

# Equine welfare quickfire update

British Horse Council 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Roly Owers MRCVS



# Current welfare situation

- Met with Defra in November to discuss current equine welfare dial going into winter. Key points raised:
  - Welfare dial busy but steady (largely tracking 2019)
  - Another strong year for rehoming – resulting in some capacity in the system
  - Price of horses across the board has increased substantially and remains high
  - *BUT* soft signs of increase in number of people are looking to relinquish their horses
- Key concerns looking forward:
  - High prices will encourage increased breeding
  - Price bubble will burst
  - Resulting in a double-whammy welfare surge – will continue to monitor closely



# 2022 state of play

- Two NEWC Covid-19 surveys in 2020 helped ensure views of the equine welfare sector were represented to UK governments
- With some restrictions eased and the end of Covid-19 government support measures the current aim is to:
  - Understand whether the sector has recovered
  - Identify any challenges that remain and potential solutions
- NEWC will launch a follow-up survey in early 2022

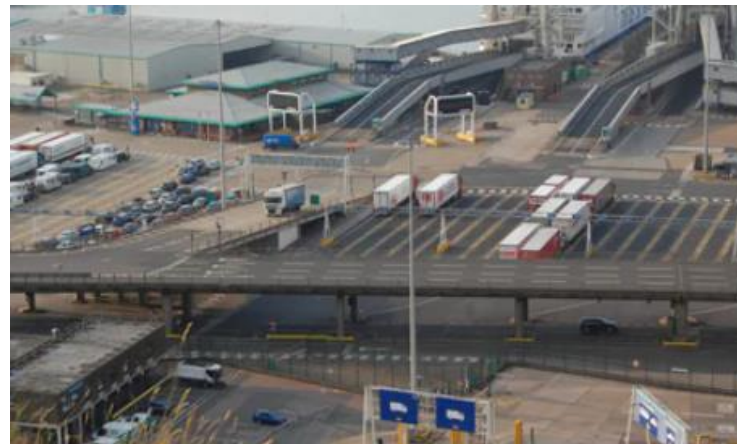


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# Kept Animals Bill

- Kept Animals Bill addresses one area consulted on – ban on live export for slaughter and fattening
- Welcome ban *BUT* no equines have been declared as exported for slaughter for years
- Legislation as drafted is sufficient – captures all those potentially involved in trade
- Proof of these movements will rely heavily on intelligence. Critical that enforcement agencies are given the resources necessary to identify ‘risky’ movements and take action where required
- Improved traceability and digitisation of equine identification process fundamental to success of ban



# Improving welfare during transport

- Bill an opportunity to identify and implement barriers to make this trade too difficult to sustain and prevent non-compliance with welfare during transport. This could include:
  - Quick pre-export checks to be undertaken at ports where possible (for example, checking if a horse transporter really is empty)
  - Making transporter authorisations more robust for sea transport
- Any additional measures *MUST NOT* disproportionately impact legitimate movements
- Written evidence submitted (from Four Paws, Animal Aid, RSPCA, BVA and World Horse Welfare) can be found on UK Parliament website
- Defra, the Scottish and Welsh governments to conduct workshops on wider welfare during transport proposals next year



# Animals (Penalty Notices) Bill

- Private Members Bill but delivers on proposal set out in Defra's Action Plan for Animal Welfare
- If passed, it will create a system of a financial penalties of up to £5,000 for certain animal health and welfare offences in England
- Committee stage in the House of Commons was held this week (8 Dec)
- Welfare sector position still being discussed but concerns and opportunities around:
  - Definition of offence
  - Reporting requirements
  - Effective and consistent use

