

**Supplementary Item 1: Survey questionnaire.****Section A**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey.

All answers to this survey are anonymous. You will not be identifiable through your responses to the survey. Responses will be used for the current project and to contribute to or inform future research.

Your participation will contribute to planning future owner education and improving equine welfare in Ireland.

Completing this survey will take approximately 20 minutes. There are 3 sections. The first has 4 questions on your own and your horse(s)/pony(ies)'s experience and activities. The second section contains 8 scenarios, each depicting a horse health condition. For each condition you will be asked to rate your knowledge of it and its potential impact on your pony and yourself. The final section contains 3 questions on decision making regarding horse health and euthanasia and availability of information.

If you decide at any point during the survey that you no longer wish to take part, simply close the survey window. Your responses will not be used within the study unless you complete the survey in full.

This survey is part of an academic research project being carried out by students and staff from the School of Veterinary Medicine at University College Dublin (UCD) and is funded by World Horse Welfare.

After completing this survey, you will be taken to a second web-page allowing you to enter a draw for an 80€ TRI Equestrian voucher. This ensures that your answers to this survey remain anonymous.

After considering the information above, I consent to participate in this survey.

- Yes, I consent.
- No, I do not consent.

Are you currently living in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland?

- Yes
- No

Which of the following best describes you?

- I own at least 1 horse/pony.
- I am responsible for the day-to-day care of at least 1 horse/pony that I do not own.
- I own at least 1 horse/pony and am responsible for horse(s)/pony(ies) that I do not own.

Which of the following best describes you as a pony/horse owner?

- Amateur rider or pony(ies)/horse(s) kept for companionship.
- Competing amateur.
- Non-competing professional.
- Competing professional.
- Other.

Please define your level of experience of pony/horse ownership and care.

(Please base this on your knowledge and confidence level rather than years of horse/pony ownership.)

- Novice.
- Some experience.
- Experienced.
- Very experienced.

How many horses/ponies do you own?

- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- Over 10

Do you own one or more Connemara or Connemara cross pony(ies)?

- Yes (respondents were directed directly to the vignettes)
- No (respondents directed to the question below and then to the vignettes)

What type horse/pony do you own? (Please select the option that applies to the greatest number of horses/ponies you own.)

- Thoroughbreds and other hot-blooded breeds.
- Standardbred (Trotters).
- Sport horse and other warmbloods.
- Draft horse and other cold-blooded breeds.
- Cob.
- Pony. (Including Welsh cobs and other native pony breeds, everything below 14.2 hands.)

- Other.

## Section B

On the next page you will see the first of 8 short scenarios depicting a health condition that affects horses and ponies. Each of these scenarios will be accompanied by the same 5 questions. Please read the scenario and answer the questions with your own [breed selected above] in mind.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions! For each one, please select the answer that best matches what you think or how you feel about that particular condition based on your current level of knowledge/experience.

We would appreciate it if you do not use Google or other means to research any of the conditions during the survey as this may affect the results.

### Scenario 1: Arthritis

Your **older pony/horse** has recently started to seem a little **stiff when exercising**. Its gait seems slightly uneven. When you try lifting its hindlimbs, your pony/horse is **reluctant to bend its joints**. You consult your veterinarian who suspects **arthritis of the hocks**.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:

- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
- 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.
- 3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.
- 4) I know **whether it can be cured**.

- I have never heard of it.
- I only recognize the name.
- I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of 2 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of at least 3 of the 4 above.

2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

- Highly unlikely
- Unlikely
- Likely
- Very likely

- My horse/pony has already contracted this condition.
3. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **comfort level** be affected by this condition?
- Unaffected.
  - Mildly affected. (Occasionally/mildly uncomfortable.)
  - Moderately affected. (Often/moderately uncomfortable.)
  - Very affected. (Constantly/severely uncomfortable.)
4. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **activity level** be affected by this condition?
- Unaffected.
  - Mildly affected. (Less active/Performance mildly compromised.)
  - Moderately affected. (Much less active/Performance compromised.)
  - Very affected. (Almost completely inactive.)
5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?
- Not worried.
  - It would be in the back of my mind.
  - I would be very conscious of it.
  - It would cause me considerable stress.
  - It would definitely keep me up at night!
6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.
- There is no information available.
  - The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
  - There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
  - There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
  - I have never sought out information about this condition.

#### Scenario 2: Cushing's disease

Your **older pony/horse** has gradually lost weight over the past few months. Overall, it seems off form and has **lost topline**. It has started to look ribby and its **coat is a bit long** for this time of year. For the past two weeks, your pony/horse has had a runny nose with clear nasal discharge from its left nostril. The veterinarian you have called suspects a case of **Cushing's disease**.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:

- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
- 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.
- 3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.
- 4) I know **whether it can be cured**.

- I have never heard of it.
- I only recognize the name.
- I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of 2 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of at least 3 of the 4 above.

2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

- Highly unlikely
- Unlikely
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- Very likely
- My horse/pony has already contracted this condition.

3. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **comfort level** be affected by this condition?

- Unaffected.
- Mildly affected. (Occasionally/mildly uncomfortable.)
- Moderately affected. (Often/moderately uncomfortable.)
- Very affected. (Constantly/severely uncomfortable.)

4. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **activity level** be affected by this condition?

- Unaffected.
- Mildly affected. (Less active/Performance mildly compromised.)
- Moderately affected. (Much less active/Performance compromised.)
- Very affected. (Almost completely inactive.)

5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?

- Not worried.
- It would be in the back of my mind.
- I would be very conscious of it.
- It would cause me considerable stress.
- It would definitely keep me up at night!

6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.

- There is no information available.
- The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
- There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- I have never sought out information about this condition.

### Scenario 3: Equine Metabolic Syndrome

Your **overweight pony/horse** that you recently turned out to pasture has gradually become more reluctant to walk up to the gate. It seems increasingly dull and less active than before. It also seems a bit **sore footed on and off**. You had noticed similar signs last Spring when your pony/horse put on weight and developed a distinctly **cresty neck**. After carrying out the appropriate tests, your vet diagnoses **Equine Metabolic Syndrome**.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:

- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
- 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.
- 3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.
- 4) I know **whether it can be cured**.

- I have never heard of it.
- I only recognize the name.
- I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of 2 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of at least 3 of the 4 above.

2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

- Highly unlikely
- Unlikely
- Likely
- Very likely
- My horse/pony has already contracted this condition.

3. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **comfort level** be affected by this condition?

- Unaffected.
- Mildly affected. (Occasionally/mildly uncomfortable.)
- Moderately affected. (Often/moderately uncomfortable.)
- Very affected. (Constantly/severely uncomfortable.)

4. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **activity level** be affected by this condition?

- Unaffected.
- Mildly affected. (Less active/Performance mildly compromised.)
- Moderately affected. (Much less active/Performance compromised.)
- Very affected. (Almost completely inactive.)

5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?

- Not worried.
- It would be in the back of my mind.
- I would be very conscious of it.
- It would cause me considerable stress.
- It would definitely keep me up at night!

6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.

- There is no information available.
- The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
- There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- I have never sought out information about this condition.

Scenario 4: Gastric ulcers

Your pony/horse has **not been finishing its hard feed** and has been **gradually losing weight** for the past two months. Your horse/pony is **reluctant to let you tighten its girth** and has not been performing to its usual standard. You decide to call the veterinarian who identifies **gastric ulcers** as the issue.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:

- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
- 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.
- 3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.
- 4) I know **whether it can be cured**.

- I have never heard of it.
- I only recognize the name.
- I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of 2 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of at least 3 of the 4 above.

2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

- Highly unlikely
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  - Mildly affected. (Occasionally/mildly uncomfortable.)
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  - Very affected. (Constantly/severely uncomfortable.)
4. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **activity level** be affected by this condition?
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  - Mildly affected. (Less active/Performance mildly compromised.)
  - Moderately affected. (Much less active/Performance compromised.)
  - Very affected. (Almost completely inactive.)
5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?
- Not worried.
  - It would be in the back of my mind.
  - I would be very conscious of it.
  - It would cause me considerable stress.
  - It would definitely keep me up at night!
6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.
- There is no information available.
  - The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
  - There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
  - There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
  - I have never sought out information about this condition.

#### Scenario 5: High worm burden

Over the past few months at pasture, your pony/horse has **gradually lost weight** and developed a **poor coat**. You have also noticed that its **dung occasionally seems softer than normal**. The high protein diet, linseed oil and nutritional supplements that you've been feeding it for the past two weeks have had no effect. You decide to call the veterinarian who suspects that a **high worm burden** is causing these symptoms.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:
- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
  - 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.



3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.

4) I know **whether it can be cured**.

- I have never heard of it.
- I only recognize the name.
- I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of 2 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of at least 3 of the 4 above.

2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

- Highly unlikely
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3. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **comfort level** be affected by this condition?

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- Mildly affected. (Occasionally/mildly uncomfortable.)
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- Very affected. (Constantly/severely uncomfortable.)

4. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **activity level** be affected by this condition?

- Unaffected.
- Mildly affected. (Less active/Performance mildly compromised.)
- Moderately affected. (Much less active/Performance compromised.)
- Very affected. (Almost completely inactive.)

5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?

- Not worried.
- It would be in the back of my mind.
- I would be very conscious of it.
- It would cause me considerable stress.
- It would definitely keep me up at night!

6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.

- There is no information available.
- The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
- There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.

- There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- I have never sought out information about this condition.

#### Scenario 6: Mud rash

In early September, you notice that your pony/horse has developed areas of **crusty scabs on its lower limbs**. As you were grooming it, some of the **grey scabs peeled off** which caused your pony/horse to pull away its limb. There has been heavy rainfall in the past few weeks causing the pasture to become very muddy. After looking at the lesions, the vet tells you it is most likely **mud rash**.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:

- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
- 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.
- 3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.
- 4) I know **whether it can be cured**.

- I have never heard of it.
- I only recognize the name.
- I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
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2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

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5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?

- Not worried.
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6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.

- There is no information available.
- The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
- There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- I have never sought out information about this condition.

Scenario 7: Quidding and head tossing

Your pony/horse has seemed a little off form recently. It has started **tossing its head occasionally when ridden**, especially when its reins are shortened. You also notice that there is a considerable amount of feed on the floor around its feeding trough and conclude that it must be **dropping food while eating (“quidding”)**. The veterinarian you have called thinks that **sharp enamel points** (pieces of tooth sticking out into the pony/horse's cheek or tongue) are causing the problem.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:

- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
  - 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.
  - 3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.
  - 4) I know **whether it can be cured**.
- I have never heard of it.
  - I only recognize the name.
  - I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
  - I have knowledge of 2 of the 4 above.
  - I have knowledge of at least 3 of the 4 above.

2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

- Highly unlikely

- Unlikely
  - Likely
  - Very likely
  - My horse/pony has already contracted this condition.
3. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **comfort level** be affected by this condition?
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  - Very affected. (Almost completely inactive.)
5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?
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  - I would be very conscious of it.
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  - It would definitely keep me up at night!
6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.
- There is no information available.
  - The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
  - There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
  - There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
  - I have never sought out information about this condition.

#### Scenario 8: Equine asthma (COPD or Heaves)

Your pony/horse has a **cough on and off** when stabled and has also developed a **heave line** (line of defined muscle across the flank). The cough is sometimes accompanied by **white nasal discharge**. However, this morning your pony/horse seems to be **struggling to breathe around 15 minutes after being given hay**. Its nostrils are flared. After examining your pony/horse, the veterinarian suggest looking at how it responds to treatment for **equine asthma (COPD or Heaves)**.

1. Please rate **your knowledge** of this condition using these guidelines:

- 1) I know how to **recognize it**.
- 2) I know how a vet would **diagnose it**.
- 3) I know how it is **treated/managed**.
- 4) I know **whether it can be cured**.

- I have never heard of it.
- I only recognize the name.
- I have knowledge of 1 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of 2 of the 4 above.
- I have knowledge of at least 3 of the 4 above.

2. **How likely** do you think it is that the pony(ies)/horse(s) you own/are responsible for will contract this condition throughout its/their lifetime?

- Highly unlikely
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4. How much would your pony(ies)/horse(s)'s **activity level** be affected by this condition?

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5. **How worried** would you be if your pony/horse contracted this condition?

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- I would be very conscious of it.
- It would cause me considerable stress.
- It would definitely keep me up at night!

6. Please rate the availability of up-to-date **owner-orientated information** for this condition.

- There is no information available.
- The available information is too complex &/or out-of-date.
- There is limited availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- There is broad availability of easy to understand & up-to-date information.
- I have never sought out information about this condition.

### Section C

When your horse/pony has a medical condition, which 3 of the following would concern you the most?

- Pain and discomfort.
- Cost of treatment and management changes. (eg: change to a more expensive diet.)
- Challenges of future management. (eg: managing dust in the yard, time consuming care...)
- Loss of monetary value and income.
- Re-homing potential and management compliance by future owners.
- Effect of the condition on quality of life.
- Inability of the pony/horse to carry out its normal activity now and in the future.
- Other

When your horse/pony has a serious medical condition, end of life decisions can be difficult. Which 5 of the following would have the greatest influence on your decision to put your horse/pony to sleep?

- Vet advice.
- Emotional bond with the pony/horse.
- Cost of treatment.
- Age of the pony/horse.
- Effect of a condition on quality of life.
- Pain and discomfort.
- Prior experience of the same condition.
- Likelihood that the condition will reoccur or that the symptoms will resolve
- Inability of the pony to carry out its normal activity.
- Monetary value of the pony/horse.
- Body disposal concerns.
- Other

Thank you for completing our survey!

We are very grateful for your contribution.

Please click the "Done" button below to submit your answers.

This will take you to a second web-page where you will be able to sign up for the €80 TRI Equestrian voucher draw.