

# At a Glance: Equine Code Top-of-Mind Survey Results

## PROVINCES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATE

British Columbia 52.5%  
Ontario 16.5%  
Manitoba 8.9%  
Alberta 7.6%



## TOTAL NUMBER OF SURVEY RESPONSES RECEIVED

2,194

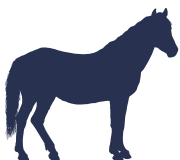


4,964  
Welfare  
Comments  
extracted  
from  
survey  
responses

**A FEW FINDINGS  
FROM THE SURVEY  
APRIL 26 - MAY 16  
2024**

## MAIN WELFARE THEMES IDENTIFIED

Medical care  
Pain mitigation  
Shelter  
Space  
Training  
Food and water  
Handling



## TOP 3 CATEGORIES OF SURVEY TAKERS

Concerned citizen 66.1%  
Horse owner/caregiver: 34.7%  
Recreational rider/driver 17.9%



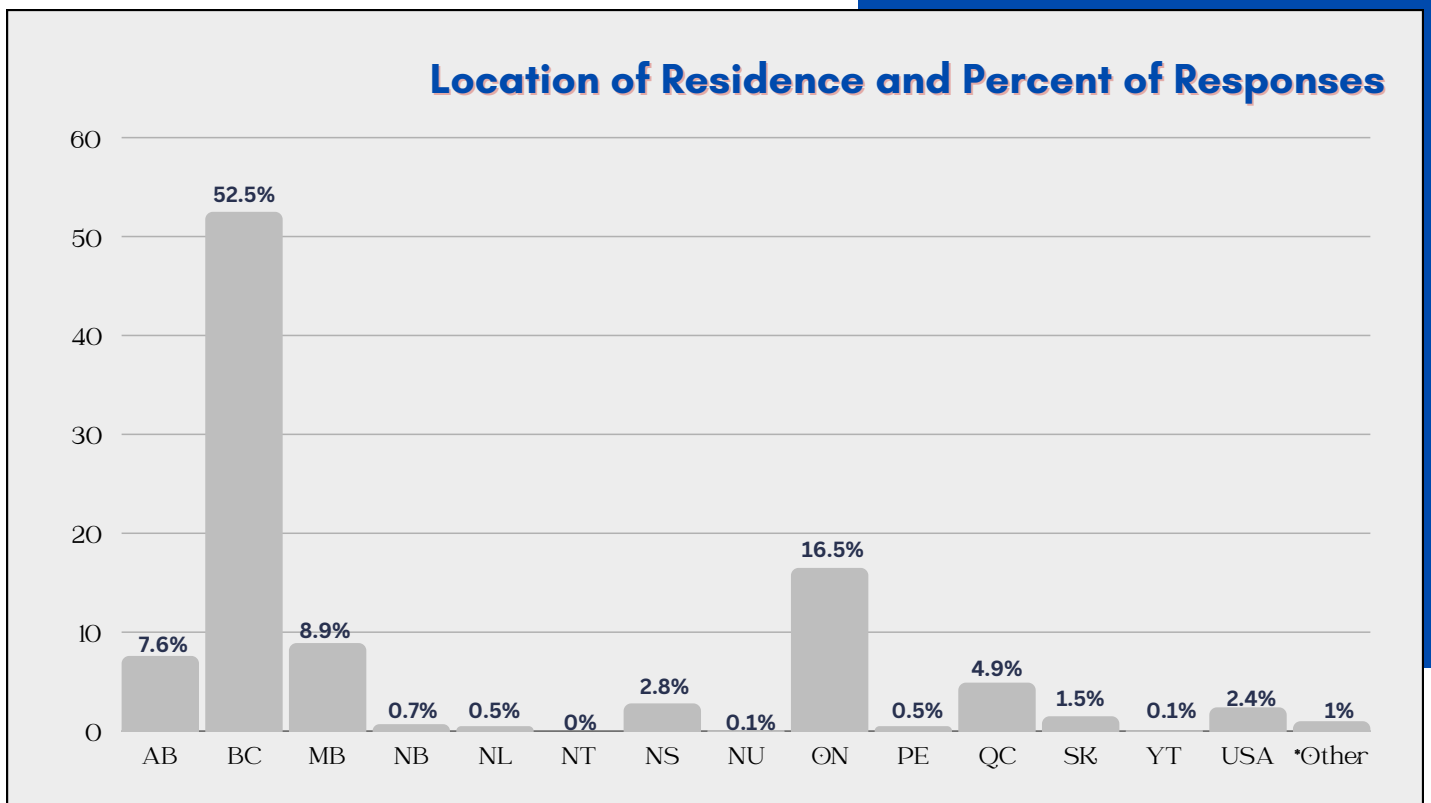
## Background

Equestrian Canada has initiated a revision to the 2013 Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines using the process coordinated by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC). Once completed, the Code will reflect updated requirements and recommended practices for on-farm care of equines.

## Survey

From the period of April 26th through May 16th, 2024, the industry, general public, and all other interested individuals were invited to participate in a Top-of-Mind Survey for the Equine Code and provide their unique top-of-mind thoughts around equine welfare. The input received through this early engagement will help the Code Committee understand the kinds of issues people wish to see considered in the update.

## Where do the survey respondents live?



\*Other responses included Australia, Cyprus, Europe (country not specified), France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Scotland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

## Who took part?

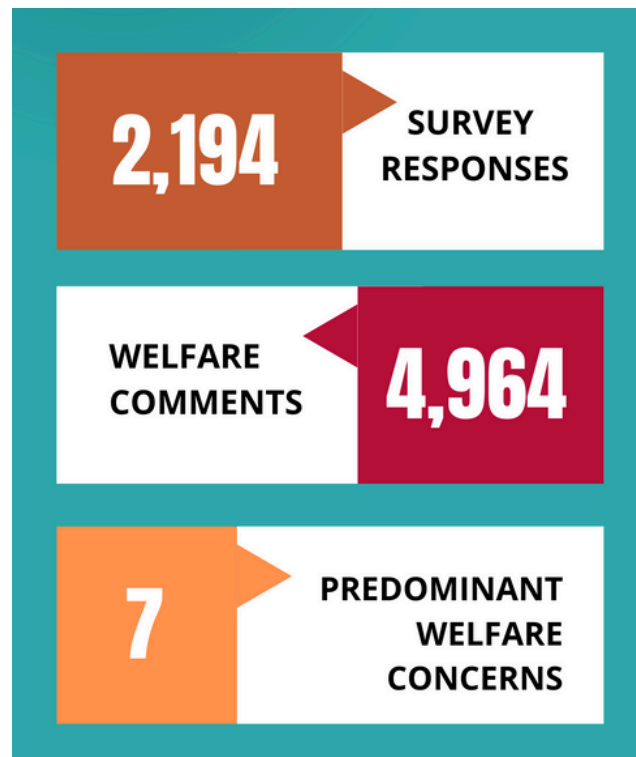
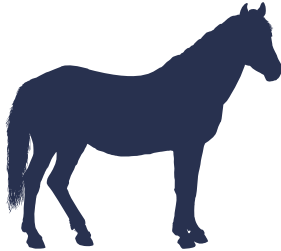
Note that respondents were able to identify as belonging to more than one group.



<b>Industry Perspective</b>	<b># of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
• Amateur sport competitor	254	11.6%
• Animal protection enforcement	105	4.8%
• Breeder	81	3.7%
• Coach/trainer	128	5.8%
• Concerned citizen	1,450	66.1%
• Equine facility owner and/or employee	169	7.7%
• Event organizer and/or event facility owner/operator	63	2.9%
• Farmer/rancher	164	7.5%
• Feed/nutrition specialist	25	1.1%
• Feedlot owner/employee	6	0.3%
• Government	27	1.2%
• Horse owner/caregiver	762	34.7%
• Industry representative (e.g., extension, technical advisor)	22	1.0%
• Processor (meat)	9	0.4%
• Producer (other commodity/species)	12	0.5%
• Professional sport competitor	37	1.7%
• Recreational rider/driver	393	17.9%

## What was top-of-mind?

From the **2,194 survey responses** received, **4,964 individual welfare comments** were extracted, and from those, **7 predominant welfare concerns** were identified.



### 1. Medical Care

Participants stressed the importance of equines having access to appropriate veterinary care. In addition, respondents also mentioned the need for proper hoof care.

#### **Quotes: Veterinary care**

*"Proper physical care, teeth flowing, farrier, vet care"*

*"...veterinary care according to age & stage of development."*

*"Regular veterinary care, routine farrier care, yearly dentistry."*

#### **Quotes: Hoof care**

*"Hoof care—proper hoof care to prevent disease and injury"*

*"Proper health checks and hoof care by Professional"*

*"A minimum level of care requirements for horse owners such as annual vet exam, hoof care,"*

## 2. Pain Mitigation

Many respondents expressed concern over painful procedures (e.g., castration), with some expressing a desire to see all painful procedures eliminated. Pain control was a major concern stressed for all painful procedures.

### **Quotes: Pain control**

*"Pain control for painful procedures/branding, painful injuries and illnesses"*

*"anesthesia/pain control for surgical/medical procedures as needed"*

*"Painful procedures should require of pain control."*

### **Quotes: Painful procedures**

*"Pain management for painful procedures."*

*"Prompt access to veterinary care and pain management for procedures such as castration"*

*"Pain management for painful procedures and prompt medical care."*

*"Painful procedures be absolutely eliminated"*

## 3. Shelter

Respondents said proper, clean, and dry shelter was a priority. Furthermore, outdoor shelter was noted, and the importance of outdoor access was stressed.

### **Quotes: Proper shelter**

*"Lack of pain relief when branding & lack of adequate shelter and turnout spaces"*

*"Adequate shelter and outdoor space to graze."*

*"Adequate shelter for all equines at same time"*

### **3. Shelter (continued)**

#### **Quotes: Outdoor shelter**

*"Safe barns and outdoor shelters with water"*

*"Access to year round outdoor shelters."*

*"Not enough shade/ outdoor shelter"*

#### **Quotes: Clean shelter**

*"Clean and adequate shelter (weather-appropriate)"*

*"Outdoor shelters and animals having a clean, dry and comfortable place to lie down"*

*"Proper clean shelters, paddocks and stalls"*

#### **Quotes: Dry shelter**

*"Dry, clean shelter enough space as well as the ability to forage, socialize and run free"*

*"Access to humane appropriate clean, dry shelter and space to range"*

*"living conditions providing access to appropriate space and clean / dry shelter / pens."*

### **4. Space**

In connection with shelter, respondents stressed the importance of equines having "enough" space. Some suggested that space allowances are needed to identify what is "enough" space.

#### **Quotes: Adequate Space**

*"Provide health care, clean & dry shelter, enough space for natural behaviour"*

*"provide horses shelter with enough space for their comfort and clean/dry bedding"*

*"Safe pasture, dry lot, shelter w/run-ins and adequate space and cleanliness"*

## 4. Space (continued)

### **Quotes: Outdoor Space**

*"Appropriate outdoor space and shelter"*

*"inadequate indoor and outdoor space"*

*"Freedom of movement and access to outdoor space /grazing"*

### **Quotes: Insufficient Space**

*"Insufficient space both indoors/outdoors, social isolation, poor exercise"*

*"Bad conditions, insufficient space, bad food, it all adds up to maltreatment"*

*"Lack of socialization and physical exercise due to insufficient space."*

### **Quotes: Space Allowances**

*"allowances for indoor/outdoor space that maximises social interactions."*

*"Clear space allowances both indoors and outdoors."*

*"clear space allowance inside and out/no isolation minimum outdoor time established"*

### **Quotes: Turnout space**

*"...lack of adequate shelter and turnout spaces"*

*"ratio of turnout space and hours of turnout with available shade, water, feed"*

*"lack of turnout space, horses confined to small stall and/or small paddock for day."*

## 5. Training

Respondents expressed concern about training methods and equipment that cause pain or stress to equines. Some respondents stressed that painful and abusive training methods and tools must be banned.

### **Quotes: Training methods**

*“Training methods and tools.”*

*“Training methods must not inflict pain or cause distress to the horse”*

*“Training methods: starting horses too young (racing, reining, etc)”*

### **Quotes: Training equipment**

*“The use of handling and training equipment that causes pain”*

*“The use of handling/training equipment that causes pain/any painful procedures”*

*“Minimizing use of training equipment that causes pain”*

### **Quotes: Painful training**

*“Prohibit training methods that cause pain and fear”*

*“Evolved training methods that don’t include cruel and outdated fear and pain tactics”*

*“Training methods that are aggressive and cause fear, pain or stress”*

### **Quotes: Abusive training**

*“Abusive training/ handling”*

*“Minimizing or banning abusive training and handling aids”*



## 6. Food and Water

Respondents often stated that equines need access to adequate, good-quality food and water.

### **Quotes: Adequate Food**

*“Proper and adequate food and water supply”*

*“Minimum standard of care is met- adequate food, shelter water etc.”*

*“Ensuring animals are given adequate food, water, exercise, open space”*

### **Quotes: Good/proper food**

*“Environment plenty of space, good food, water and clean stall”*

*“Access to good food, water and shelter”*

*“Proper food and clean fresh water should be always available.”*

### **Quotes: Clean food**

*“Constant clean food and water source.”*

*“Clean environment and clean food”*

*“Clean food and water”*



## 7. Handling

Respondents also stressed the importance of humane handling methods and equipment and the prohibition on the use of painful methods or tools.

### **Quotes: Humane handling**

*“Humane handling at all levels of human interaction”*

*“Safe and humane handling of equines”*

*“Pain free Humane handling and training techniques should be paramount”*

### **Quotes: Aversive/cruel/painful handling**

*“Stop relying on punishment to train – aversive handling should be prohibited”*

*“Prohibit aversive handling, training methods that involve the use of fear, pain or stress.”*

*“Aversive Handling/ Training: modern methods still emphasize punishment, causing stress.”*

### **Quotes: Handling equipment**

*“Prevent the use of training/handling equipment that causes pain (severe bits, tying poles)”*

*“Training and handling equipment frequently inflict pain.”*

*“Lessen the use of training/handling equipment that inflicts pains”*



## Were there any other issues identified?

Several other concerns were identified, though with less frequency than the key issues above. Additionally, some comments were outside of the scope for the equine Code update. These additional or out of scope welfare concerns were as follows:

- Auction markets
- Traceability regulations
- Enforcement and monitoring of farm practices
- Horse slaughter
- Export of horses for slaughter.

## How will the survey results be used?

The survey input has been clearly heard and provides a rich source of information that will help the Code committee as it updates the existing Code of Practice. As with all Code of Practice updates, this Code will progress through a prescribed series of steps, as outlined in the [Code development process](#). The process includes another opportunity for public input at a later date: once the committee completes its final draft Code, the draft will be posted online (on NFACC's website) for feedback during a 60-day public comment period. We invite you to join us at that time. Every submission received is reviewed and considered in the context of improving and finalizing the Code.

## Thank you!

NFACC and all those involved in revising the [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equine](#) thank you for participating in this survey and sharing your top-of-mind thoughts on the welfare of equines. Your input contributes to a common goal: an updated Code that reflects current and progressive practices for equine management and welfare.

For more information about NFACC and the Code development process, please visit [www.nfacc.ca](http://www.nfacc.ca).

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