

20th April 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

On behalf of the South African Equestrian Federation (SAEF) and its members, I write this letter in motivation of some relaxation of the Lockdown rules.

The SAEF has approximately 6 000 members countrywide, with approximately 20 000 horses registered. The vast majority of members live in large metropolitan areas and stable their horses at livery yards. Due to the lockdown most of the owners have been unable to exercise their horses. The following points should be considered:

1. No exercise in an animal that is bred to be an athlete is detrimental to the overall health and welfare of the horse. Many livery yards, have inadequate size of paddocks for the number of horses they stable, which means that horses have very limited time for any paddock exercise. The horse is by nature a trickle feeder and will walk around trickle feeding for most of the day. Confined to a 3 x 4m stable for most of the day without exercise, is fraught with potential problems, and not in the interests of the welfare of the horse.
2. With no or little exercise equine athletes will lose their fitness after a period of inactivity of 3 weeks. Regaining any former level of fitness requires a slow return to work and buildup of exercise over about a 6-week period.
3. Despite reducing carbohydrate intake in inactive horses, many become fractious and serious injury can occur as they attempt to expend their energy.
4. Equestrian sports are not contact sports and it is therefore easy to maintain social distancing.

We therefore urge:

1. Some relaxation of the Lockdown regulations to allow owners to travel to Livery yards to exercise their horses.
2. We are not requesting relaxation for competition purposes, but merely for the purposes of exercising elite athletes with the sole intention of maintaining a certain level of fitness and to keep them manageable.

CONSTITUENT MEMBERS: All Discipline Associations, Associate Members and Athlete's Commission & Provincial Federations

President: Adv Willem Edeling
Vice President: Hannes van Aswegen
Secretary General: Wessel Strauss
Treasurer: Neil Smith
Athletes' Rep: Nicola Sime-Riley

Legal: Adv Johann Raubenheimer
Discipline Associations Rep: Robert Lord
Jaap Lotter
Provincial Federation Rep: Sakkie van Niekerk
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3. Livery Yard owners/managers may be instructed to allow no more than 3 persons to exercise horses in an arena at any one time. Social distancing is easy as horses are ridden by individuals not groups of persons.

We trust you will consider the above in any decision to relax some of the regulations pertaining to exercising horses.



S M Higgerty

***National Head Veterinarian SAEF/FEI
Chairperson SAEF Veterinary Committee***

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