

THE WELFARE ASSESSMENT IN BECLEAN STUD FARM'S HORSES

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SUMMARY

The aim of the study was the welfare assessment in horses in Beclean's stud farm; according to both The Five Freedoms established in the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (3) and using ANSVSA's welfare assesement guide; the only one available in Romania. In the same time; we performed a batch of clinical; haematological and biochemical assays; to estimate the training induced changes and to assess if effort may constitute a negative influence upon welfare.

The general welfare assessment was made considering all the 191 horses of the stud farm; using observation; space measurements; water and air analysis; checking of records. The results were compared with the legal reglemantations and specifical recomandations of our country. The clinical examination and blood assays were made for comparison between two regulary trained stallions and one unfamiliar with physical effort. Clinical determinations and blood sample collection were performed before exercise; just after exercise and after one hour and 30 minutes of rest. For the haematological and biochemical assay we used a Counter-Culter Abacus apparatus; and a Ciba Corning 550 Express apparatus. The results were compared with the normal values for horses; given by the Merck Veterinary Manual (2005) and between each-other (1). Using ANSVSA's welfare assesement guide we obtained a score of 3,5 points; which reveal partial conformity with the animal welfare standards.

In accordance of The Five Freedoms the absence of sterotypies; wounds and diseases in horses are important; and the absence of agressivity; the curious; environment-interested behaviour as well. It worth noticing that there are resembling circumstances and conditions with the natural ones in wich the equine species were formed.

Regarding the clinical and haematological assays; comparing the obtained values with the reference ranges we didn't reveal significant changes to prove the role of training in horse's physical or mental well-being; but we obtain differences between the issues of the horses; which proved bigger emotional stress in the untrained one (2). Routine screening doesn't prove relevance in assessing welfare of horses; even if it helps in establish their state of health.

In conclusion; in the welfare assessment of the horses it is needed a standardized; reproducible and objective assessment tool; based on other parameters; designed only for horses; or it need to be done special analyses like enzyme and hormone dosages.

1. Merck Veterinary Manual; 2005; Ninth Ed.; published by Merck & CO.; INC.; Whitehouse Station; N.J.; USA

2. Robert C; A. Benamou-Smith ; JL. Leclerc; 2002; Use of the recovery check in long-distance endurance rides. Equine Vet J Suppl.; (34):106-11.

3. Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare; World Society for the Protection of Animals