

**MINIMUM WELFARE CRITERIA FOR RURAL RACING AS UP-HELD BY THE
COASTAL HORSE-CARE UNIT (CHCU).**

DEFINITION: A RURAL RACE HORSE IS AN EQUINE OF ANY TYPE OR BREED THAT IS USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRAINING AND RACING.

PURPOSE: TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF THE RURAL RACE HORSE, AND TAKE THE SAFETY OF THE RIDER/HANDLER/OWNER INTO CONSIDERATION

THE RURAL RACE HORSE:

1. Wounds which will compromise the performance or cause pain or discomfort to the animal will cause a horse to be scratched.
2. Must have a minimum age of 4 years and a maximum age of 16 years.
3. Must be sound of wind, body and limb, and free of disease or injury.
4. Must have a temperament which is suited to the racing environment.
5. Must carry a weight condition which is “acceptable” to “good”, in accordance with the VWE (Visual Weight Estimate).
6. Must be in good overall condition, and have a general conformation which indicates the suitability of the horse for the purpose of the task required.
7. Must be capable of carrying/drawing it’s rider/driver and performing what is required – the horse should undergo the requisite training so as to ensure that they are responsive to their riders/drivers and capable of coping with the level of fitness required to race.
8. Must not include any mares in foal.
9. Each horse should be examined by an equine veterinarian prior to being utilized for racing purposes.

GAIT

The racing gaits shall be triple, pace or trot.

ENVIRONMENT FOR OVERNIGHT HOLDING OF RURAL RACE HORSES

1. The owner shall ensure that adequate shade, fresh water and fodder is available.
2. The holding area must be secure and safe.
3. Holding area must not be overcrowded nor contain any dangerous elements – rocks, sharp metal, loose wire etc.
4. Aggressive horses and stallions need to be separated to avoid injury.
5. A nominated responsible supervisor should be present to ensure no unseen overnight problems.

TACK AND EQUIPMENT

1. The owner shall ensure that all equipment, including saddles with stirrups, bridles with reins, bits, leg protection in the form of tendon and over-reach boots, numnahs, standard broad strapping and double buckle girths is available in good, clean working order and fits the animal without causing discomfort or pain.
2. No cinches, spurs, unsafe bits or broken unsafe tack will be allowed.
3. Saddles must fit the horses' backs comfortably and correctly. The saddle shall be clear of the horse's spine and shall not create pressure or bruising points along the horses back. Horses with saddle sores, girth galls, chafed mouths or any injuries from incorrectly fitting tack must not be used until such injuries are healed, and the cause of the problem resolved.

UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE OF HORSE USED FOR RACING

1. Race horses used for racing by the owner shall be de-wormed regularly and vaccinated annually, with records of such to be kept and presented to officials at a race meeting.
2. A recognized tick remedy must be applied when required.
3. All horses must be fully and correctly shod or trimmed at all times.
4. Injured, maimed, unfit or unsound horses may not be raced.
5. All horses must be inspected before and after each race for wounds or unsoundness, with appropriate action to be taken.
6. No horses shall be left unattended and/or unsupervised at makeshift stables or encampments or in any area where the horse may be exposed to danger, theft, or health hazards.
7. No excessive riding of horses before they are raced. Horses over -ridden or unfit will be scratched by the vet.
8. No rider shall carry or utilize a whip that is longer than 68 cm, and any unnecessary or excessive use of the whip is disallowed. Sjamboks are strictly disallowed.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM A RACE MEETING:

1. Horses that are transported by vehicle to a race meeting must be carried in an acceptable manner.

2. Overcrowding is unacceptable.
3. Protection from the elements must be provided.
4. A non-slip floor must be provided – either a flat metal grid, or webbed matting, to enable the horse/s to maintain a foothold whilst being transported.
5. Stallions must be transported separately, or partitioned from other horses.
6. No sharp metal or other material on the vehicle that could cause injury to the animal whilst being transported is permitted.
7. Any animal that is weak or injured should not be transported
8. Any animal that “goes down” during the journey must be lifted up and monitored for further problems in a safe manner.
9. During loading or off-loading a ramp should be utilized.
10. Provision must be made for fresh water and fodder if the journey is over 4 hours.
11. Any horses that are ridden to the race meeting should not be over-ridden – e.g. if the horse lives a long distance from the race meeting and is not being transported by vehicle, the trip should be undertaken so as not to overtire/override the horse.

TRACK CONDITION:

The track should be even and soft and free from holes, rocks, and clumps of veld grass that may trip the horse.