

Health & Safety Factsheet No. 1



INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE IN THE THOROUGHbred BREEDING INDUSTRY (UK)

Health and safety is especially important to thoroughbred breeders because their work involves high-value animals, physical risk, reputational exposure, and long-term business sustainability. In short, good health and safety protects people, horses, and the breeding operation itself.

Protecting people

Studs involve daily hazards such as handling horses, working around vehicles and machinery, manual handling, health hazards, and variable ground conditions. Robust health and safety practices reduce the risk of serious injury, ill-health and fatal accidents to staff, contractors, vets, farriers, and visitors.

Protecting horses

Horses can be unpredictable. Safe facilities, trained staff, and clear procedures reduce the risk of injury, stress, illness, and behavioural issues. A safe working environment leads to calmer horses, better handling, and improved welfare outcomes, which directly affect performance and sale value.

Legal and regulatory compliance

Breeders have legal duties under UK legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and animal welfare laws. Failure to manage risks can lead to enforcement action, fines, prosecution, and insurance issues.

Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others. They must follow safety procedures, use equipment properly, wear required PPE, cooperate with their employer, and report hazards or concerns.

Business reputation and client confidence

Stud farms rely heavily on trust from owners, buyers, sales companies, and insurers. Demonstrating high health and safety standards can significantly improve the reputation of a breeding operation both as an entity and as an employer.

Reducing costs and disruption

Accidents lead to lost working time, staff shortages, increased insurance premiums, veterinary costs, and potential litigation. Preventative health and safety measures reduce disruption during critical periods such as foaling, covering, and sales preparation.

Supporting staff retention and morale

A safe workplace shows staff that their wellbeing matters. This improves morale, retention, and competence - key factors in maintaining consistent horse care and breeding standards.

Summary

Health and safety is not just a legal requirement for thoroughbred breeders; it is a fundamental part of animal welfare, risk management, and long-term commercial success.

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