

Assessment of the welfare of carriage horses in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia

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Horse drawn carriage is still widely used as transportation and leisure in Yogyakarta Province. This study was aimed to assess the level of animal welfare of carriage horses in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. We assessed the welfare of 225 heads of carriage horses, belong to 65 owners in Yogyakarta Indonesia. From various sources of literatures and management practices on regular basis, 25 indicators which describe the attribute of 5 freedoms, were selected. The individual assessment was defined as directly observable and objective verifiable (e.g. body condition score and presence of skin lesion and wounds, diseases and discomfort by use). Data on farm level were related to feeding, housing and health care management, exercise, training methods, and human-animal interactions. The data were analysed descriptively and compared to some existing welfare assessment, due to absence of particular welfare assessment protocols for developing countries. The results showed that 29, 20.3 and 50.7% of carriage horses had relatively good, moderate and bad welfare respectively. Health and human-animal interaction aspects obtained the worst score. In conclusion, most of horses used for carriage are handled poorly. Welfare assessment based on objective parameters can be used as first step to improve horse welfare in Indonesia, but needs continuous improvement. The animal welfare needs to be strongly and continually promoted in developing country such as Indonesia. Welfare assessment protocol for horses is needed in developing countries.