



AECSOP 6.1 - Equine cumulative use measurement

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Purpose

- (1) The objective of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to outline the procedures to be used to document horse usage. This document does not provide a detailed description of the procedures or ethical judgement on whether a procedure should be undertaken or not. This procedure relies upon the use of an appropriate point system and will allow the cumulative impact of the work undertaken by Charles Sturt University horses to be objectively and consistently monitored. The following points apply:
 - a. Logging of equine information relating to teaching & research to quantify welfare impacts.
 - b. Points are allocated to procedures and activities undertaken with horses by staff and/or students.
 - c. Points are tallied after each horse use and a spelling period will commence once the maximum point tally is reached (60) or before if the Senior Technical Officer (Equine) deems necessary.
 - d. Foals/weanlings will have a maximum of 40 points.
 - e. The cumulative points carried by each horse will be reported to the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) monthly.
 - f. Points will reset after each six-week spelling period and users should ensure they ask for horses that are starting at zero points for projects that are predicted to reach maximum points. It should be noted that AEC approval may be obtained for horses to go above the maximum points allowance in certain circumstances at their discretion on a case-by-case basis.
 - g. Cumulative points will be reviewed annually, and the points allocation system will be reviewed and amended, if needed, by the Senior Technical Officer (Equine)

Scope

- (2) This procedure applies to all the Charles Sturt University horses, i.e., mares, geldings, foals, weanlings and stallions regardless of the purpose of use (teaching, research or commercial).
- (3) This procedure applies to any person who is involved in maintaining the Equine herd as a part of the Animal & Field technical team.
- (4) The scope of this document is to:
 - a. provide a reference guide for animal usage within AEC requirements and *the Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (2013, 8th Ed)* and
 - b. ensure animal usage, and the impacts on their health and welfare, is monitored and documented.
- (5) The following items shall be considered outside the scope of this document:
 - a. detailed description of the procedures undertaken – refer to appropriate Safe Work Procedure and AEC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
 - b. ethical judgement on whether a procedure should be undertaken - refer to AEC application and approval process.
- (6) Records will be kept on Charles Sturt University's web-based program to tally scores accumulated. Technical staff are currently using "ArDEX Essentials", a secure password-protected animal management programme whose annual subscription fee is paid by the school of Agricultural, Environmental and Veterinary Sciences.



AECSOP 6.1 - Equine cumulative use measurement

Details of procedure:

Logging:

- (7) Animal & Field technical staff will log points (associated with procedures) in real time to minimise the risk of information loss. Staff are to be provided with portable equipment with internet access in order to successfully apply this procedure. All procedures horses undergo will acquire points (Table 1).

Table 1 Points to measure cumulative impacts explained:

Point allocation	Description	Procedure examples
1	Minimal intervention <i>involves all procedures that can reasonably be expected to have no or minimal impact on horse welfare.</i>	Observation in paddock i.e., observers enter paddock Administering prescribed medications Foot trimming / hoof care De worming Horse visiting the University Veterinary Clinical Centre (VCC) as a companion for a hospital patient VCC consultation* [^] Yarded for faecal collection Slow feeder hay net class Yarded but not used for teaching <5 hours Temperature, Pulse and Respiration (TPR) measurement Stallion collection Teaser mare activity without stocks
2	Minor intervention <i>procedures that involve interventions that can reasonably be expected to have a short-term effect on behaviour with a temporary but minimal impact on horse welfare. These interventions are likely to include, but not be limited to, those necessary to manage the horse and safeguard its longer-term wellbeing.</i>	Blood collection by a competent staff member, including for blood donation Student handling including, catching, leading and tying up, and releasing back into yard/paddock <3 hours Hoof handling class <3 hours Cardiology class (in stocks for <2 hours) Teaser mare activity using stocks Dental* Treadmill session not including ancillary Catheter placement Ultrasound of pregnant mare Milk testing mares Microchipping Student administered injection Faecal collection from rectum Yarded >5 hours and up to 24 hours
3	Mild intervention <i>procedures that involve interventions that can have a relatively long lasting (up to 24h) impact on horse welfare. These interventions cause</i>	Reproduction class for mares - internal examination Handling - including catching, leading, hoof handling >3 hours e.g., during intensive school Branding Blood collection by a student Stabling per 24-hour period Standing in crush >2 hours



AECSOP 6.1 - Equine cumulative use measurement

	<i>discomfort (physical or mental) for a period up to 24h or be acute but intense for a shorter period of time.</i>	
4	Moderate intervention <i>procedures that involve interventions that are invasive or involve prolonged discomfort and/or inability to move freely. Require careful management to ensure that welfare is not compromised beyond undergoing the procedure.</i>	Bronchoalveolar Lavage Endoscopy Nasogastric tube Abdominocentesis Separation of mare and foal (not weaning)
5	Major intervention <i>procedures that involve interventions that are invasive or involved prolonged discomfort and/or inability to move freely. Require careful clinical management to ensure that welfare is safeguarded for an extended period after following the procedure.</i>	General anaesthesia including procedure Foal delivery (including 24 hour post foaling care) Weaning of foals (from first 24-hour period of separation where suckling is no longer possible) ^{&}

**This may be included in the higher-level intervention procedures*

^ Consultation includes all ancillary care

&Note this is 5 points for the mare and 5 points for the weanling

Impact of procedure on wellbeing of animals

- (8) Horses will be excluded from classes for a period determined by technical staff when displaying behaviours that indicate aversion to the activity. Behaviours of concern may include, but are not limited to, ears laid back, biting, weaving, kicking, trembling, pawing of ground, escape attempts e.g., jumping out the crush, fidgeting, hypervigilance, excessive avoidance, pain face (see Figure 1). Horses will also be removed from activities due to ailments and injuries at the discretion of technical staff.
- (9) Future iterations of this SOP will seek to include evidence-based indicators of positive welfare as they emerge in the scientific literature.



AECSOP 6.1 - Equine cumulative use measurement

Animal care

- (10) For further information on feed schedules, body condition scores and welfare contact the Manager of Animal and Field.

Qualifications, experience or training necessary to perform this procedure

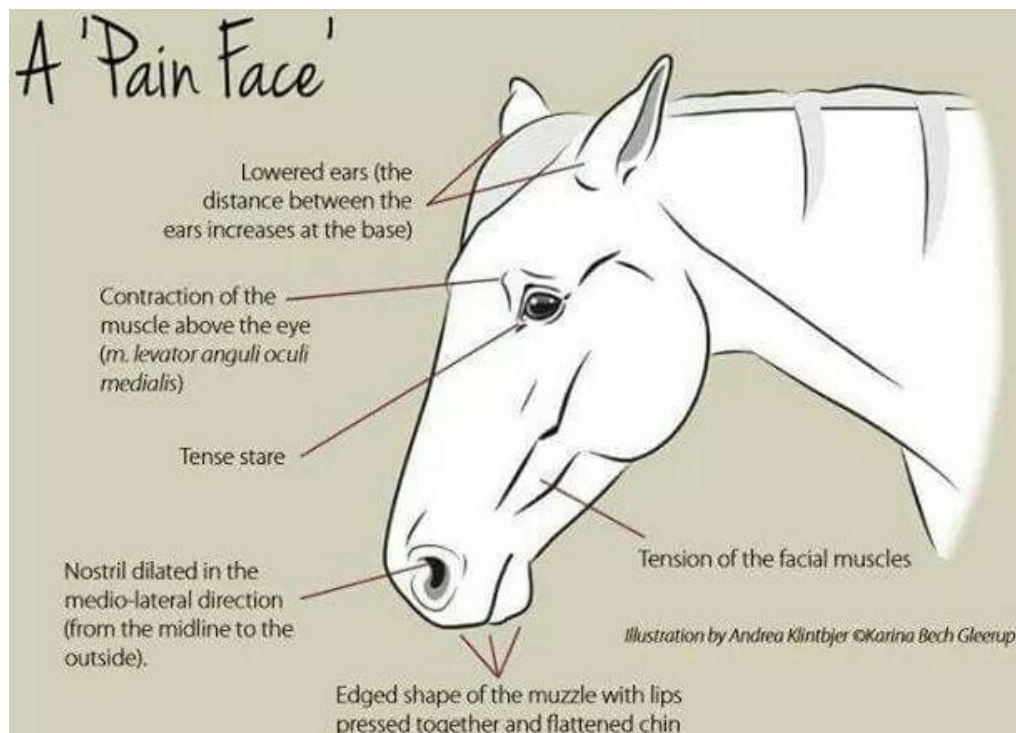
- (11) Only staff that are a part of the animal and field technical team may log procedures via the 'Ardex Essentials' animal management software.

Record requirements

- (12) Records will be sent to the Charles Sturt University Animal Ethics Committee via email on the first day of the month excluding weekends in which the report will be sent the following business day.

Associated documentation (including pictures if available)

Figure 1 – Horse 'pain face'



Source: <https://horsesandpeople.com.au/the-equine-pain-face>

References and relevant links

- (13) Cavalieri J., Dowling B., Foyle L., Godfrey C., Lloyd J., Penny J., Tranter W., Watts S., Wearn J., & Willis G. (2023). Guidelines for the use and reuse of animals for teaching within veterinary medical education programs. *Clinical Theriogenology*, 15, 29-37.
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AEC SOP 6.1 - Equine cumulative use measurement

- (14) National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th edition. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.
- (15) The equine pain face. <https://horsesandpeople.com.au/the-equine-pain-face/>. Accessed 26/09/2023.