for young horses and foals

- *These figures may no longer be sufficient as we have more larger breeds/crosses in Australia now*

GB8.10 The number of bays provided on the vehicle should be selected according to the duration of travel; the ventilation capacity of the vehicle; the size, class and condition of the horses; and whether feed and water is to be provided as part of the journey.

- *This does leave the decisions open and up to the consigner who may be driven by financial consideration*

GB8.11 Mares with foals at foot and young horses should be provided with additional space to allow the foal to suck, and both foals and young horses to lie down as required.

- *How is the risk of trampling dealt with?*

Vehicle and facilities

GB8.12 Pens or stall partitions should be strong and safe, allow air flow and be removable

- *Add: easily*
- if an animal collapses.



GB8.13 Walls should be padded or constructed using a suitable material to avoid rubbing or injury, from a level of 75 cm above the floor to a height level with the animal's back. Padding may be required to protect the animals' head.

- *Agree*

GB8.14 Bows on body trucks and single-deck semitrailers should be at least 2 m high and padded to their full length to a thickness of 2 cm of soft material.

- *2m is not sufficient height (a normal float is usually 2.2m)*
- *Horse SA is strongly opposed to the use of double-deck trailers to transport equines*

GB8.15 A mechanical means of forcing air circulation should be installed for enclosed vehicles, unless vents with natural ventilation are provided and are effective.

- *Reword this next sentence: Effective ventilation ~~may~~ change to: "is necessary to" reduce the impact of heat during transport and add: "the likelihood of" travel sickness in horses.*

GB8.16 For controlled environment vehicles, temperature gauges and the ventilation system should be checked before transport and every 3 hours during transport. Alarms or a monitoring system should be fitted to alert the driver to any problem.

- *State temperature range*
- *Log books?*

GB8.17 Horses may balk from hollow sounds caused by walking on ramps. This can be alleviated by using matting or providing earth, sand or sawdust on the floor of the ramp and vehicle.

- *Matting may come loose – state: "adhered rubber matting"*

GB8.18 Flooring should be cleaned before transport. Floors should be drained, absorbent or covered with litter to absorb urine when transporting for longer durations.

Note

Vehicles for transporting horses may vary from single horse floats to commercial prime movers with partitioned pens or stalls.

- *Rubber mats can trap urine and manure and must be cleaned frequently and the flooring beneath allowed to dry out, to prevent rotting. Floor boards should be checked regularly as part of general maintenance.*



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Two-horse trailers

GB8.19 Where a single horse is being transported in a two-horse trailer, the horse should be placed on the driver's side of the trailer or float.

- *And add.; "and if possible given the opportunity to stand sideways by removing the central partition"*

("Studies have shown that horses facing forward to the front of a large truck float are subjected to a greater level of travel associated stress than those travelling sideways or even facing towards the back in rear sections." Dr John Kohnke)

GB8.20 Where two horses are travelling in a two-horse trailer, the larger or heavier horse should be penned on the driver's side.

Handling

General standards in Chapter 5 apply to horses to ensure that the loading density is appropriate and is managed to minimise the risk to the welfare of livestock.

GB8.21 Horses that are unfamiliar to each other may become aggressive or stressed during the journey and should be segregated. The group should be assessed before loading to determine likely aggressive behaviour and whether segregation is needed.

- *Note the following comments from: **Survey of Trucking Practices and Injury to Slaughter Horses**, Drs Temple Grandin, Kasie McGee and Jennifer Lanier Department of Animal Sciences, Colorado State University:*

"... Fighting is the most common cause of severe injuries which occur during transporting and marketing. Fighting was the main cause of bruising on horse carcasses. Aggressive horses must be removed and segregated. Segregating stallions helps but does not solve the entire aggressive horse problem.

Aggressive geldings and mares must be separated and handled in the same manner as stallions.

When strange horses are first mixed they must be observed so that aggressive horses can be removed. The worst horse fights often occur shortly after mixing. Confinement in small pens makes it impossible for the subordinate horse to escape from its attacker. Four horses in the survey had numerous bites over extensive areas of their bodies. They were rated a serious welfare problem. The worst fight injuries will occur when a subordinate horse is unable to escape from its attacker. This is most likely to occur in a small pen or while a trailer is parked.



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GB8.22 Stallions should be segregated if they behave aggressively.

- *Stallions should be segregated. Do we need to wait for aggressive behaviour?*

GB8.23 Unbroken horses, pregnant mares, mares with foals at foot and animals that have health conditions should be segregated.

- *'Must' not 'should'*

GB8.24 Horses should not be routinely sedated for travel. If sedation is necessary, it should be administered by a veterinarian. Sedated horses should be stabilized if possible, segregated and not unduly affected by the motion of the vehicle. Action should be taken immediately on identifying a recumbent horse to separate it from other horses to avoid injury.

- *If sedation is necessary, it must- under current legislation in SA- be administered by, or under the direct supervision of, a vet.*

GB8.25 Where horses are rugged, ventilation should be appropriate so that horses do not overheat and become dehydrated. Fitted hoods, blinkers, knee or hock caps, pads and bandages may protect horses during transport.

- *Only light cotton rugs are acceptable in summer, and no more than light woolen rugs in winter*

GB8.26 Where there are no partitions on the vehicle, or where horses are travelling in groups, hind shoes should be removed.

GB8.27 Manual lifting of foals is permitted for animals that may have difficulty in negotiating ramps.

- *Include diagram on method of foal lifting to avoid rib /lung damage*

GB8.28 Unbroken horses should be trained in basic handling practices before transport.

GB8.29 Dogs should not be used to move horses.

- *(repeated)*

Humane destruction



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Figure B8.1 Humane destruction of horses using the frontal method