

Working together for our future: the relevance of social licence

Roly Owers MRCVS

World Horse Welfare



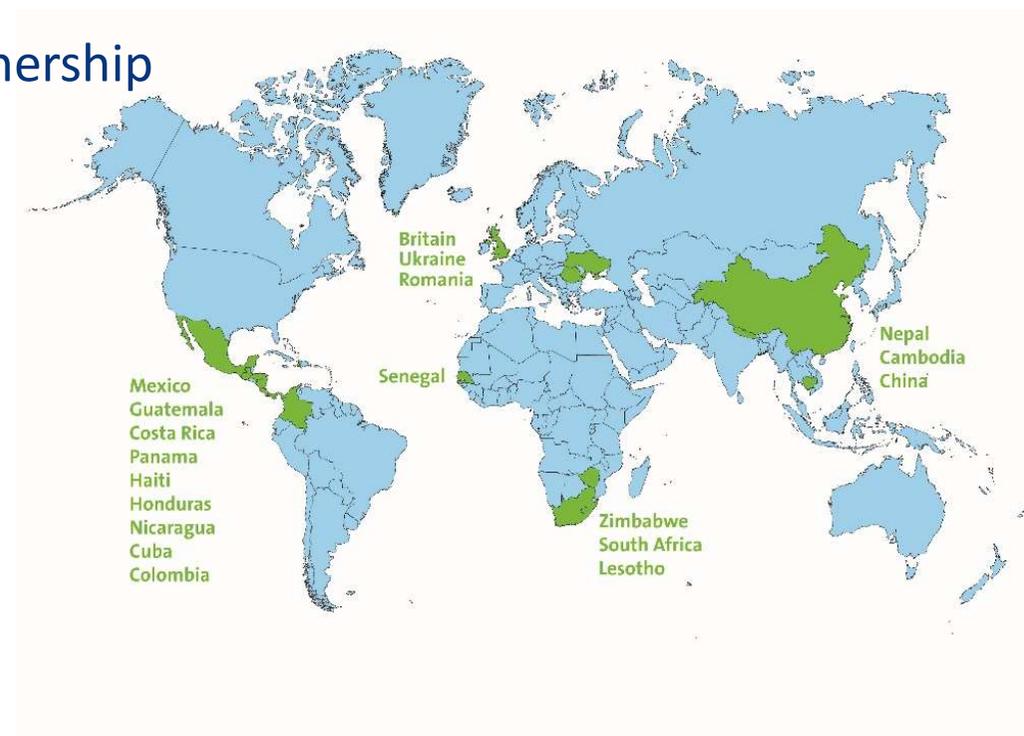
Outline

1. World Horse Welfare
2. Social licence concept
3. Lessons from other industries
4. Practical dos and don'ts



1. World Horse Welfare – overview

- Leading equine charity since 1927
- Actively promotes the horse-human partnership
- Horses in need, sport & leisure horses, work & production horses
- Care, research, education, influence
- 120+ employees – £10m turnover
- Partnership working with governments, universities, regulators, other NGOs
- Strong veterinary credentials
- Active in policy – WOA, EU, UN

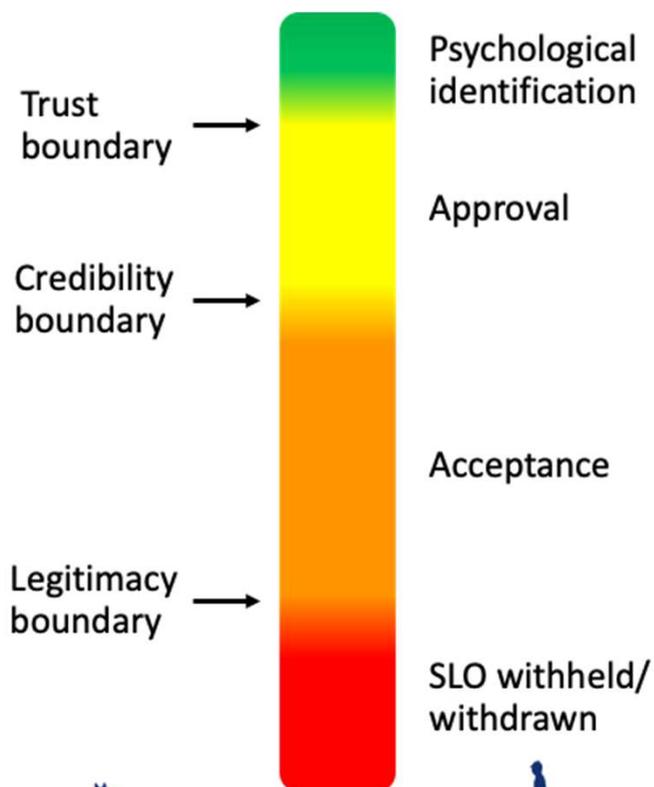


Support responsible horse sport

- Welfare advisor to sport regulators
 - International Equestrian Federation (FEI) – Code of Conduct for Welfare of Horse
 - FEI’s Equine Ethics & Wellbeing Commission
 - International Horse Sport Confederation (IHSC)
 - British Horseracing Authority (BHA)
 - Informally to other national federations
- Associate Member of British Equestrian
 - Member of Equine Welfare and Ethics Advisory Group



2. Social licence to operate (SLO)



Graphic: After Thomson & Boutilier (2011)

Loss of self-regulation – or the sport – could be the price that we pay for inaction



Society says:
Equestrianism:
“You regulate yourselves the way we would regulate [you] if we understood what you do, which we don’t. But we will know if you don’t self-regulate properly and then we will regulate you, despite our lack of understanding.”

*Bernard Rollin (1943–2021)
Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Animal Sciences, and
Biomedical Sciences, Colorado State University, USA*



Social licence: Trust is the key



Society must feel that
we can be trusted to
do right by the horses
– by THEIR values

Social licence – ‘own goal’ or helpful debate?

- Whether we like it or not, the world is talking about the welfare of horses in sport
- We will only improve the situation through openness, transparency, trust – and positive action
- The conversation needs to reach every corner of equestrianism



What can we do to protect the future of equestrian sport?



animals



Review

Social Licence to Operate: What Can Equestrian Sports Learn from Other Industries?

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Simple Summary: Most societies regulate human activities using laws that state clearly what is, and is not, legally permissible. However, there is a second layer of permission that is granted—or revoked—by the public. This second layer is known as a 'social licence to operate' (SLO), and it represents an intangible, implicit agreement between the public and an industry or group. The public may approve, and this may herald legal restrictions, or even an outright ban. This review discusses the concept of SLO in relation to equitation. Experience from other industries suggests that, to maintain its SLO, equitation should take an ethics-based, proactive, progressive, and holistic approach to the protection of equine welfare, and should establish the trust of all stakeholders, including the public. Trust will only ensue if society is confident that equitation operates transparently, that its leaders and practitioners are credible, legitimate, and competent, and that its practice reflects society's values. Earning and maintaining this status will undoubtedly require substantial effort and funding—inputs that should be regarded as an investment in the future of the sport.

Abstract: The concept of 'social licence to operate' (SLO) is relevant to all animal-use activities. An SLO is an intangible, implicit agreement between the public and an industry/group. Its existence allows that industry/group to pursue its activities with minimal formalised restrictions—such as current threats to equitation—reflect qualified or lack of public support for an activity. This review discusses an outright ban—reflecting the continuation of the SLO. The most important of these is earning the trust of all stakeholders, including the public. Trust requires transparency of operations, establishment and communication of shared values, and demonstration of competence. These attributes can only be gained by taking an ethics-based, proactive, progressive, and holistic approach to the protection of equine welfare. Animal-use activities that have faced challenges to their SLO have achieved variable success in re-establishing the approval of society, and equitation can learn from the experience of these groups as it maps its future. The associated effort and cost should be regarded as an investment in the future of the sport.

Keywords: equestrian sport; equitation; equine ethics; equine welfare; social licence to operate;

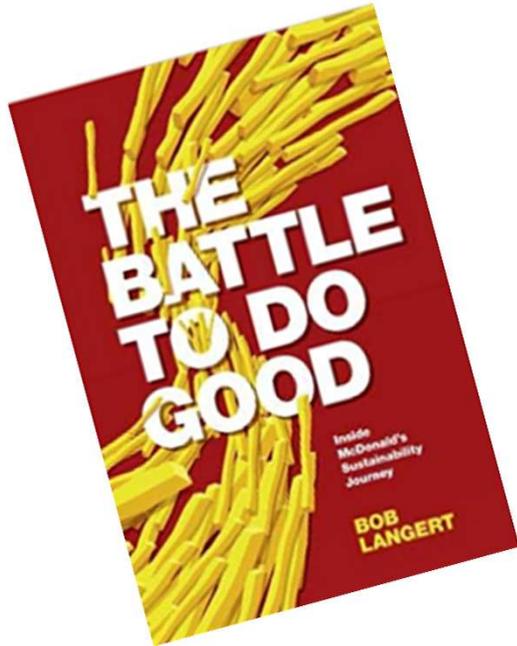
1. Introduction

The concept of 'social licence to operate' (SLO) first arose in 1997 in relation to mining [1], and has since been extended to other natural resource management industries such as fishing, forestry, and energy production [2]. The concept is also relevant to animal-use industries and activities, including dairy and sheep farming, wildlife use, zoos, hunting [2], circuses [3], marine mammal parks [3], and equestrianism [2,4–7].

3. What can we learn from other industries?

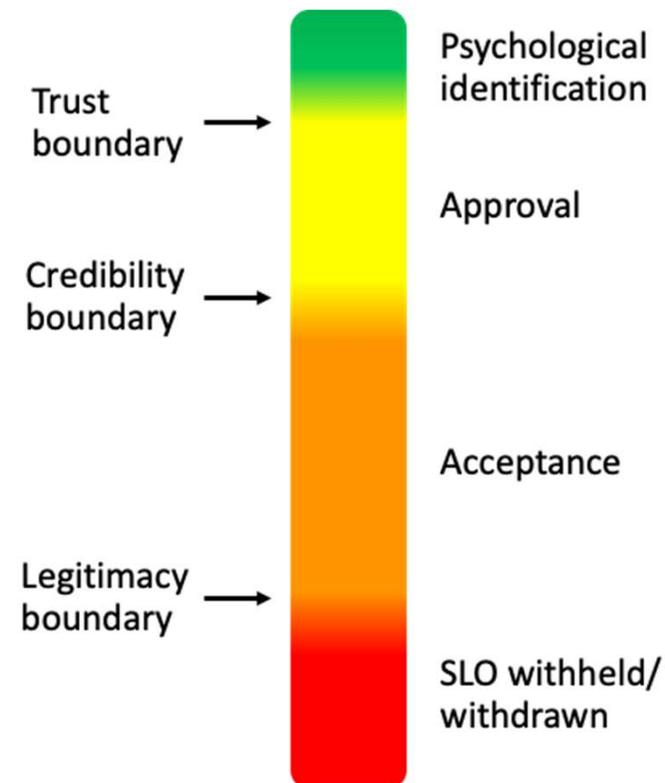


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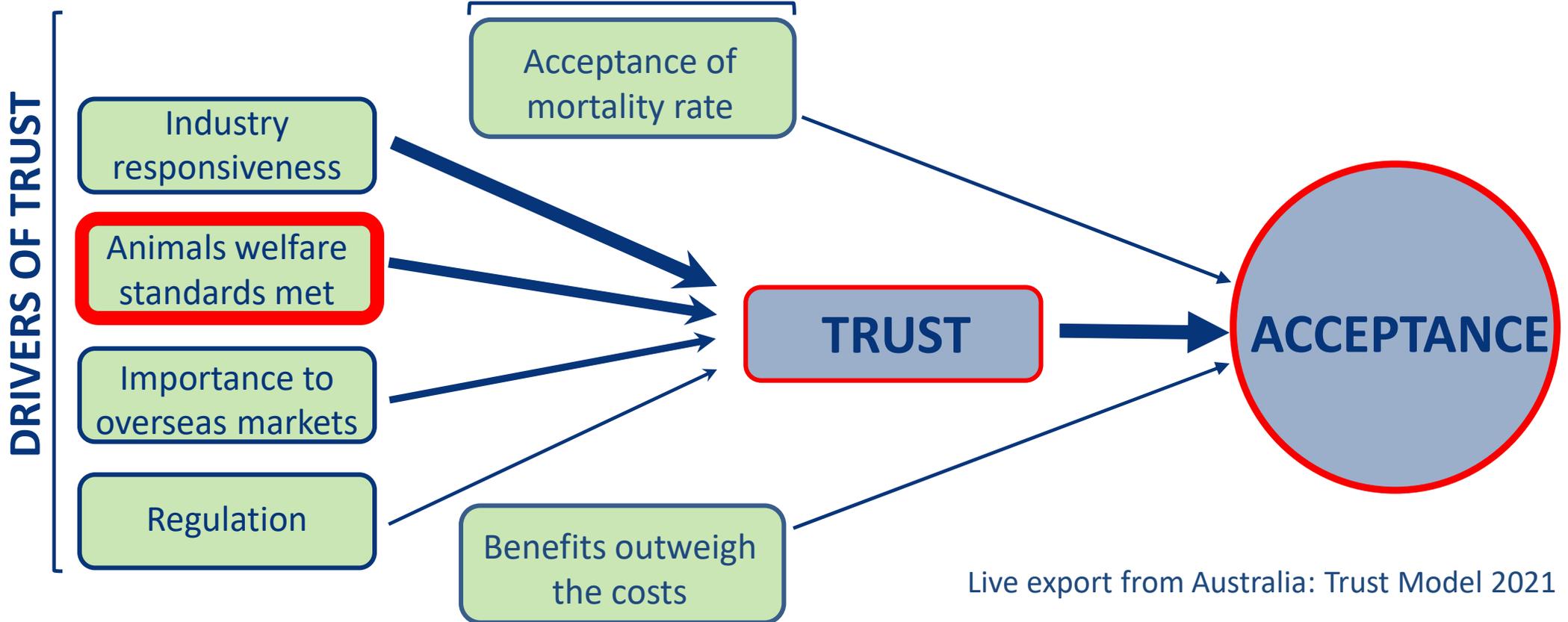
Strategy 1: Find out what drives public trust

- Example: Australian live export 
- Employed 'engagement science' experts:
 - Designed a comprehensive survey
 - Gathered data from a large, representative sample of the Australian public
 - Repeated the survey 2 years later



Drivers of public trust

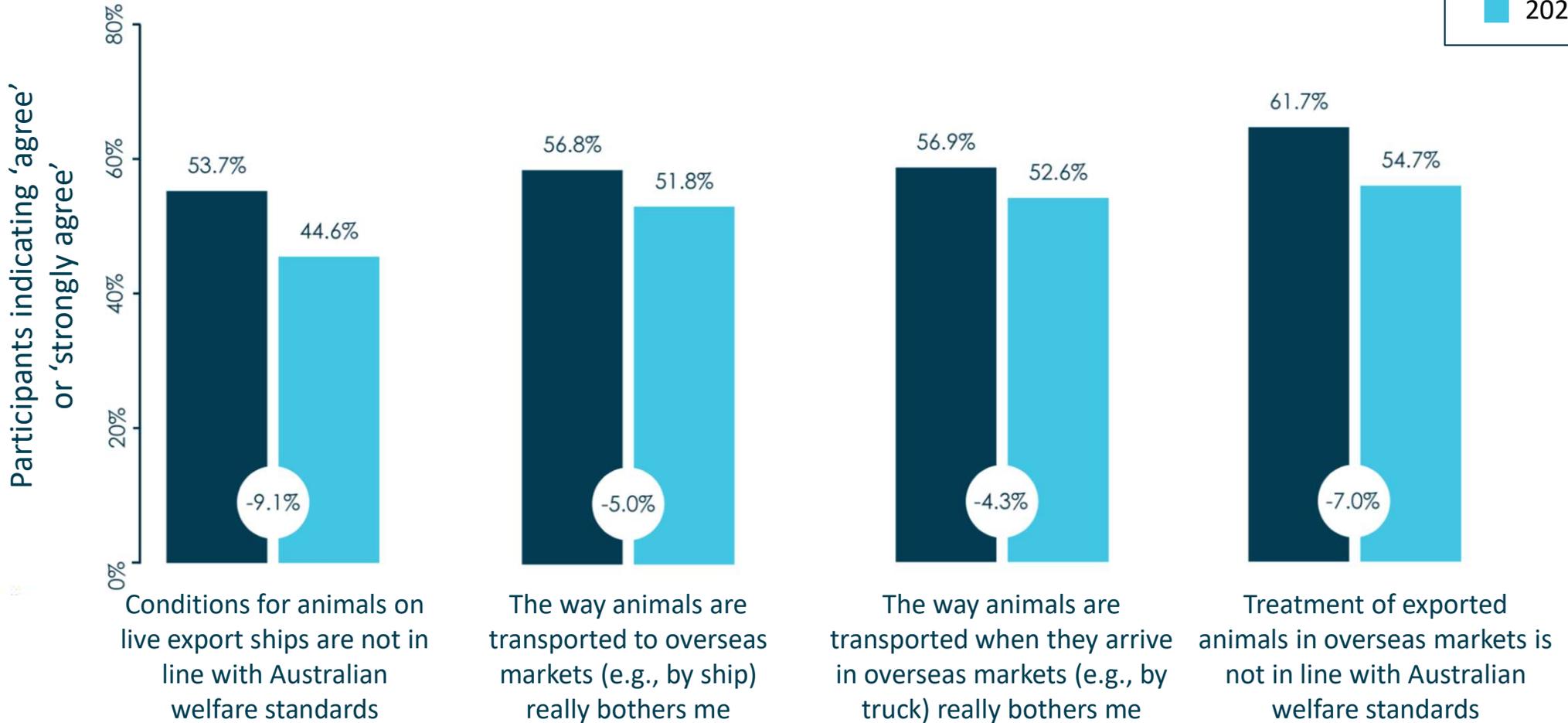
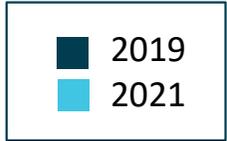
ADDITIONAL DRIVERS OF ACCEPTANCE



Live export from Australia: Trust Model 2021



Change in agreement with negative welfare statements

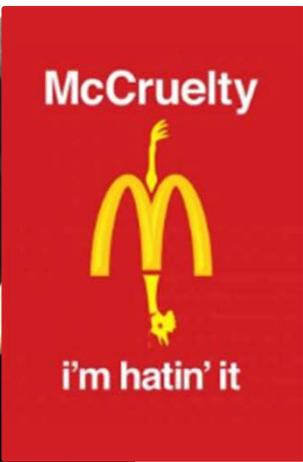
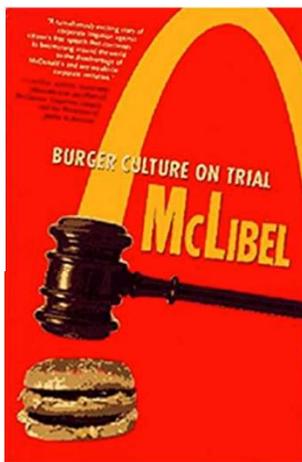


Strategy 2: Engage independent scientists

 "McDonald's Turns the Tide"



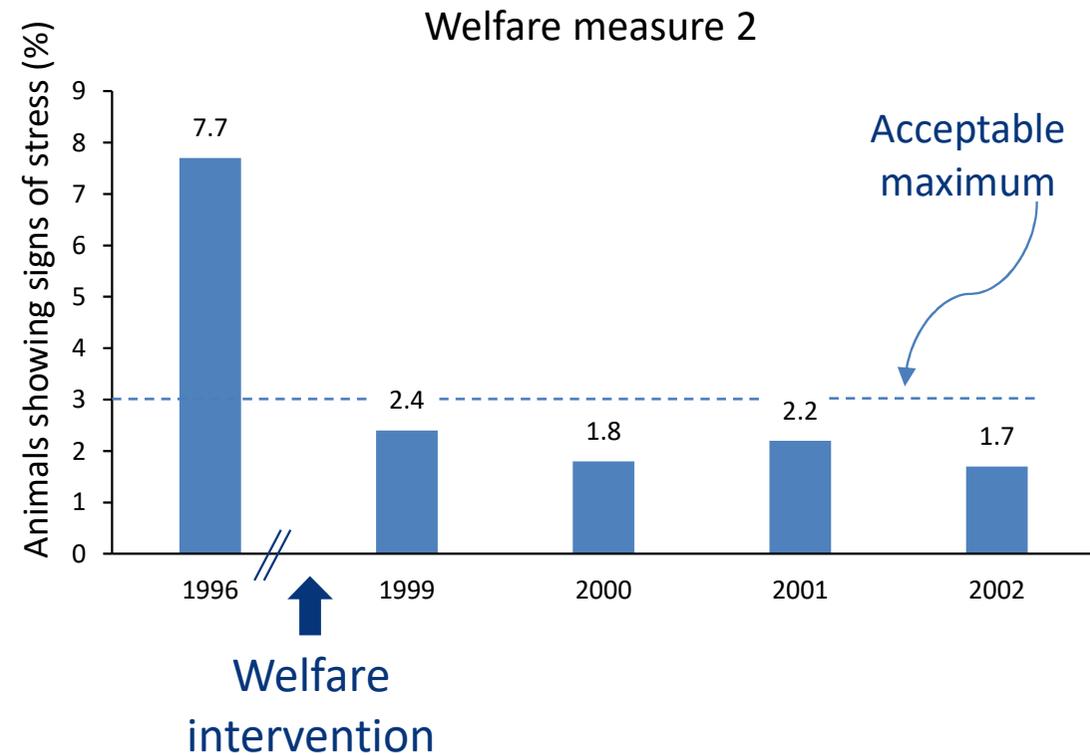
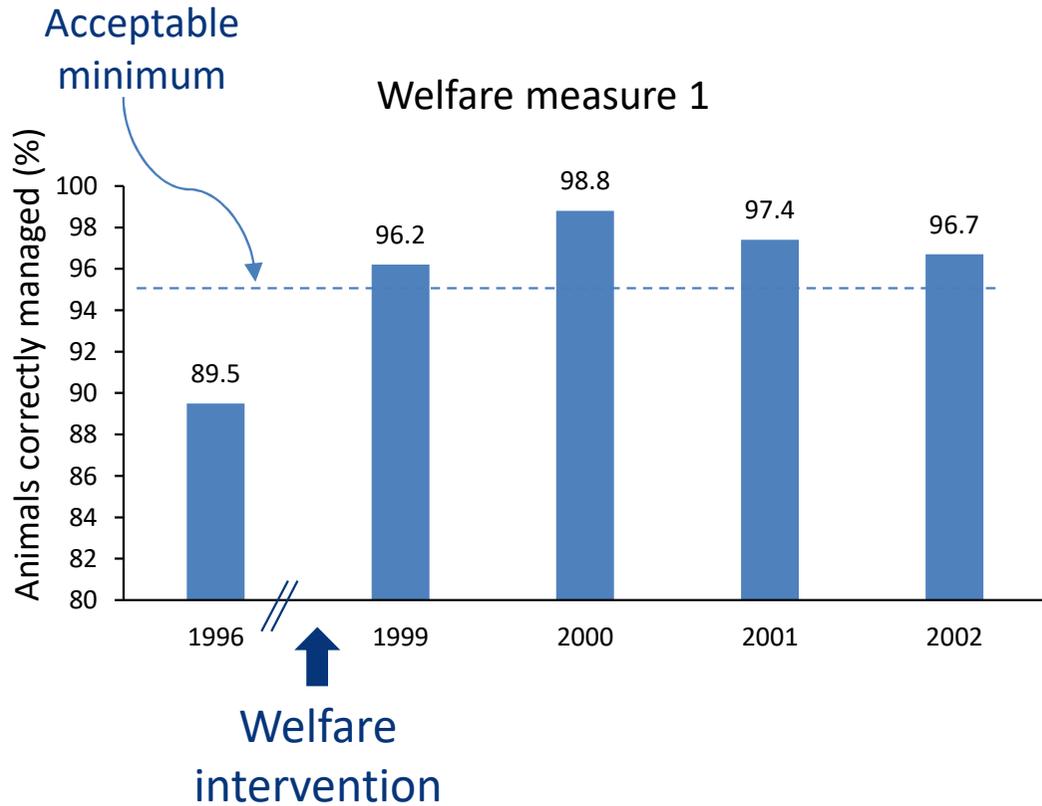
 "How Temple Grandin's designs have transformed the meat industry"



Dr Temple Grandin



Change in welfare outcomes





Strategy 3: Be transparent



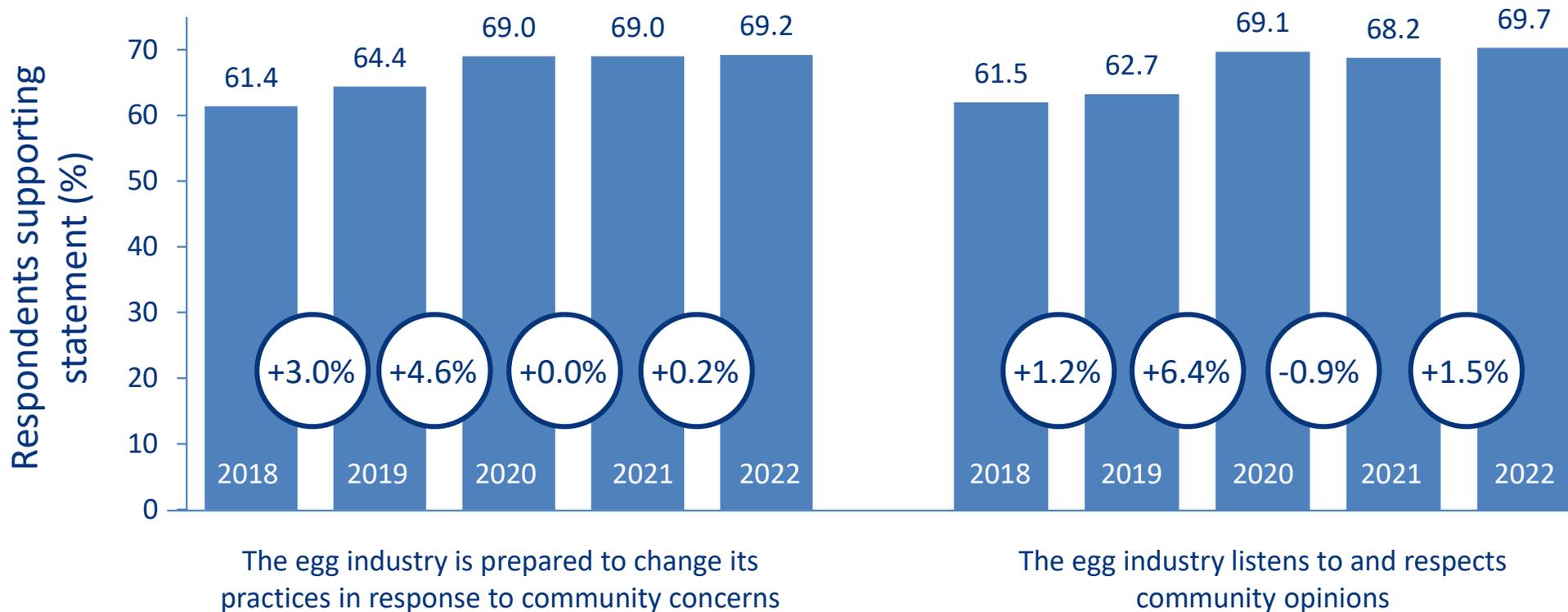
-  Australian Eggs: Serious SLO problem
-  Committed to transparent reporting
-  Publish annual 'Sustainability Framework'
 -  Focus on transparency
 -  Includes outcomes related to hen health, hen welfare, and environmental sustainability
 -  Demonstrates responsiveness to community
 -  Crucial to building trust





Change in consumer trust

“Confidence rises as transparency drives consumer trust within the Australian egg industry”





Brave approach to transparency



-  McDonald's' welfare, sustainability & environmental credentials challenged
-  Partnered with Temple Grandin & the EDF (an NGO)
-  Gave Grandin & EDF metaphorical key to ALL McDonald's' information
-  Committed to:
 -  Being completely open with the press
 -  Sending out monthly progress reports
 -  'Our Food – Your questions' campaign

EDF, Environmental Defense Fund; NGO, non-governmental organization



The response



The Journal of Wildlife Management 83(1):12-21; 2019; DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.21571
License, and Wildlife

PostFunnel By Optimove November 2021

McDonald's Marketing Strategy: Staying Transparent While Under Fire

...McDonald's latest marketing strategy: To counter negative perception with transparency – which seems to be paying off

**Animal Welfare
Use Industries**

"...This progressive oxygen and is a demo"

...has starved their critics of "al licence"





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Strategy 4: Identify disconnects in stakeholder perceptions of industry goals



Major pork producer in USA: Serious SLO problem



Asked consumers about their perceptions of family & commercial farmers



Priorities they think the farmers have



Priorities they would like them to have



Spot the disconnects

Highest
priority ↑

↓
Lowest
priority

Family Farmers		Commercial Farmers	
Priorities ARE	Priorities SHOULD BE	Priorities ARE	Priorities SHOULD BE
Affordable food	Safe food	Affordable food	Affordable food
Safe food	Affordable food	Farm Profitability	Safe food
Farm Profitability	Nutritious food	Safe food	Nutritious food
Nutritious food	Farm Profitability	Farm productivity	Humane treatment of farm animals
Farm productivity	Humane treatment of farm animals	Nutritious food	Help feed the world
Humane treatment of farm animals	Farm productivity	Help feed the world	Environmental sustainability
Environmental sustainability	Environmental sustainability	Humane treatment of farm animals	Farm Profitability
Help feed the world	Help feed the world	Environmental sustainability	Farm productivity

Strategy 5: Initiate quantitative recording of animal welfare outcomes



Important distinction:



Industries that say that welfare is a priority



Industries that demonstrate this



Maintenance of public trust requires:



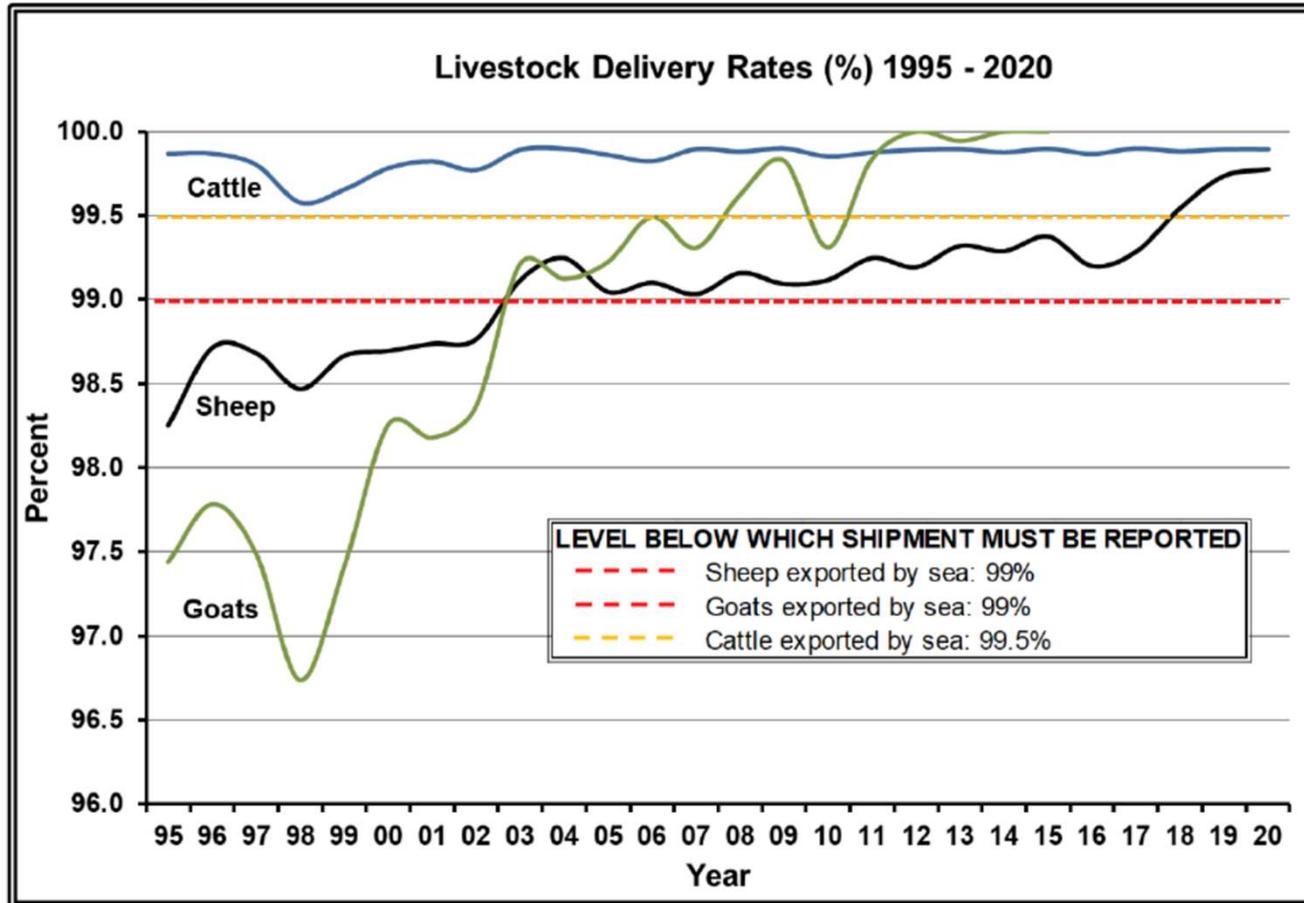
Evidence of good welfare



Transparency in how evidence is generated

Transparent reporting of deaths in transport

Livestock Export Program



Strategy 6: Involve stakeholders from the get-go

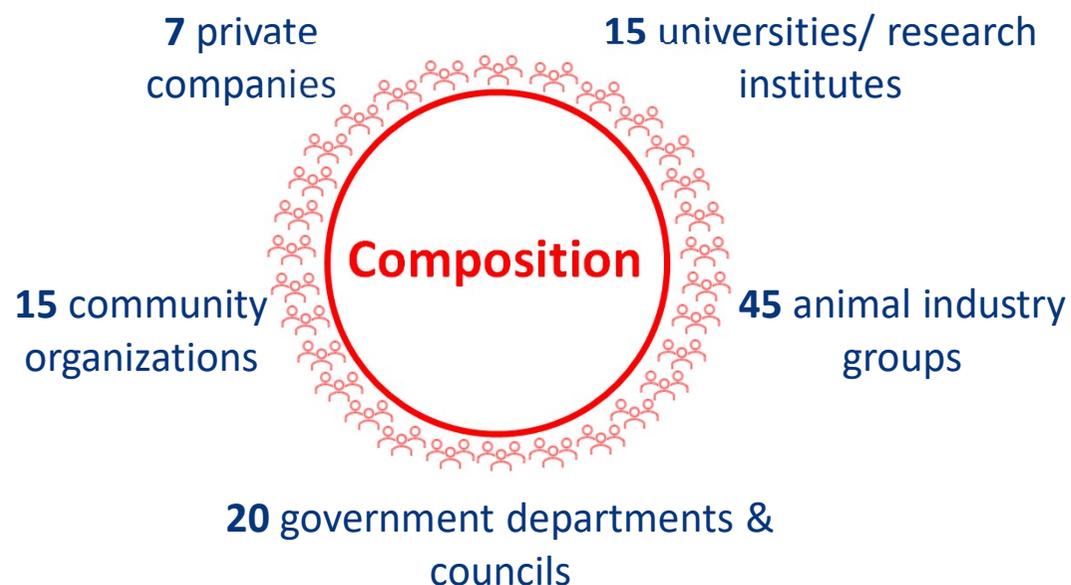
- Animal welfare issues: inherently complex and often contested
 - Best solved using a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach
 - Brings political, scientific, and practical knowledge to project
 - Ideally, stakeholders:
 - Agree on and ‘buy into’ the problems and priorities
 - Develop innovations to solve the problems
 - Co-own delivery of the solutions



For more information: Fernandes et al. Addressing Animal Welfare through Collaborative Stakeholder Networks. doi:10.3390/agriculture9060132

Example of a strategy that involved a broad cross-section of stakeholders

Purpose: Deliver sustainable improvements in welfare of all animals

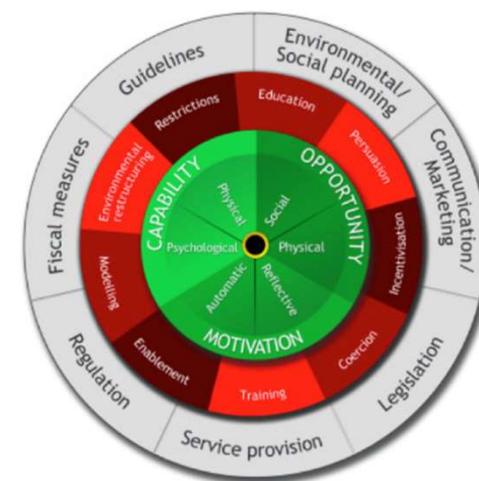
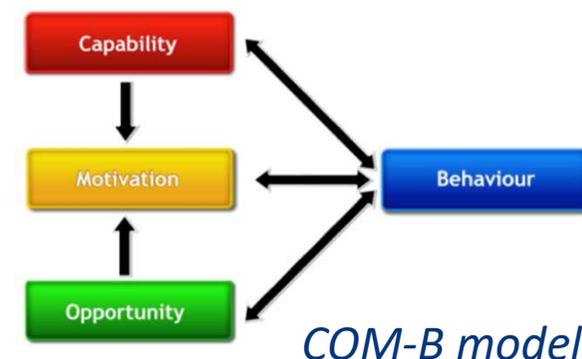


Outcomes

- Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals (MCOP) for land transport of livestock
- ‘Fit to Load’ guide (2013) endorsed by multiple stakeholder organizations
- Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th ed. (2013)

Strategy 7: Make human behaviour change a central part of the strategy

- Animal welfare will not improve without human behaviour change
- Scientifically validated frameworks for effecting behaviour change exist
 - e.g., COM-B model & Behaviour Change Wheel
- Of practical value when developing and implementing equine welfare strategies



For more information:

1. Michie, S., Atkins, L., & West, R. (2014). The Behaviour Change Wheel - A Guide To Designing Interventions. Silverback Publishing.
2. Carroll et al. 'Human behaviour change models for improving animal welfare.' DOI: 10.1079/9781789247886.000.
3. Wolframm et al. 'Changing hearts and minds in the equestrian world one behaviour at a time.' Paper submitted for peer review.

Example of an HBC-based strategy: Management of free-roaming cats:



HBC, human behaviour change

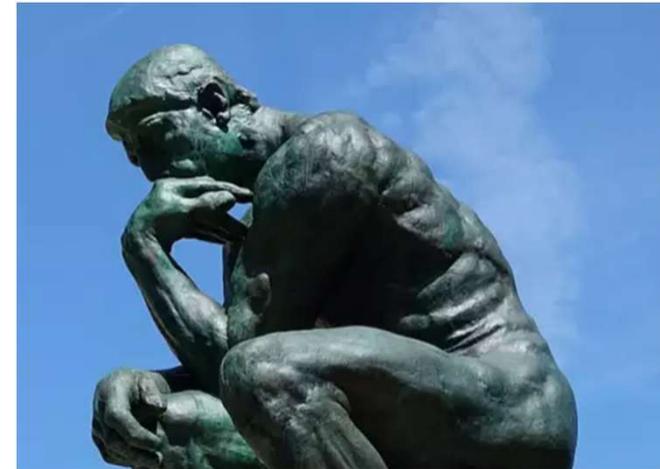
For more information: McLeod et al. Change the humans first: Principles for improving the management of free-roaming cats. *Animals* 2019;9:555; doi:10.3390/ani9080555

4. Practical dos & don'ts from people who have walked this path before



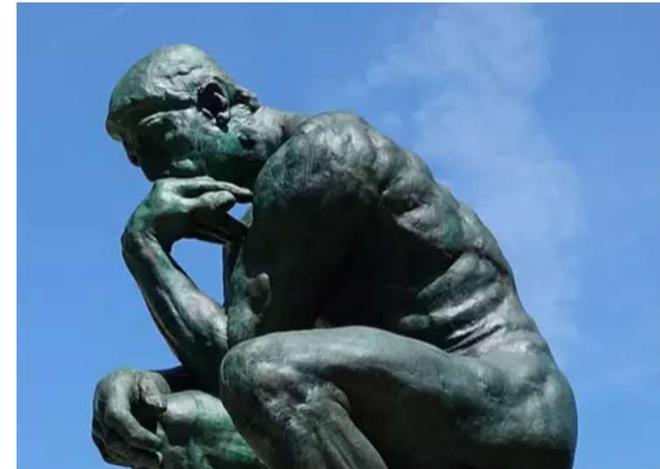
Do

- ✓ Be proactive, show leadership on issues
- ✓ Talk to ALL stakeholders
 - ✓ Treat people with respect, respond to their concerns
- ✓ Find out what drives trust; act on it
- ✓ Think about the issues from other people's viewpoints
- ✓ Be transparent
- ✓ Engage with independent scientists and NGOs



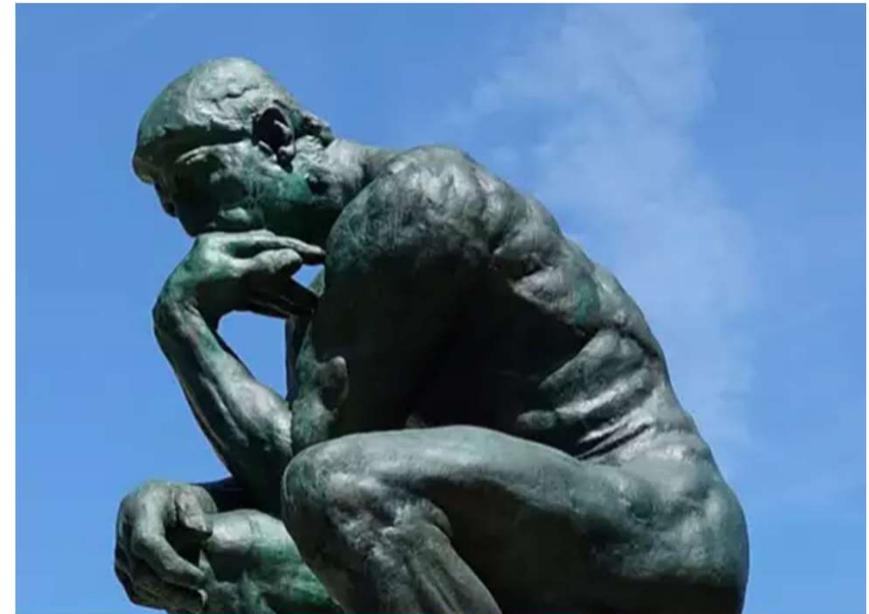
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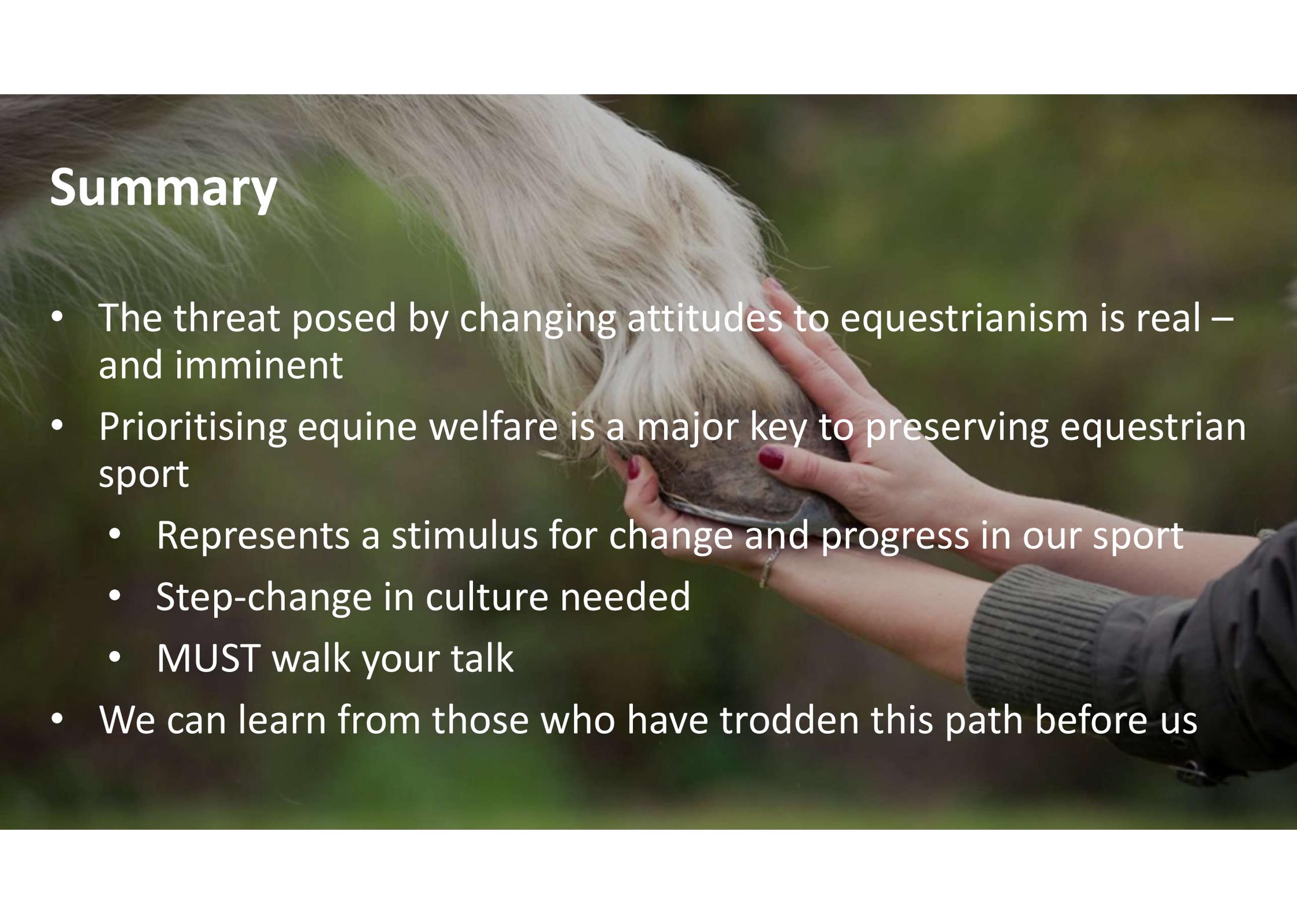
- ✓ Commit to quantitative recording – and publication – of animal welfare outcomes
- ✓ Make human behaviour change central to your strategy
- ✓ Engage with your own industry
 - ✓ Acknowledge that some equestrians' attitudes and actions need to change
- ✓ Accept that change will be slow



Don't

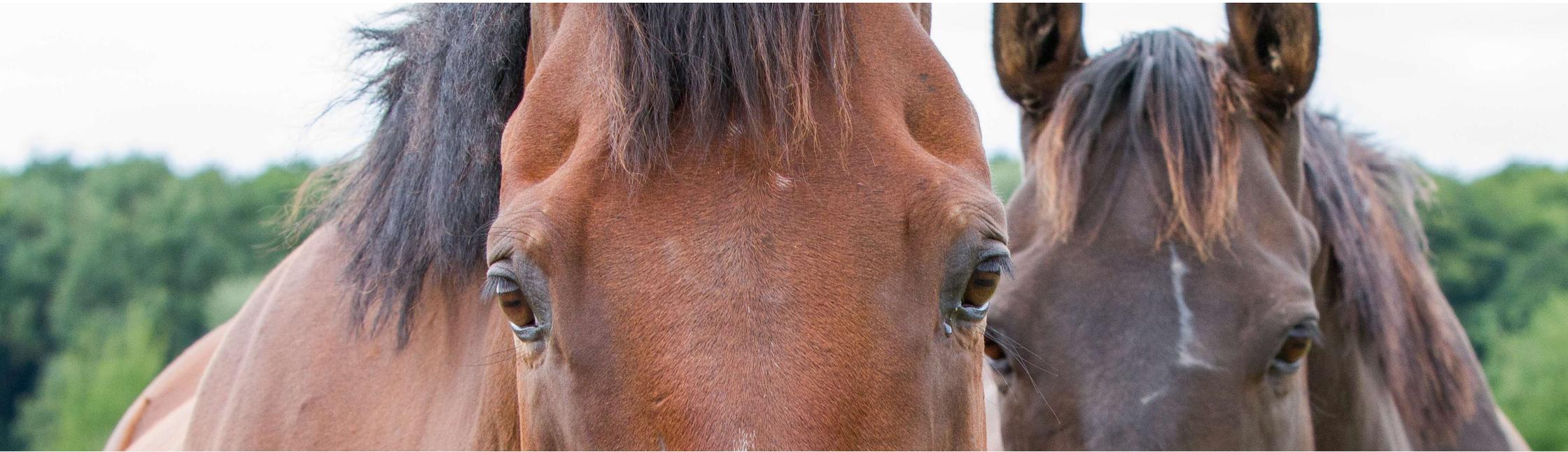
- ✗ Adopt a defensive, combative approach
- ✗ Try to 'PR' your way out of a social licence problem





Summary

- The threat posed by changing attitudes to equestrianism is real – and imminent
- Prioritising equine welfare is a major key to preserving equestrian sport
 - Represents a stimulus for change and progress in our sport
 - Step-change in culture needed
 - **MUST** walk your talk
- We can learn from those who have trodden this path before us



THANK YOU

@rolyowers
@horsecharity

