

Sport horse breeding and social licence: challenges and opportunities

Roly Owers MRCVS
CWorld Horse Welfare



Outline

1. World Horse Welfare
2. Social licence concept
3. Challenges for public acceptance of sport horse breeding
4. From challenge to opportunity JS0



Slide 2

JS0

Thought 'threat' too negative, so suggest 'challenges' and referencing 'opportunity' in last bullet

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T13:58:39.295

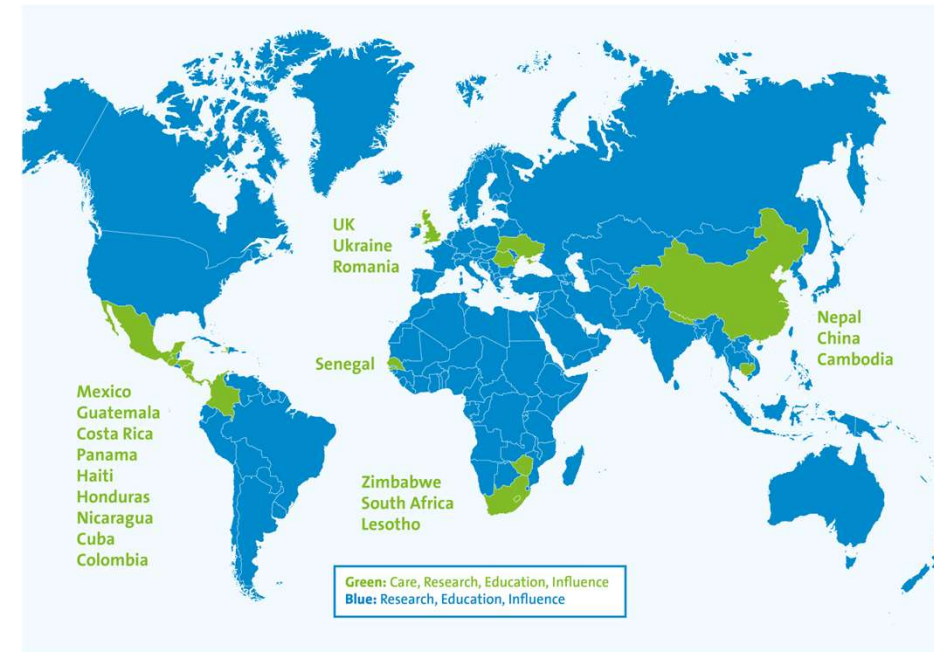
JD0 0

Roly: I have left 'threat' as 'threat' elsewhere (and note that JS has a comment about this later) but do please second guess this in both slides & notes.

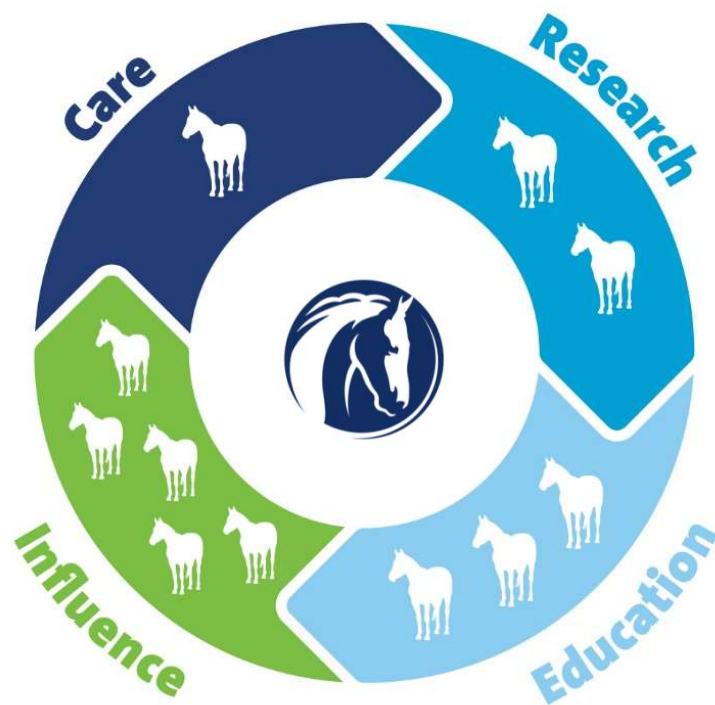
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-27T14:54:35.623

1. World Horse Welfare – overview

- Leading equine charity since 1927
- Actively promote the horse-human relationship
- Work with horses in need, sport & leisure horses, work & production horses
- Work in partnership with governments, universities, regulators, other NGOs
- Strong veterinary credentials
- **Four activities: Care, research, education, influence**



World Horse Welfare – overview



World Horse Welfare supports responsible horse sport



- Welfare advisor to sport regulators
 - International Equestrian Federation (FEI) – Code of Conduct for Welfare of Horse
 - FEI's Equine Ethics & Wellbeing Commission
 - International Horse Sport Confederation (IHSC)
 - British Horseracing Authority (BHA)
 - Informally to other national federations
- Associate Member of British Equestrian
 - Member of Equine Welfare and Ethics Advisory Group



Focus on social licence



Review

Social Licence to Operate: What Can Equestrian Sports Learn from Other Industries?

Janet Douglas ^{1,*}, Roly Owers ¹ and Madeleine L. H. Campbell ²

¹ World Horse Welfare, Anne Colvin House, Snetterton, Norwich NR16 2LR, UK

² School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham, Sutton Bonington, Nottingham LE12 5RD, UK

* Correspondence: janetdouglas@worldhorsewelfare.org

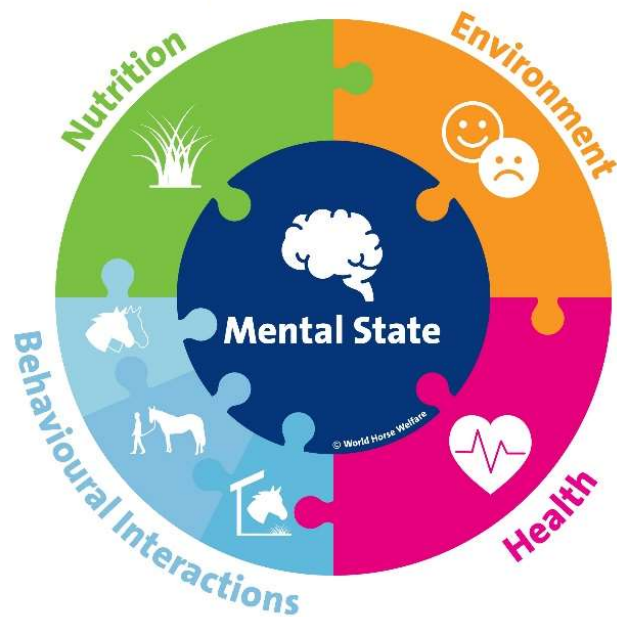


2. Social licence = Public acceptance



Equine welfare lies at the heart of the threat to horse sport's social licence

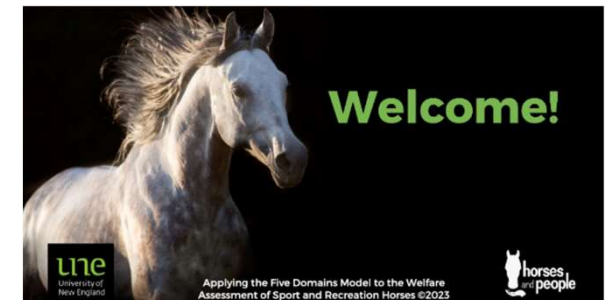
5 Domains model



The 5 Domains of animal welfare

Find out how you can meet the species specific needs of your horse using the 5 Domains of animal welfare

<https://www.worldhorsecwelfare.org/advice/the-5-domains-of-animal-welfare>



<https://www.openlearning.com/une/courses/une-equine-course/?cl=1>



WorldHorseWelfare

www.worldhorsecwelfare.org
Registered charity no. 206658 and SC038384

Ethics vs. welfare

- Ethics:
 - “Should I do this?”

- Optimal welfare:
 - “I am going to do this – how can I make the experience the best for the horse?”

Article

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

Madeleine L. H. Campbell

Animals 2021;11:1725



Article

Testing and Refining the Ethical Framework for the Use of Horses in Sport

Bluebell Brown ¹, Jacqueline M. Cardwell ¹, Kristien L. P. Verheyen ¹  and Madeleine L. H. Campbell ^{2,*}

Animals 2023;13:1821

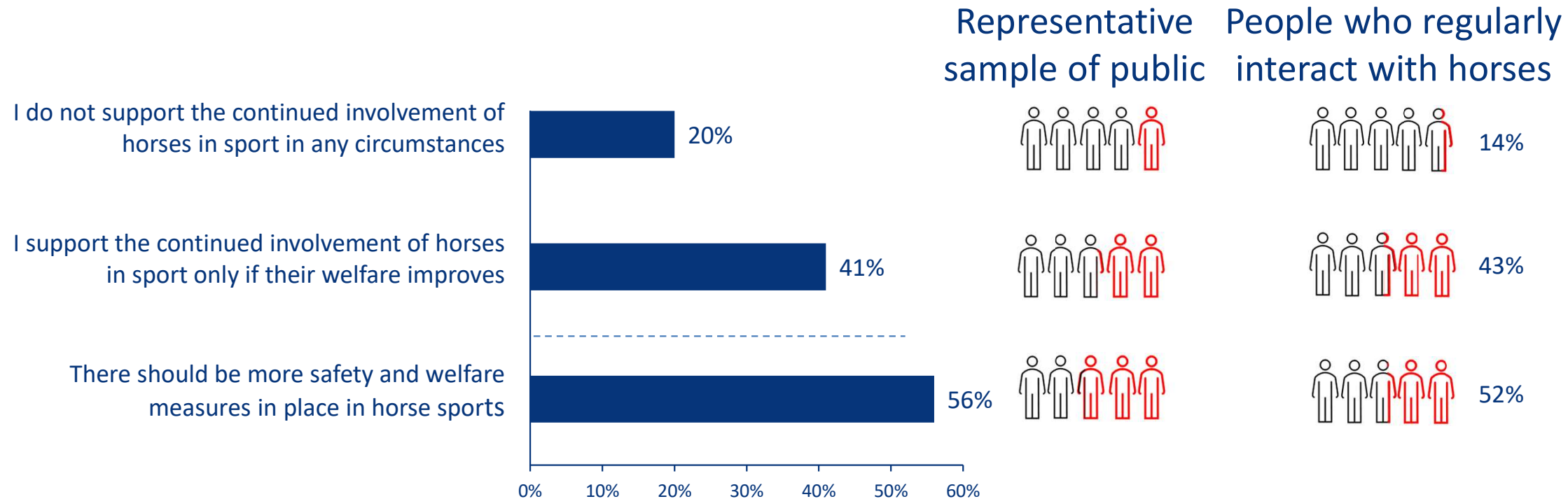
Slide 9

JD0

I want to get this slide in, but am struggling to figure out where to put it. As you will be the one telling the story, Roly, please shift it if you think it works better somewhere else. And let me know if, having done that, you need me to create some kind of segue for it in its new position.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T11:40:08.520

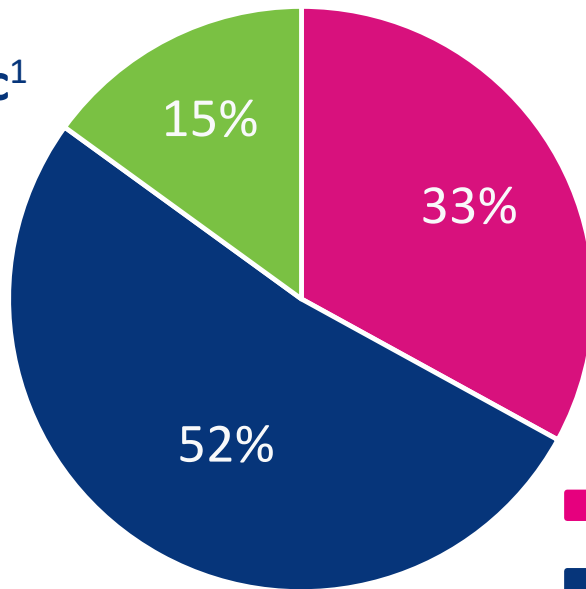
Perceptions of UK public and 'horse people' re the use of horses in sport



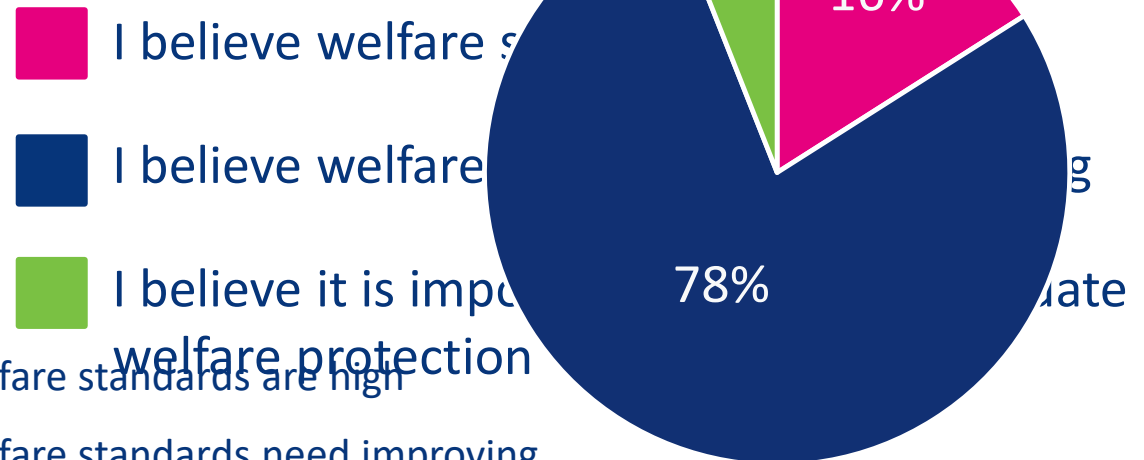
YouGov research conducted in UK 29–30 May, 2024; N=4,195

Global perceptions re welfare of horses in sport

Public¹



Equestrians²



- I believe welfare standards are high
- I believe welfare standards need improving
- I believe it is impossible to provide adequate welfare protection

Savanta opinion surveys, 2022

¹ Public: 14,000 respondents from 14 countries

Data weighted to be representative of each country by age, region and gender

² Equestrian stakeholders: 27,710 respondents from 116 countries

Sources: ¹ Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission for the FEI. Public Attitudes on the Use of Horses in Sport: Survey Report (November 2022)

² Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission for the FEI. Opinions of Equestrian Stakeholders on the use of Horses in Sport: Survey Report (November 2022)

So what?



Slide 12

JD0

Roly: Dltto re notes

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T11:49:59.930

This is what...



Greyhound racing:
Banned in parts of
Australia and the USA and
under threat in the UK



Jump racing:
Disappeared from
most of Australia



Equestrianism:
Now **lost** from modern
pentathlon

Slide 13

JD0

Roly: Dltto re notes (although I got rid of your first sentence as I think the segue works better this way)

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T11:50:06.836

JD0 0

But incorporating the edits I suggested to the version of the RF script that you sent me.

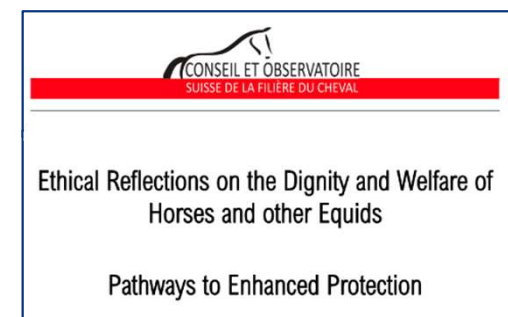
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T11:50:40.999

JD0 1

And another smidgin of an edit (penultimate bullet)

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T11:53:00.464

What is horse sport doing about this?



Slide 14

JD0

Roly: Previously, you mentioned possibly adding the BEF 'Charter for the Horse' to this slide (with permission). Is that something that you would like to pursue?

Janet Douglas, 2024-02-15T00:48:05.555

JD1

Note that I have added the report that the WBFSH commissioned from Hartpury & put it front & centre.

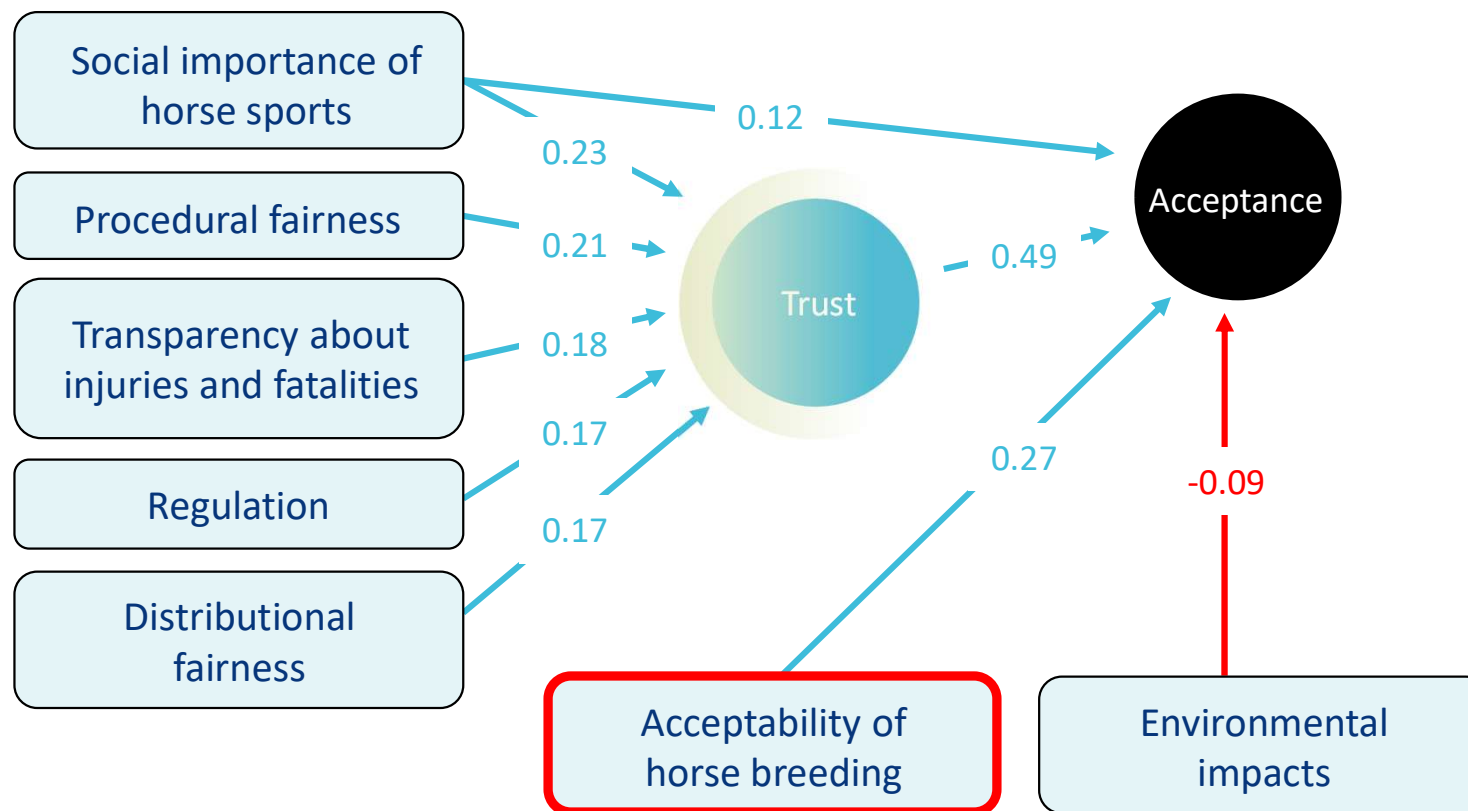
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-24T12:10:59.430

JS1 0

Excellent

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:02:17.455

What are the main drivers of acceptance of horse sport in the UK?



Slide 15

JD0

Roly: Final 2 sub-bullets are direct quotes from VQ report. Note that breeding feeds directly into acceptance, so would not be one of the drivers that VQ would recommend going after - but I don't think we need to tell the audience that...

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T12:40:17.349

JD0 0

FYI, though, relevant quote from VQ report is: "This driver is based on the question 'I think it is acceptable for horses to be bred for sports' and the answers it reflect the respondents' moral or ideological position. There is therefore limited scope for the industry to shift this driver of acceptance."

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T12:53:34.845

JS0 1

I think the last bullet of the notes re increased scrutiny of breeding could cause acceptance to wane is still really important here. So what industry does to ensure practices stand up to scrutiny is really important for them to focus on as not sure they would now

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:06:13.898

JD1

The slide title here says 'in the UK'. And that is correct - these data are only relevant to the UK. But should we comment somewhere that we don't know how these data are to other countries & cultures?

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T12:47:07.289

JS1 0

Think it's important for this to be referenced/highlighted even just verbally

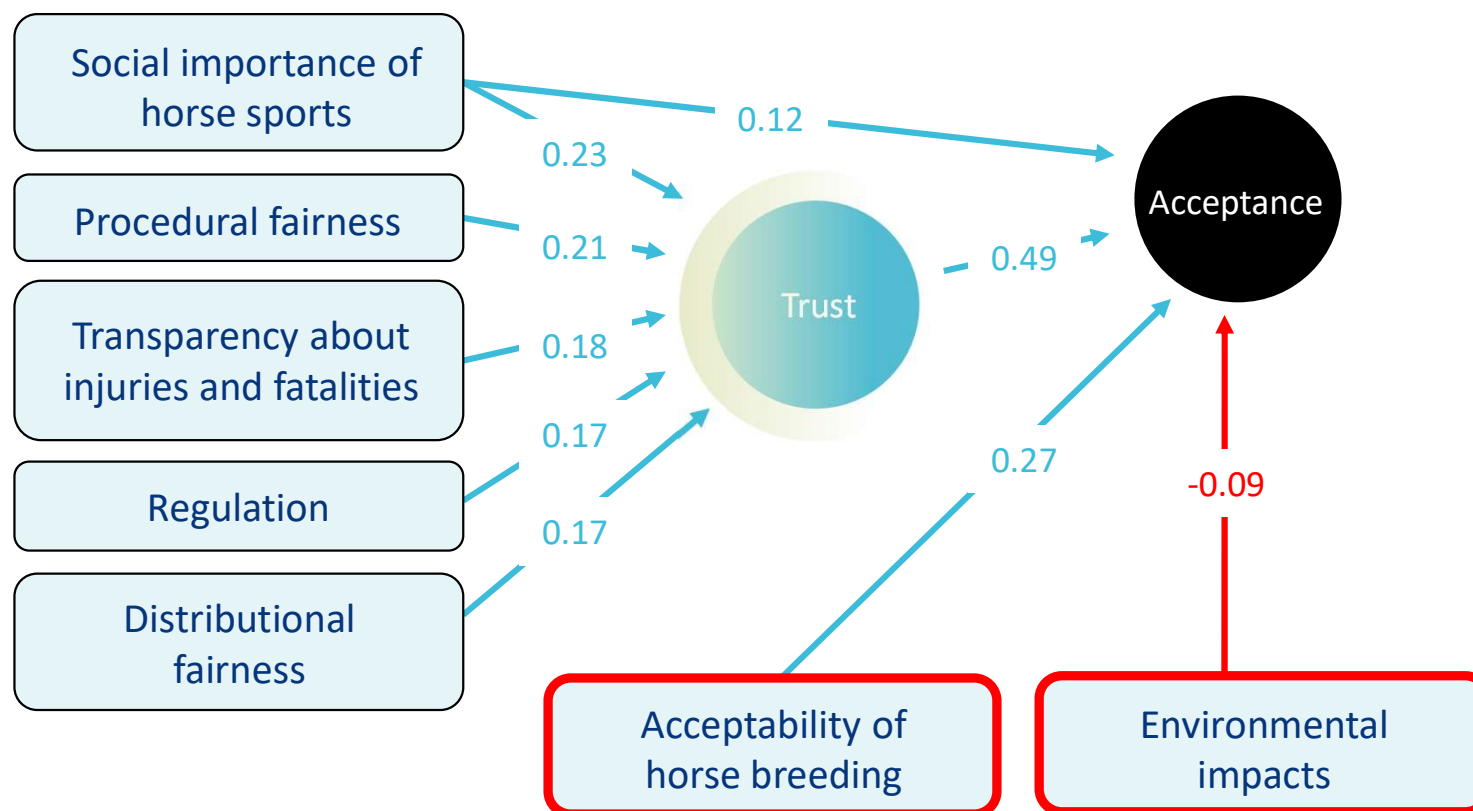
Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:06:52.133

JD1 1

Thanks. Done in notes.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-27T14:58:00.212

3. Threats ^{JS0} and opportunities – for horse sport



Slide 16

JS0

I'm OK with use of 'threat's here as the concepts have already been introduced and fits naturally against 'opportunities'

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:07:40.759

JD1

Note that I haven't specified on this slide that these data are relevant to the UK only as this has just been acknowledged.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-27T14:59:07.959

Threat to sport horse breeding's social licence: Environmental sustainability

Some of the problems



Some solutions



Slide 17

JD0

I haven't mentioned EDI in this deck. It didn't come up on the VQ work, and we are tight for time here - so I have just mentioned environmental impacts on straight on to welfare.

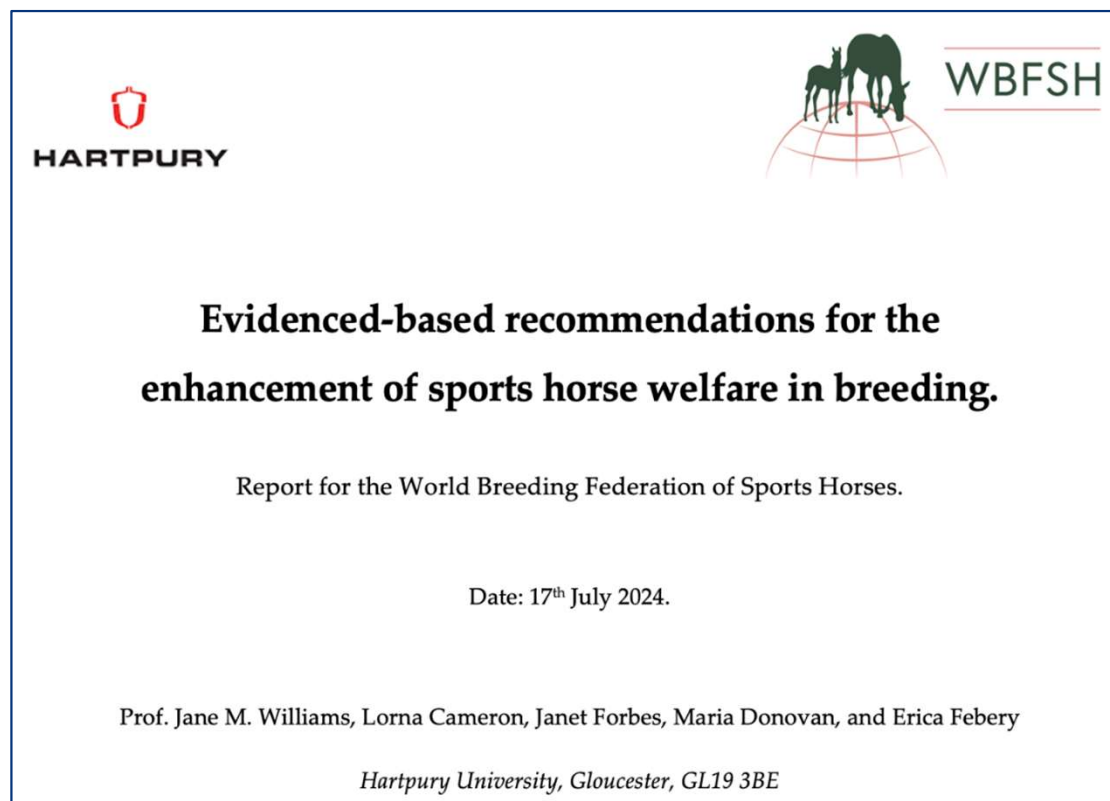
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-24T18:35:43.050

JS0 0

Genally agree EDI issue may not be applicable across all countries, so OK to leave it out?

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:09:52.512

Threat to sport horse breeding's social licence: Equine welfare



Slide 18

JD0

I had planned to acknowledge somewhere that what Roly will present is not necessarily evidence-based (in contrast to the Hartpury report) - but can't find the words to do it. This is the obvious slide to do it on, I think, if we do it. Thoughts?

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T13:40:06.896

JS0 0

Could say something like: World Horse Welfare applauds this piece of work, and what follows will echo much of it - while highlighting what we at World Horse Welfare have found through our own experience with horses and in our wider work in horse sport and breeding. [I suggest something like this as through our front door, and through our intelligence and keeping abreast of research and media we hear about a range of these issues]

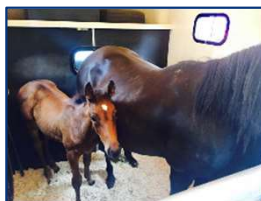
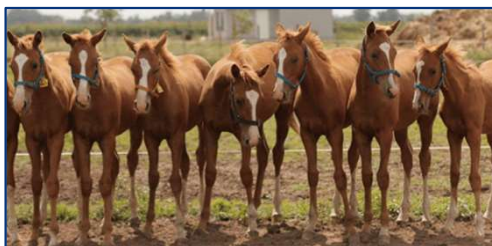
Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:16:02.036

JD0 1

Thanks - added to final bullet of notes.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-27T15:00:29.127

Breeding itself: Threats to welfare – and public acceptance



Slide 19

JD0

Re gene doping & cloning: The document "PROPOSALS FOR RULES CHANGES OF EQUINE ANTI-DOPING & CONTROLLED MEDICATION 2024" (available here: https://inside.fei.org/system/files/12-EADCMR_Rules%20Modification_26%20June%202024_0.pdf) says "topic of gene doping is also being discussed within the International Horse Sports Confederation as the Racing Authorities may update their wording on the matter. Any relevant updates/changes may be incorporated into the Final Draft".

This document mentions prohibition of gene doping and mentions cloning but makes no specific statement about their stance on the latter.

I also found this (slide deck):

https://inside.fei.org/system/files/03_SF2024_FEI%20Equine%20Anti-Doping%20and%20Controlled%20Medication%20Regulations_29April2024.pdf. This presentation mentions cloning but again makes no statement about the FEI's stance on it. But I summarised the evidence surrounding its use in horses for something I did in Edinburgh & it wasn't good - hence my text in the notes (although the summary I created was a couple of years ago now - I can look again if you would like to know).

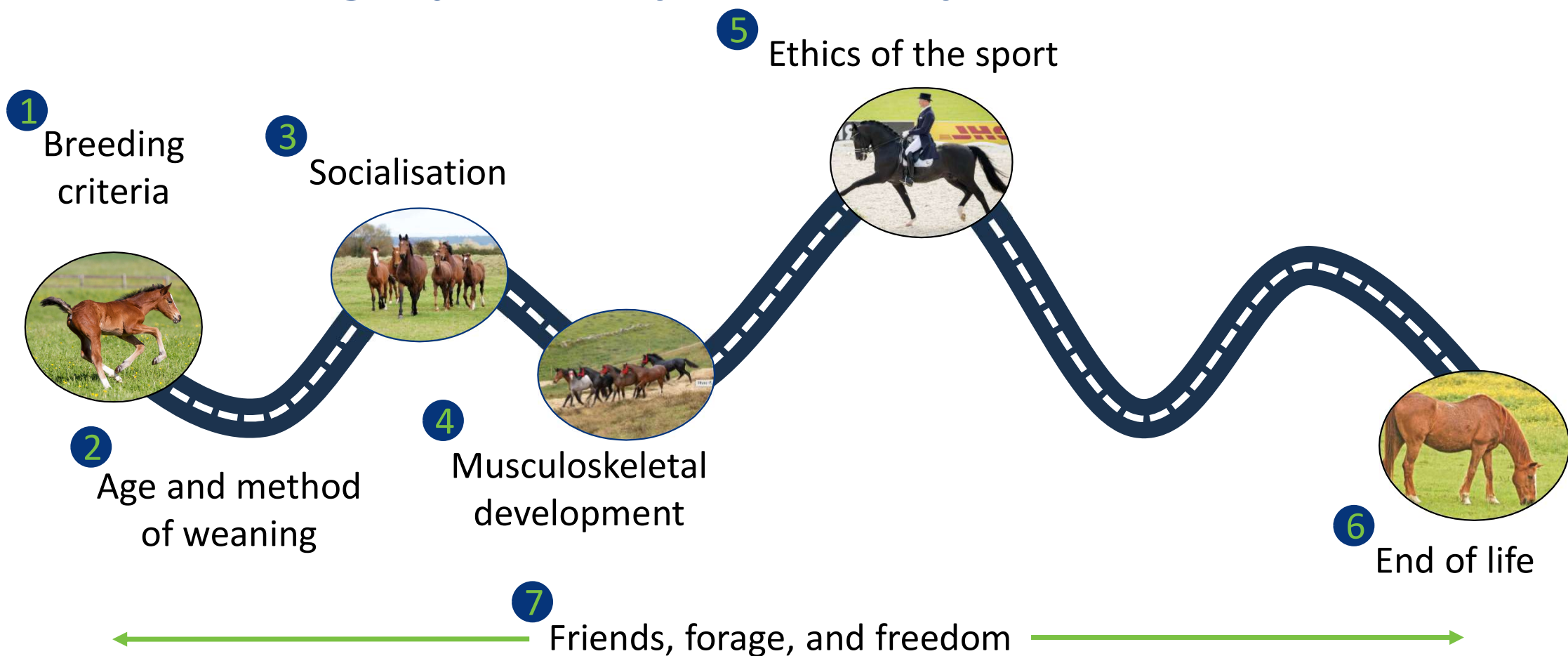
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T14:10:41.566

JD1

Jessica: After listening to Meta's Changing Rein podcast about the ethics of breeding in which she said that, in TB breeding, mares are no longer hobbled, I created this image top L.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-28T18:08:25.984

But breeding is just one part of the picture



Slide 20

JD0

I am very aware of the VQ data, which showed widespread abhorrence of both euthanasia & slaughter - but am aware that that may differ among cultures & UK-based. Re this, the final bullet in the notes is Jessica's - but she didn't mention how we tackle euthanasia - I reckon we should couch it as a serious positive dribbling on into a sad old age, but am not sure how to 'sell' that to the public - but I know that Jessica has been thinking about this.

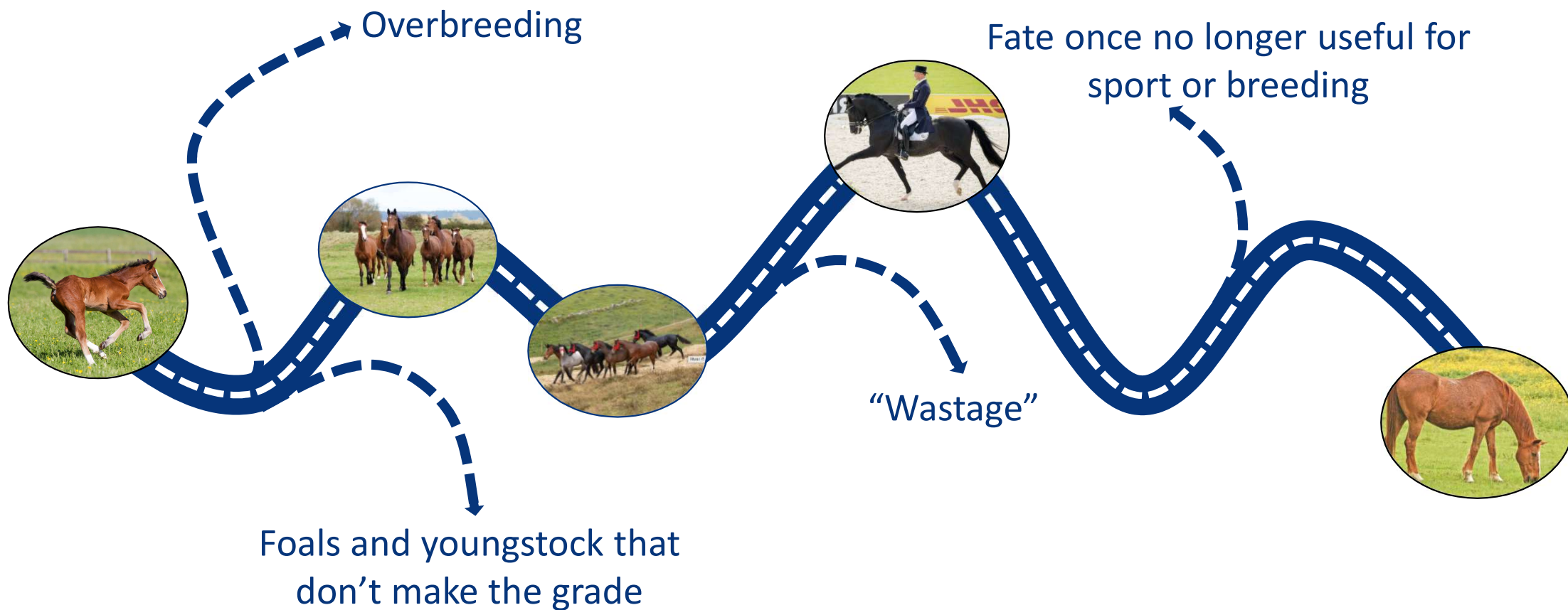
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T14:42:35.330

JS0 0

Completely agree, Janet, different cultures have different views, and laws too. Have added to the notes. Also believe providing for horses in retirement is an obligation - not sure if just sentiment covers that. Global nature of sport suggests that's an across the board duty, regardless of culture.

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:23:20.654

What about the ones that aren't useful?



Slide 21

JD0

I need to make my 'exit ramps' look a bit better but will do that if you think this slide has legs.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-25T23:03:42.646

JS0 0

If you can make them better I think it will work

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:23:38.077

JD0 1

I have fiddled with the exit ramps but if you think they look naff do please say.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-29T22:58:26.625

JD1

I am not at all sure about my final bullet in the notes here - this stuff is all off the top of my head & I increasingly feel as if I am coming up with rubbish.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T14:57:39.795

JS1 0

I really like it

Jessica Stark, 2024-09-27T14:24:01.874

4. How could things be different?



← Friends, forage, and freedom →

Slide 22

JD0

FYI re Cambridge Stud (Foal NZ): https://www.foalnz.com/site_files/19386/upload_files/OurFoalEducationprocessusingthe10ISEStrainingpractices.pdf?dl=1
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T15:08:14.954

JD0 0

Note that the top team at Foal NZ are Monty Roberts-trained - but the paper at the link above is to do with their use of ISES training principles (which are based on learning theory). Do let me know if you want more info. The reason they are on my radar is that I was on the Cambridge Stud half of the 'away day' at ISES in 2023 - that's what I saw.

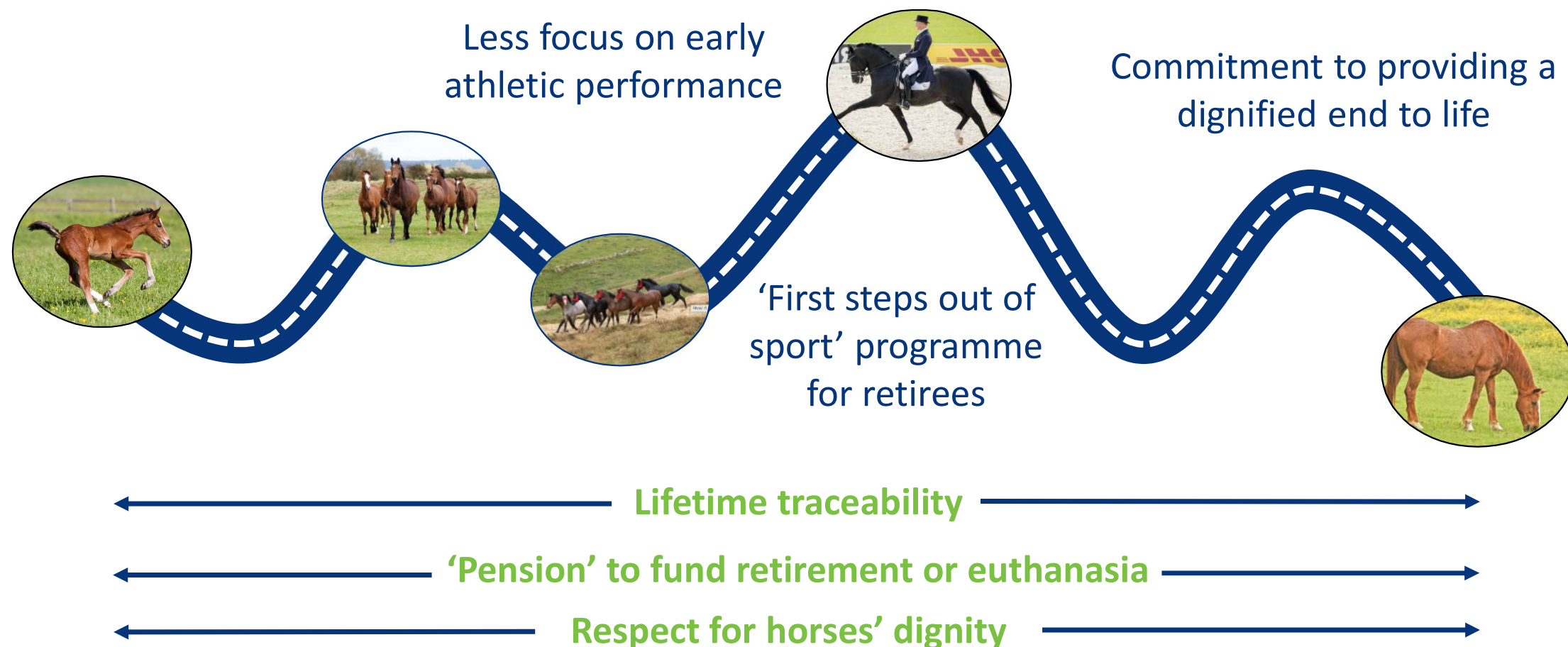
Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T15:27:58.813

JD1

Re Brosarp Project - great idea, in my estimation, but no data yet re durability that I could find. Report (written by those in charge, so inevitably potentially biased - but does include data): <https://indd.adobe.com/view/836d9bf7-1b2f-42fb-a0a6-0922280877d1>

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T15:38:05.229

Change on a more holistic level



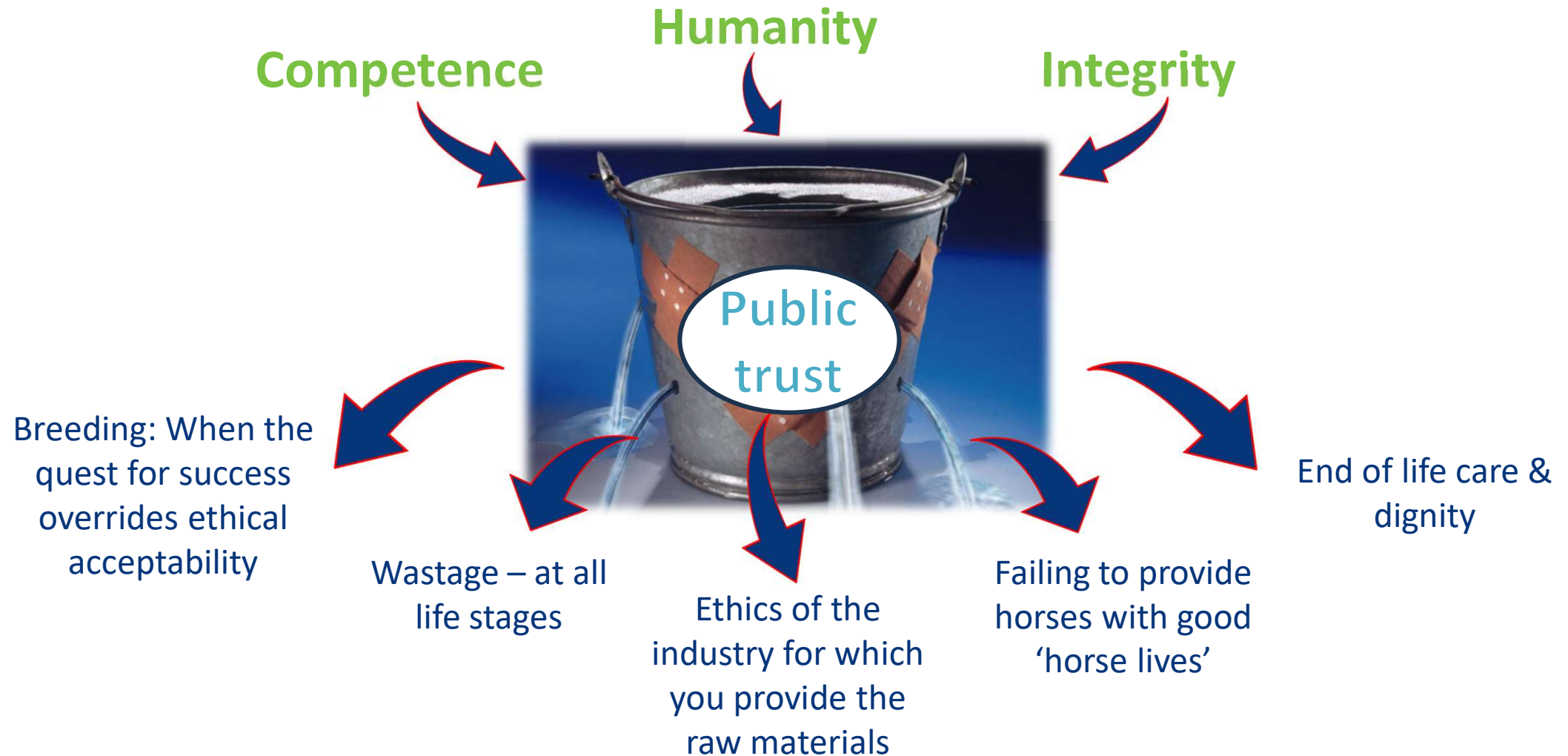
Slide 23

JD0

I have popped my ethics & welfare 'rider' idea for research into the notes, but it is probably a bit far out for this audience, so you may want to take it out.

Janet Douglas, 2024-09-26T19:35:57.037

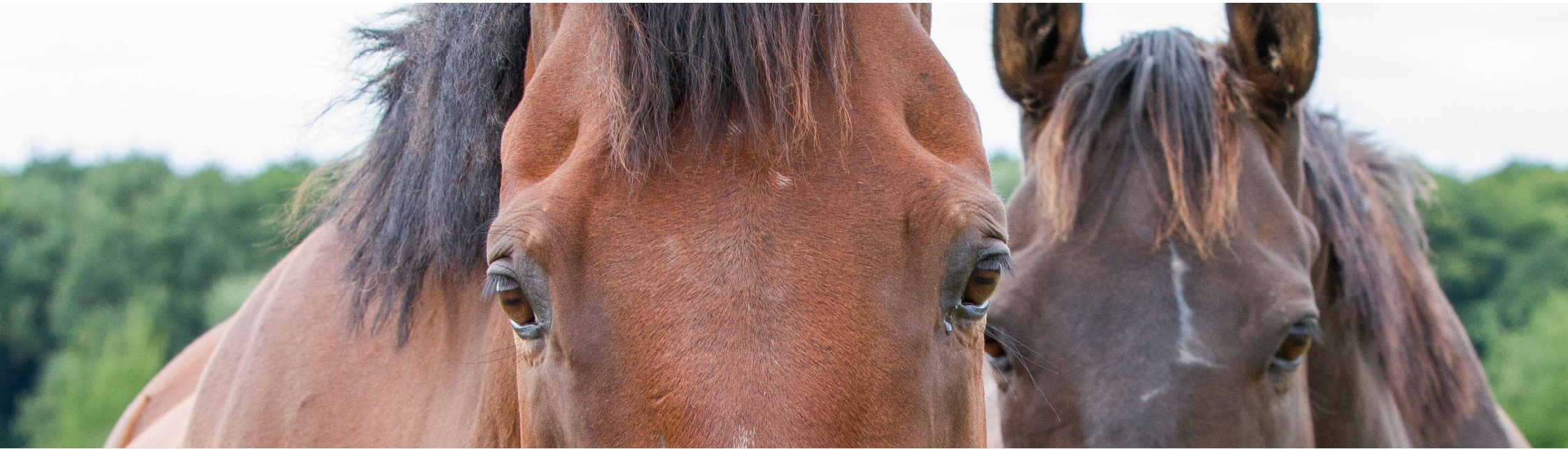
Public acceptance is about way more than overt, highly visible abuse



Summary

- The threat posed by the public's attitude to horse sport is real – and imminent
- Prioritising welfare is key to preserving our sport – and to turning this challenge into an opportunity for growth
- This must be based on:
 - Embedding a 'horse-first', 'horse-centric', ethics-based mindset
 - Being open to challenge and change
 - Funding – and acting on the results of – high quality research





THANK YOU

@rolyowers
@horsecharity

