

**NEW ZEALAND
THOROUGHBRED RACING**



PUREI HŌIHO NĀTI O AOTEAROA

NEW ZEALAND THOROUGHBRED RACING

THOROUGHBRED WELFARE

DETAILED ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

JULY 2023

CONTEXT

(why does this matter?)

NZ Thoroughbred Racing, along with the recognised industry organisations (NZ Trainers' Association, NZ Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, NZ Racehorse Owners' Federation and the NZ Jockeys' Association) each appreciate that maintenance of high standards of welfare for our horses is not just morally correct but is also a foundation of the public and government continuing acceptance of racing. This latter consideration is often referred to as 'maintaining racing's social licence to operate'.

Therefore, while Thoroughbred welfare has long been inherent in Rules, policy and practices for both racing and breeding, NZTR is committed to further protect and progressively further advance the welfare of our horses, this is embodied in NZTR's vision for Thoroughbred welfare, which was endorsed by the recognised industry organisations:

"A Thoroughbred should be provided a good life, with the care and conditions that allow it to thrive and perform to its natural abilities."

The concept of ensuring 'A Good Life' for our horses is central to NZTR's Thoroughbred welfare strategy, so it's worth explaining. We recognise that our horses are sentient and understand that their individual welfare needs matter. To have A Good Life on a day-to-day basis and over their lifetimes, our Thoroughbreds must not only have their basic needs met, but they must also have positive and rewarding experiences that matter to them. In addition to being cared for in a manner that supports good health, providing opportunities for preferences in their diet, about how they engage with their environment, with each other and people, can all contribute to a positive mental state and overall positive welfare.

Over a lifetime, to have A Good Life, these positive and rewarding experiences must outweigh negative experiences. By providing opportunities to have preferred experiences that meaningful to our Thoroughbreds, we are on the way to enabling them to have A Good Life.

How can we be assured that we are providing these opportunities and experiences?

Among other welfare initiatives advanced in recent years, NZTR has adopted the 5 Domains Model for Thoroughbred welfare and a vision that all Thoroughbreds should be provided a good life. [NZTR's Thoroughbred Welfare Guidelines \(2019\)](#) have since been cited as a basis of more recent equine 5 Domains guidelines by a number of horse sports, including the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (Thoroughbred racing's international confederation), Harness Racing NZ, and a number of other international racing authorities. So New Zealand is a recognised leader in this approach.

Those published guidelines (2019) were carefully prepared in consultation with the NZ Trainers' Association, the NZ Thoroughbred Breeders' Association and veterinarians with intent to ensure that the guidelines were a relevant and effective aid to detailed assessment of Thoroughbred welfare.

These Thoroughbred Welfare Detailed Assessment Standards are a further advancement and provide a range of more granular provisions or observations that together describe whether required minimum standards are met by Accountable Persons (as defined by Rule 1429).

Other relevant basic minimums are outlined in Rules 1402, 1404 and 1432 of the [Rules of Racing](#).

These Detailed Assessment Standards are also intentionally designed to provide Trainers and others in charge of horses with some objective measures against which they may self-assess and plan 'best practice' improvements in provisions or practices. Additionally, these Standards will provide a basis for routine or targeted inspections by RIB Stewards or Investigators.

NZTR will in future years, reassess and update these Detailed Assessment Standards, to ensure that these 'minimum standards' further improve in alignment to scientific and practical advances, and also to better elaborate optimal or 'best practice' provisions. In the interim, those with intent to ensure optimal welfare practices should refer to these aspects of the [NZTR's Thoroughbred Welfare Guidelines \(2019\)](#).

ANIMAL WELFARE OBLIGATIONS

Licensed Trainers, Breeders or Accountable Persons (as defined by Rule 14.29 of NZTR's Rules of Racing) must comply with their obligations under:

- [NZTR Rules of Racing](#)
- NZTR policies including:
 - [Prohibited Substance Regulations](#)
 - [Race Day Treatment of Horses](#)
 - [Directive - Cardiac Arrhythmia](#)
 - [Hot Weather Policy](#)
- [NZTR's Thoroughbred Welfare Guidelines \(2019\)](#)
- [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#)
- [Code of Welfare: Horses and Donkeys](#)
- [Animal Welfare \(Care and Procedure\) Regulations 2018](#) and
- this document.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NZ Thoroughbred Racing acknowledges the Harness Racing NZ Horse Care Regulations and the [Code of Welfare: Horses and Donkeys](#), as each have been partly used as a basis for these Standards.

DETAILED WELFARE ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

1. NUTRITION

- 1.1 Unless otherwise stated by a veterinarian a Thoroughbred must be provided with:
- 1.1.1 Free access to clean, fresh water (free of algae) to drink sufficient for their needs.
 - 1.1.2 To ensure condition and good digestive function, whether the horse is boxed on managed feed, or if free grazing, regular provision of a balanced diet including a minimum 1.5% of the horse's body weight in good quality natural fibre or roughage daily.
 - 1.1.3 Access to quantities of food (and/or forage) sufficient for their varying physiological and exercise needs, to ensure no deprivation of food for more than 12 hours (unless directed by a veterinarian).
 - 1.1.4 Supplementary feed and trace minerals if required, such as when pasture is not of high quality, a horse is using extra energy (e.g., if in work, adverse weather conditions, lactating mares, pregnant mares in their final trimester), or needing to gain condition.
 - 1.1.5 Consideration of individual horse feeding preferences (if exhibited).
- 1.2 An Accountable Person must comply with Part 3 of the [Code of Welfare: Horses and Donkeys](#) including:
- 1.2.1 If any Thoroughbred shows signs of being emaciated, or if the body condition score (BCS) of any horse falls below 2 on the Henneke 0-5 BCS system (refer to Schedule 1 in the Appendix to these Standards), urgent remedial action must be taken to improve the condition of the horse.
 - 1.2.2 If any Thoroughbred shows signs of being very overweight, such that it may pose health risks to the horse, or if the body condition score of any horse is greater than 4 (on Henneke BCS scale of 0-5), urgent remedial action must be taken to reduce the BCS of the horse.

2. ENVIRONMENT

- 2.1 A Thoroughbred must be provided with:
- 2.1.1 A secure, safe, and hygienic environment, without excessive faeces and urine accumulation or noticeable build-up of ammonia.
 - 2.1.2 Facilities, housing, suitable fences, horse enclosures, horse areas which are designed, constructed, maintained, and operated in a manner that minimises the likelihood of distress, the horse escaping, the spread of infectious diseases, or injury to the horse. Specifically, fencing must be readily visible to horses and well maintained; and free of sharp protrusions or loose wires or loose electric tape.
 - 2.1.3 Where horses are confined to a box or yard, provision for free movement, with room to allow the horse to stand freely in the normal position with its head fully raised, walk forward and turn, lie down, roll, stretch and groom themselves without restriction. As a practical guideline, a minimum box size should be 3.5m by 3.5m in size.
 - 2.1.4 Areas used for confinement of horses must allow for visible interaction with other

- horse(s) or suitable companion(s).
- 2.1.5 Access to a form of shade or shelter (including appropriate rugging) to reduce the risk to their health and welfare caused by exposure to the elements including inclement weather, cold, rain, wind, excessive sunlight, and heat.
 - 2.1.6 The means to minimise the effects of heat stress.
 - 2.1.7 Suitable ground surfaces in stables, yards, and paddocks, and training and racing venues.
 - 2.1.8 For stabled horses, bedding must be provided and maintained to prevent dampness and excess odour, while providing a base that enables the horse to comfortably rest and move.
 - 2.1.9 Good ventilation when stabled, to ensure prevention of heat or cold stress or build-up of noxious odours.
 - 2.1.10 Natural or comparable artificial lighting during daylight hours when stabled.
 - 2.1.11 Grazing on fresh pasture where possible.
 - 2.1.12 An absence of ruts or holes in pasture, loose wires, toxic plants or other potential hazards.
 - 2.1.13 Feed is stored in a dry, temperate environment, away from rodents, pets, birds, toxic substances or any other source of contamination or soiling.
- 2.2 Where a property is unoccupied, horses must be checked at least twice a day and contact details of person in charge must be clearly displayed / readily accessible.
- 2.3 Preparedness for emergency situations such as fire or flood or restriction of supplies should be demonstrated. This should include:
- 2.3.1 Staff trained in equine emergency response preparedness and contingency plans for dealing with various hazards or emergencies, including the ability to rapidly release horses into a safe and secure environment.
 - 2.3.2 Prominent display of contact details for the Trainer or other 'person in charge' of the property and horses, and the mobile and after-hours phone numbers of the equine veterinarian.
 - 2.3.3 Halters and lead ropes are readily accessible.

For assistance, please refer planning guidance and Emergency Equine Management Plan template ([guidance and resources link](#) – [Emergency Plan template link](#)).

3 HEALTH

- 3.1 A Thoroughbred must be provided with:
- 3.1.1 Care by people competent at recognising the signs of ill-health or injury who will take prompt remedial action, as appropriate.
 - 3.1.2 Access to a registered veterinary practitioner.
 - 3.1.3 Proper and timely management of chronic or acute injuries, parasites, conditions, and disease.
 - 3.1.4 Approved treatment such that surgeries or surgical procedures are only conducted by registered veterinarians or in accordance with the [Animal Welfare \(Care and Procedure\) Regulations 2018](#).

- 3.1.5 Vaccinations are conducted in line with veterinary advice and recorded in the Treatments Logbook or a Vaccinations Logbook. For general guidance, please refer to [Equine Vaccination Guidelines for NZ](#).
 - 3.1.6 Good hoof care where hooves must be trimmed or shod as required to permit normal mobility and to maintain hoof health, shape, and function.
 - 3.1.7 Good teeth care where teeth must be regularly maintained as required to permit normal grazing, chewing, and fitting and function of bits.
 - 3.1.8 With particular regard to confined horses, daily exercise or turn-out sufficient to ensure its health and welfare except where the exercise may be detrimental to the health and welfare of the horse.
- 3.2 The trimming of inner ear hair and whiskers of a horse is not permitted.
- 3.3 The Accountable Person must ensure the Notifiable Surgeries and Procedures Regulations are complied with (including but not limited to Rules 650-654), and that a Treatment Logbook is maintained in accordance with Rule 345 of the [Rules of Racing](#).

4 BEHAVIOUR

- 4.1 A Thoroughbred must be provided with:
- 4.1.1 An environment that provides safe, compatible, and appropriate opportunities to express natural horse behaviours.
 - 4.1.2 An environment with comfortable sensory inputs that permit sufficient sleep and rest (e.g. appropriate artificial lighting and minimal loud noises).
 - 4.1.3 An environment that allows regular interaction with other horses or suitable companion.
 - 4.1.4 Management provisions to meet nutritional, environmental, health and behavioural requirements.
 - 4.1.5 Comfortable environments and routines of handling and empathetic husbandry, ideally with familiar handlers.
- 4.2 Minimum acceptable welfare conditions may not be met in circumstances where a notable proportion of Thoroughbreds exhibit the following behaviours:
- 4.2.1 Stereotypies (examples include: crib biting or wind sucking, weaving, head bobbing, box walking or pawing),
 - 4.2.2 Resistance or lack of cooperation when worked or handled,
- or, where any Thoroughbred displays:
- 4.2.3 Lethargy and exhaustion

5 MENTAL STATE

- 5.1 Breeders, trainers and stablehands depend on healthy and willing horses, so they will regularly monitor their mental state for:
 - 5.1.1 Alertness and engagement with handlers
 - 5.1.2 Appropriate energy levels for workload
 - 5.1.3 Willingness to work
 - 5.1.4 Confidence and calmness
 - 5.1.5 The absence of signs of anxiety, fear or panic
 - 5.1.6 The absence of signs of pain, anger or frustration
- 5.2 Desired or optimal welfare conditions for Thoroughbreds would be provided where:
 - 5.2.1 Management provisions meet nutritional, environmental, health and behavioural requirements
 - 5.2.2 Negative experiences are kept at tolerably low levels
 - 5.2.3 Opportunities are available for positive experiences

6 HANDLING

- 6.1 A Thoroughbred must be:
 - 6.1.1 Checked for any changes in their appearance or behaviour on at least a daily basis or more frequently for sick or injured horses or mares in late pregnancy.
 - 6.1.2 Observed for changes in appearance or behaviour that may indicate health issues which must be diagnosed as soon as reasonably practicable and then treated.
 - 6.1.3 Handled and trained at all times in such a way as to minimise the risk of pain, injury, or distress.
 - 6.1.4 Not worked at an intensity that is likely to cause exhaustion, heat stress, injury, or distress.
 - 6.1.5 Handled following the practices outlined in Part 6.1 of the [Code of Welfare: Horses and Donkeys](#).

7 TREATMENTS

- 7.1 Rule 345 requires that Licenceholders maintain a Treatment Logbook and defines Treatments and Medications. A treatment is something that is done, given, or administered to a horse for illness, injury, or for the wellbeing of the horse and includes:
 - 7.1.1 Any treatment or medication substance prescribed or administered by a veterinarian.
 - 7.1.2 Any substance that is an alkalinising agent.
 - 7.1.3 Any substance that may give rise to a breach of the rules or regulations relating to prohibited substances (refer <https://nztr.co.nz/ProhibitedSubstanceRegulations>).
 - 7.1.4 Any physical Treatment method as detailed in Rule 345(3)(a).
- 7.2 An Accountable Person must ensure:

- 7.2.1 All substances are clearly labelled.
- 7.2.2 That where a medication, as a treatment, is prescribed to a horse by a veterinarian, the label must contain the name of the veterinarian prescribing the treatment, the name of the horse, the name of the medication, the dosage and frequency of dosing of the medication and the date of the prescription.
- 7.2.3 Any substance that is unlabelled, no longer prescribed for a horse, or expired is removed from the Accountable Person's premises.
- 7.2.4 That any substance that may give rise to a breach of the rules relating to prohibited substances are stored separately and securely from other feed stored at the premises.
- 7.2.5 That they keep and maintain a logbook:
 - 7.2.5.1 Listing all therapeutic substances in his or her possession.
 - 7.2.5.2 Recording all details of treatment (including medications and physical methods as listed in as detailed in Rule 345(3)) administered to any horse in his or her care and including as a minimum requirement:
 - the name of the horse, and
 - the date and time of administration of the treatment, and
 - the name of the treatment or medication administered (brand name of active constituent), and
 - the route of administration (including by injection, stomach tube, paste, topical application or inhalation), and
 - the amount of medication given and the duration of treatment (if applicable), and
 - the reason for treatment, and
 - the name and signature of the person or persons administering and authorising treatment.

8 TRANSPORTATION

- 8.1 When a Thoroughbred is transported in a vehicle, aircraft, or ship:
 - 8.1.1 It must be examined by the person in charge prior to loading to ensure that it is fit for transport and is able to withstand the journey without suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain, or distress.
 - 8.1.2 It must be protected against injuries and other health risks including dehydration, fear and distress.
 - 8.1.3 The care of the horse must be properly attended to by a competent person.
 - 8.1.4 The transportation must be appropriate for the horse including ensuring:
 - 8.1.4.1 is provided with thermally and physically comfortable, well ventilated, safe and secure accommodation with non-slip footing; and
 - 8.1.4.2 the horse float and vehicle, or truck used in the transportation must have a current Warrant of Fitness or Certificate of Fitness as applicable.

9 TRAINING

- 9.1 Training must not involve methods that involve inhumane practices.
- 9.2 All gear or equipment used in training must be in a safe working condition and be used as properly intended and so as not to cause pain, suffering or injury.
- 9.3 Equipment must be used and fitted in such a way as to avoid pain, injury, or distress to the horse.
- 9.4 Horses must be under constant competent supervision if on a treadmill, in a pool, or when on a walker.
- 9.5 A horse showing symptoms of disease, lameness, an ailment, or pre-existing clinical conditions must not be trained or raced unless on veterinary advice such training or racing is permitted.
- 9.6 Training must be based on graduated training practices supported by positive reinforcement of the horse's learning.

10 RETIREMENT FROM RACING AND/OR BREEDING OR DEATH OF A REGISTERED THOROUGHBRED

- 10.1 On the retirement of horses from racing or breeding the owner must take reasonable steps to ensure the horse will be provided good care for the rest of its natural life. The owner has a responsibility to retire horses in a condition that best places them to transition to their next stage of life. If a horse is not deemed suitable for a natural retirement, then it is the responsibility of the owner to make the right decision for the horse, including euthanasia.
- 10.2 Owners are encouraged to provide a person who has the intention of rehoming the horse, with:
 - 10.2.1 feet recently trimmed or shod (within last 8 weeks for trim or 4 weeks for shod);
 - 10.2.2 teeth recently floated (within last 12 months);
 - 10.2.3 records of horse's worming programme and the products used; and
 - 10.2.4 a record of any behavioural or physical history that may be relevant to those handling/ training the horse in its retirement.
- 10.3 Once a horse retires from racing or breeding the Accountable Person is responsible within five working days for notifying NZTR of its retirement (by completing a [SR24 Death or Retirement Form](#)) in accordance with the requirements of Rule 4.17 of the [Rules of Racing](#).
- 10.4 Euthanasia, when necessary, must be performed using a recognised humane method, and only by persons who are able to prove competence or appropriate training in using the method selected.

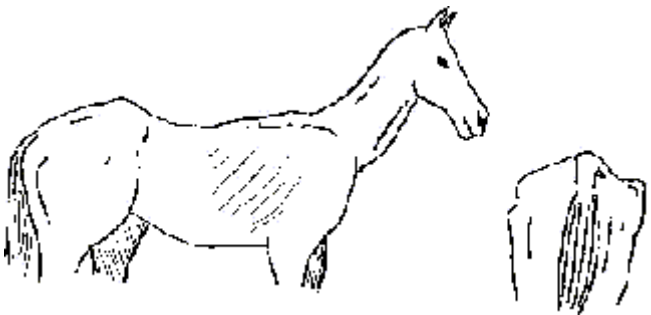
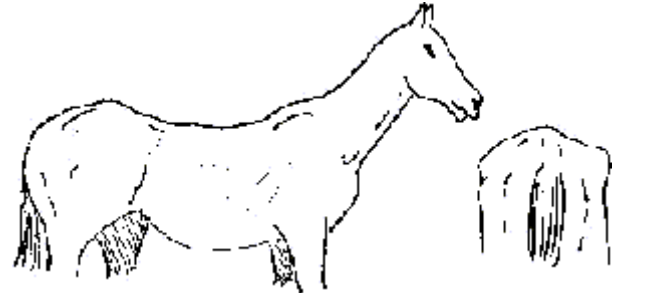
SCHEDULE 1

Henneke (0-5) Body Condition Scoring of Horses

Method

To obtain the condition score for any horse, first score the pelvis, then adjust the pelvis score up or down by 0.5 if it differs by 1 or more points from the back or neck score.

Score

0 – Emaciated	
<p>Pelvis Angular, skin tight Very sunken rump Deep cavity under tail</p> <p>Back and ribs Skin tight over ribs Very prominent and sharp backbone</p> <p>Neck Marked ewe neck Narrow and slack at base</p>	
1 – Thin	
<p>Pelvis Prominent pelvis and croup Sunken rump but skin supple Deep cavity under tail</p> <p>Back and ribs Ribs easily visible Prominent backbone with skin sunken on either side</p> <p>Neck Ewe neck Narrow and slack at base</p>	

2 - Moderate

Pelvis

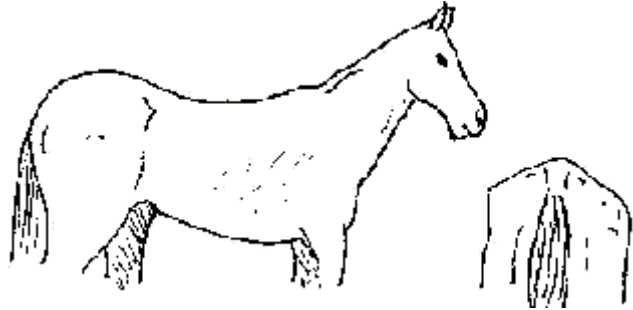
Rump flat either side of backbone
Croup well defined, some fat

Back and ribs

Ribs just visible
Backbone covered but spines can be felt

Neck

Narrow but firm



3 - Good

Pelvis

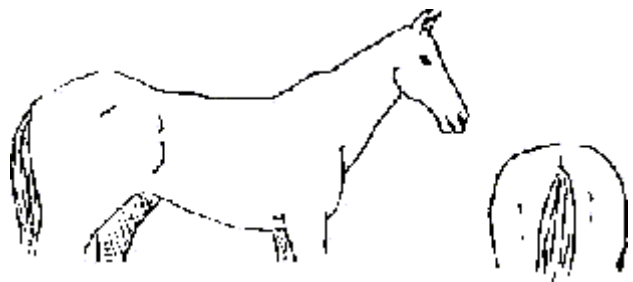
Covered by fat and rounded
No gutter
Pelvis easily felt

Back and ribs

Ribs just covered and easily felt
No gutter along back
Backbone well covered but spines can be felt

Neck

No crest (except for stallions) firm neck



4 - Fat

Pelvis

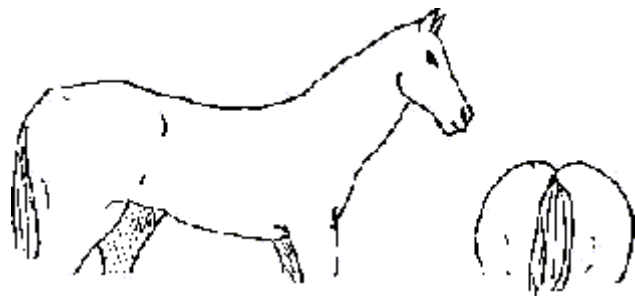
Gutter to root of tail
Pelvis covered by soft fat
Need firm pressure to feel

Back and ribs

Ribs well covered, need firm pressure to feel
Gutter along backbone

Neck

Slight crest
Wide and firm



5 - Very fat

Pelvis

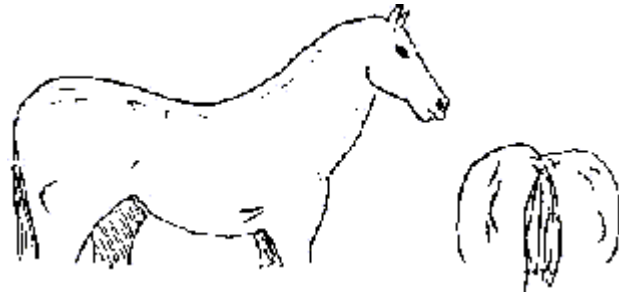
Deep gutter to root of tail
Skin distended
Pelvis buried, cannot be felt

Back and ribs

Ribs buried, cannot be felt
Deep gutter along back
Back broad and flat

Neck

Marked crest
Very wide and firm
Fold of fat



Note: When using this chart to assist in calculating bodyweight, the score must be calculated to the nearest 0.5 points.

Based on the Carroll and Huntington Method