



RACEHORSE STUDIES

Introduction

The British Horseracing Authority regulates, promotes and represents the sport of horseracing. The Authority manages the fixture list, sets the Rules of Racing and enforces standards through disciplinary processes, represents the views of racing stakeholders, and seeks to ensure racing is clean and fair. The safety and welfare of horse and rider is a top priority.

In Britain about 6 million people attend just over 1,500 race meetings in a year, there are over 15,000 racehorses in training, and 50,000 people have an individual or group ownership of racehorses.

The Issue

The Authority believes in using animals for a sport enjoyed by millions as long as there are certain standards of care given in return. The health of the racehorse population is ensured by access to suitable veterinary treatment. The integrity of the sport relies on horses running without prohibited drug substances in their systems, and indeed most positive drug tests each year are the result of medication prescribed by a Veterinary Surgeon that has lingered in the horse's body.

Detection Times

To avoid horses running without prohibited drug substances in their systems racing authorities worldwide publish 'Detection Times'. These are measured from studies where the drugs are administered to horses under controlled scientific conditions, and the levels in blood and urine measured over time. A Detection Times is the time from administration to when the amount of drug in blood or urine is considered as insignificant. Detection Times are not synonymous with 'Withdrawal Times' used by Veterinary Surgeons, who must add an adequate safety margin to the stated Detection Time. This safety margin is chosen by the treating Veterinary Surgeon using their professional judgement and discretion, to allow for biological, pharmaceutical and pharmacological variation.

Without published Detection Times there is a fear that trainers or veterinarians may not feel able to administer the required medication to a horse for fear of a positive test on the racecourse. Therefore the Authority has invested in a Centre for Racehorse Studies where our staff will to continue work to undertake research to publish Detection Times for veterinary medicines used in horseracing so as to ensure veterinary treatments can be given, integrity is maintained, and the welfare of horses is not compromised.

The Authority's Standards for Racehorse Studies

- Investment in high quality accommodation and care for the horses, where they are exercised and turned out.
- After horses are used in studies they normally go on to other roles.
- Strict control of research activity: The Centre is subject to independent Government inspection.
- Ethics of the studies reviewed by a forum including independent animal welfare specialists.
- Employment of an independent Veterinary Surgeon to advise on welfare.
- Commitment to share the data with other racing authorities to avoid duplication of research.
- Commitment to well designed studies to ensure we use only the required number of horses for each study.
- The research will be usually be carried out using veterinary drugs whose safety has already been assessed by national authorities.

Demonstrating our Commitment

- The Authority will publish scientific abstracts describing its use of horses.
- The number of horses used in studies by the Authority, and their roles afterwards, will be reported annually.
- A summary of the output of the Centre will be published annually.

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