

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Safer roads for horses

Around 3000 horse-related traffic accidents are reported every year in the UK and although, thankfully, very few human fatalities occur as a result of these accidents the number of horses that are killed runs into hundreds. Many riders do not have access to bridlepaths and private farmland or find that these can only be reached via roads. With increasing numbers of motorists and a growing intolerance of horses on the road the problem is significant.

A new leaflet with the title *Horse Sense for Motorists* forms part of a Safety 2000 campaign to be launched officially in March 1997 by the British Horse Society. The main aim of the campaign is to reduce the number of traffic accidents involving horses before the year 2000. It is hoped that this will be achieved by educating motorists about the particular problems of riders as vulnerable road users and encouraging more riders to take the British Horse Society and Road Safety Test (currently about 7000 per year).

Produced in collaboration with the Department of Transport, the leaflet for motorists outlines the reasons why riders have to use the roads and illustrates the particular road signals and manoeuvres that riders practise. The leaflet has won the support of a number of motorists' organizations including the Driving Standards Agency which has agreed to display the leaflet in all 400 test centres throughout the country. Later in the year the leaflet will be accompanied by a video of the same title and a new training video entitled *Horse Sense for Riders* to educate riders about their responsibilities on the roads.

Horse Sense for Motorists. Produced by the Department of Transport in association with the British Horse Society (1996). Obtainable from local authority Road Safety Officers or British Horse Society, British Equestrian Centre, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LR, UK.

Welfare of animals kept for harvesting of blood

In New Zealand, blood is harvested from horses, cattle, sheep and goats for research (eg preparation of specific antisera) and commercial purposes (eg vaccine production). Due to the country's favourable disease status there is a growing demand from other countries for harvested blood and it is expected that the blood-harvesting industry in New Zealand will grow. These guidelines were drawn up for use by local Animal Ethics Committees in New Zealand in order to safeguard the welfare of animals used for blood-harvesting. The guidelines contain sections on facilities and equipment, bleeding techniques, volume and frequency of bleeding, animal monitoring (including monitoring of packed cell volume) and other aspects of blood-harvesting. It is stated that not more than 15 per cent of estimated circulating blood volume should be removed in any four week period. However, it may be acceptable in some circumstances, with the approval of the institutional Animal Ethics Committee, for up to 25 per cent of estimated circulating blood volume to be removed. The document is required reading for people involved with the blood-harvesting industry in New Zealand but it is also likely to be of interest and value to those involved in similar work elsewhere in the world.

Guidelines for the Welfare of Livestock from which Blood is Harvested for Commercial and Research Purposes. Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (1996). Ministry of Agriculture: Wellington. 15pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand.