

# January 2026

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# HETI LIVE MONTHLY MEETING

MONTHLY ONLINE MEETINGS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS

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**TIME** 

VARIABLE  
ACCOMODATING  
TO ALL TIME ZONES

**DATE** 

2ND WEEK OF  
A MONTH



# Equine Welfare in EAS

Looking to the 5 Domains Model  
Human Equine Interactions (4C)



# Animal Welfare

## A brief history of Animal welfare

Animals have been revered and cared for since ancient times

e.g., Evidence of care of a puppy found in burial site 14000 years old (Bonn)

### **A respect for animals is not new**

1000-500BC Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism - position of non- violence towards all beings.

Mongolians – harm or overburdening of horses was punished.

Ancient Philosophers – Pythagorus (kindness to animals). Xenophon (On Horsemanship) advocated for care and gentle training methods

Ancient Brehon Laws- Harm to animals is punishable by fines, care duties towards livestock

Care of animals was necessary for livelihood – extensive care practices promoted welfare (herding, shephards, tending to flock etc)



# The Age of enlightenment

(17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century)

## Status of animals in Europe

Age of enlightenment saw an increase in interest in the importance of human wellbeing

Status of animal Influenced by humans having dominion over animals

Changes in animal use/husbandry necessary for agricultural progress and industrialization.

Some philosophers (Decartes) viewed animals as automata (like machines) did not have reason or souls.

Animals viewed as not having feelings and were not worthy of 'moral concern'

Some cruel practices seen as acceptable e.g., vivisection, overwork of horses



## Changes on the horizon

Philosophy Jeremy Bentham famously asked

“The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?”

*An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789).Footnote.*

—served as the foundations for animal welfare ethics and a shift in thinking about animals as sentient beings

# An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation.

## Jeremy Bentham



# Rebirth of Societal concern for animals

The Martin Act 1822 – wanton cruelty (cruel practices) limited reach

RSPCA 1824 .....along with other associations world-wide

Black beauty published in 1877 (cruelty and overwork of carriage horses)

Royal society for the protection of birds RSPB – stop the trade in birdfeathers



# The start of Modern Animal Welfare

Ruth Harrisons (Animal Machines)



Bramwell report (1965) introduced the  
5 Freedoms

Animal welfare and rights comes to the fore  
(Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) in 1979)



Paved the way for legislation in UK (2006) and worldwide

Animal welfare becomes a science

**5 Domains of animal welfare (1994) – see later**

## The 'Five Freedoms' for Horse Health and Welfare

In a natural environment, horses are social, preferring to live and move in groups, foraging over large areas. It is almost impossible to provide this type of environment for domesticated horses but the Animal Welfare Act 2006 states all animals are entitled to a minimum level of care.



**1 Freedom from hunger and thirst:**  
Supply enough fresh water and the right type and amount of food to promote wellbeing.



**2 Freedom from discomfort:**  
Provide the right type of environment, including shelter and somewhere comfortable to rest.



**3 Freedom from pain, injury and disease:**  
Take steps to prevent illness or injury and make sure they are diagnosed and treated promptly by a Vet when needed.



**4 Freedom from fear and distress:**  
Make sure they have appropriate care and handling.



**5 Freedom to behave normally:**  
Provide enough space, proper facilities and the company of other horses or ponies.

Here4Horses believes in the 'Five Freedoms'

here4horses

# Sentience and beyond

Treaty of Lisbon (2009): Article 13 formally recognizes animals as sentient beings

The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness (2012) formally recognized that many non-human animals are sentient, conscious beings.

Consensus of leading scientists

Sentience in UK law- Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.

Switzerland, Germany, Austria, New Zealand, Canada, France, Ireland, Sweden, Spain and many other countries now recognize animals as sentient beings in law

Many others partially recognize

This and social license to operate = welfare is crucial

# What is Animal welfare

- Difficult to define
- According to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), animal welfare is;  
‘a complex, multi-faceted concept with scientific, ethical, economic, cultural, social, religious, and political dimensions’ (Agricultural or broad perspective)

*“as the balance of positive and negative affective states over the period of time of interest, which can span from hours to years to lifelong”* Reimert et al, 2023 (Academic perspective)

Dynamic Animal Welfare Concept (DAWCon) of ‘positive animal welfare’;

*“An individual is likely to be in a positive welfare state if it is mentally and physically capable and has the ability and opportunity to respond appropriately to sporadic or sustained appetitive and adverse internal and external stimuli, events and conditions. Appropriate responses are elements of an animal’s normal behavior. They enable the animal to cope with and adapt to the demands of the [prevailing] environmental circumstances and to reach a state that it perceives as positive, i.e. that evokes positive emotions”*

Van der Staay, F. J., Goerlich, V. C., Meijboom, F. L., & Arndt, S. S. (2025). Animal welfare definitions, frameworks, and assessment tools: Advancing the measurement and laying the foundation for improved animal welfare through a three-step approach. *Animal Welfare*, 34, e30. doi:10.1017/awf.2025.23

# 5 Domains Model of Animal Welfare

(1) nutrition,

(2) environment,

(3) health,

(4) behaviour

(5) mental

- The first three domains focused on internal imbalances or disturbances which had nutritional, environmental and health origins.
- The fourth domain was on external restrictive confinement or restraint, and/or negative impacts of the presence or absence of other animals (including humans)
- The fifth concerned the animals mental state or subjective experience (how animal feels)

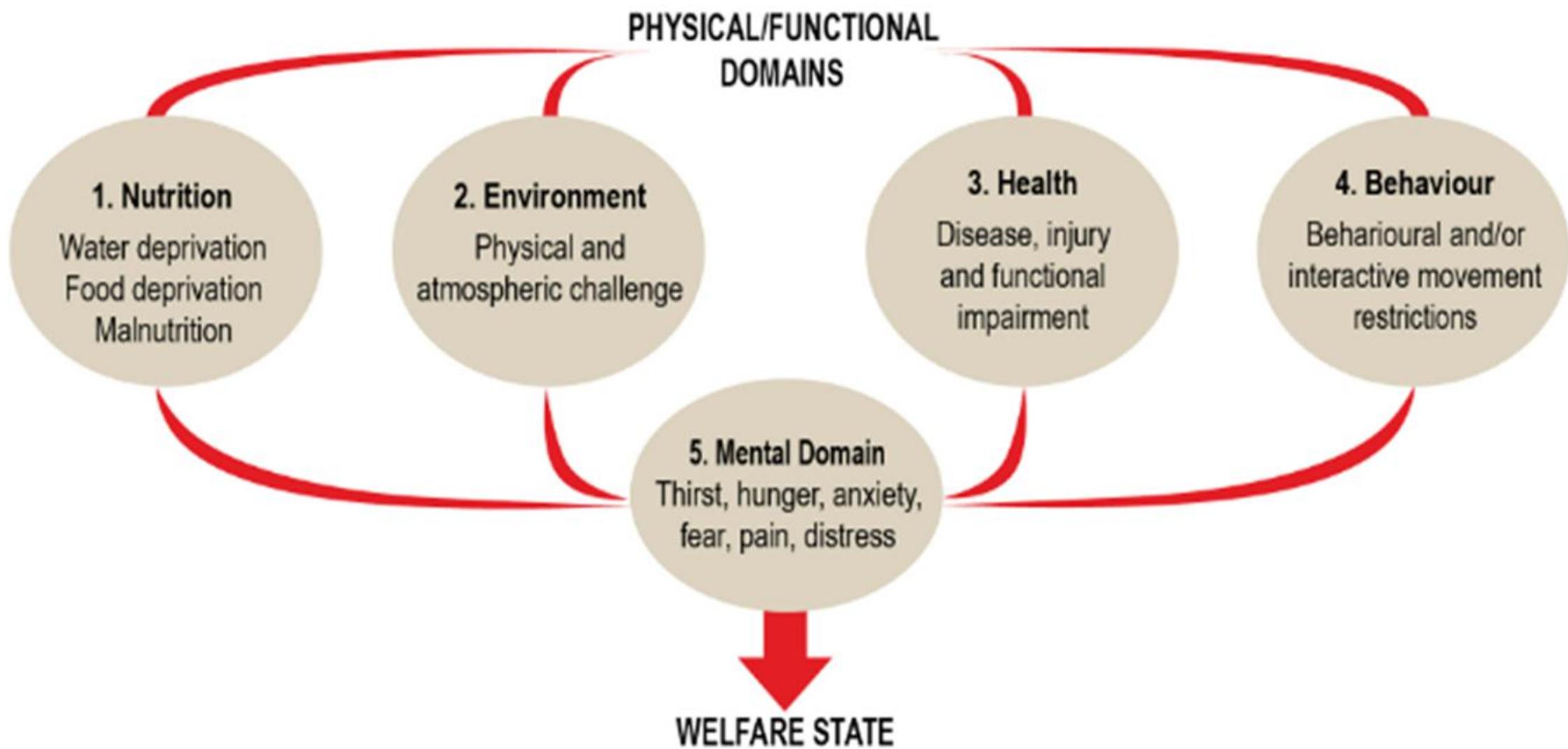
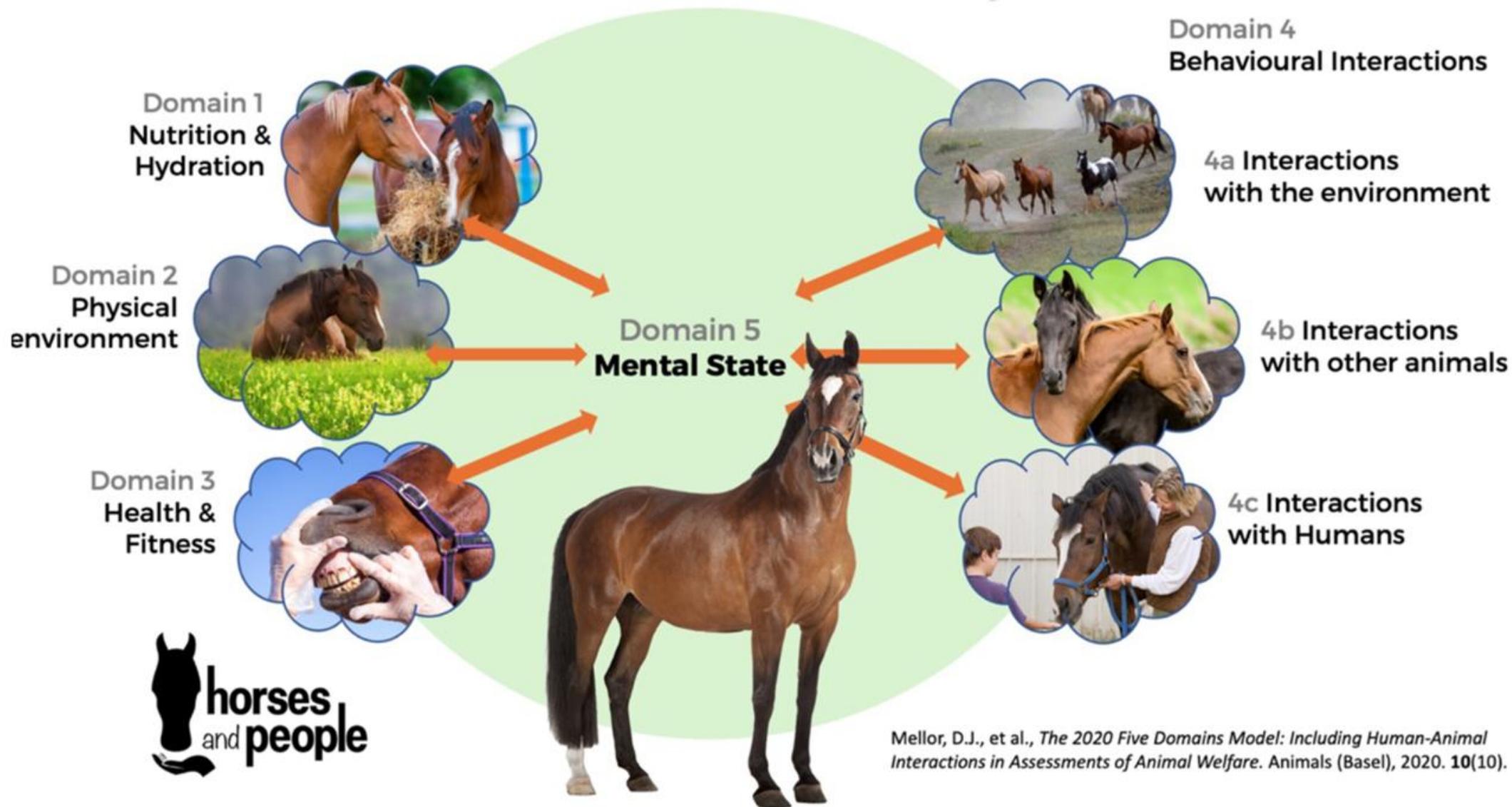


Figure 1. The 1994 Five Domains Model, redrawn from Reference [1].

# The 2020 Five Domains Model for Welfare Assessment and Monitoring



## General Principles

- Practitioners and handlers are trained and competent in equine behaviour, welfare, and safe practice.
- Physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of equines are prioritized.
- Choice, autonomy, and variety are built into sessions to support equine agency.
- Ethical and consistent training methods are used—avoiding coercion and punishment.
- Regular health, tack, and equipment checks ensure comfort and prevent pain.
- Appropriate workloads and rest are maintained; horses' limits are respected.
- Quiet, secure environments to minimize stress; bystanders avoid distracting equines.
- Sessions are adapted based on ongoing observation of both horse and client wellbeing.



# Modality-Specific Practices



- **Ridden work:** Rider weight and balance matched to horse ability; skilled supervision and proper equipment.
- **Vaulting:** Avoid restrictive positions; ensure rest periods off the lunge.
- **Carriage driving:** Driver must have independent rein control; avoid aversive mouth pressure.
- **Ground work:** mutually respectful interactions, mutual regard, understanding of Horse behaviour, Equine agency, avoid undue aversive interactions, understanding communication

## Handler & Practitioner Competency



- Qualified for service being provided, emotionally regulated, informed awareness. Continuous professional development
- Recognize signs of pain, stress, and discomfort (colic, lameness, girth sensitivity etc).
- Empowered to adapt or stop sessions for welfare reasons.

Associated Equine Experiences with positive interactions

**HETI LIVE**  
**MONTHLY MEETING**



- Physical: Relaxed posture, normal breathing, steady heart rate.
- Emotional: Confidence, curiosity, playfulness, optimism.
- Behavioural: Approaches willingly, engages positively, recovers quickly from surprises.
- Cognitive: Enjoys problem-solving, shows interest in variety.
- Relational: Trust, cooperation, sense of safety and control.

Recent Executive committee – reflections –

1. How does your equine respond to you before and after the session?  
Do they come willingly, stay neutral, or try to move away once the work is finished?
2. If you could exchange roles for one day — wearing the tack, carrying the weight, and following the demands — would you still feel motivated and willing to work?
3. Does your equine truly have a choice to join the session?  
And if they show signs of being unhappy or unwilling to work, what do you do?
4. Is everything about mounting comfortable and fair for the equine?  
Do you feel confident that the equipment, positioning and organisation respect your equine's comfort?
5. During leading and handling, is your equine guided in a friendly, non-oppressive way?  
Do they have enough space to move, communicate and feel safe, and does your approach support calm, confident cooperation rather than pressure?

What would your answers be?

# Previous Live Discussion



Questions that arose from the discussion:

- How do we challenge the assumption that humans can touch horses whenever they like?
- How do we meet people where they're at with regards to knowledge, resources and experience to further share best practice?
- How do we reduce the stress for horses during mounting and dismounting, especially when working with clients with limited mobility?
- How do we encourage the adaption of language so that people no longer 'use' horses but 'work/partner with' them instead?
- How do we encourage education around Equine Ethology?
- How can we emphasise the importance of a deep knowledge of equine behaviour?
- How do we encourage questioning and reflection when it's 'always been done like that'?

# Discussion



Your views - any types of services missing?

Any potential welfare issues (within interactions) not being considered?

Visual representations - what might work best

What are the crucial things, in your view, that we need to consider within Horse-Human Interactions for welfare