**Basic Principles for the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media**

- American Humane Association’s *Guidelines* prescribe a high standard of care that the film and television production industries have voluntarily agreed to provide to animal performers. This standard is more comprehensive and more compassionate than any state’s anti-cruelty laws.

- American Humane Association’s *Guidelines* apply to all animals used in the production, including animals used as background or off-camera to attract the attention of another animal being filmed.

- Animals are not props (even if they are supplied by the props department)!

- No animal will be killed or injured for the sake of a film production.

- American Humane Association will not allow any animal to be treated inhumanely to elicit a performance.

- Although permitted for necessary veterinary care, general anesthesia and sedation are high-risk procedures and are prohibited for the sole purpose of filmmaking.

- Storytelling needs of producers can be achieved humanely by working with American Humane Association and adhering to American Humane Association’s *Guidelines*.

- Documentary-style footage/stock footage acceptable to American Humane Association’s mission cannot include scenes that represent actual harm to an animal, even if filmed as non-fiction “newsreel” footage. Such harm, although possibly historic, is considered exploitation of the animal’s suffering for the sake of entertainment. Any scene depicting harm must be simulated.

- Reality or non-scripted entertainment acceptable to American Humane Association’s mission may only include scenes that do not show real harm to a live animal.

- American Humane Association and American Humane Association’s Certified Animal Safety Representative(s)™ will uphold all applicable anti-cruelty laws.
g. Additional veterinarians may be required when animals are to be used on sets at different locations or units.

2-3........ To address animal emergencies involving injury, illness, death or allegations of abuse, the following should be considered:

a. The establishment of a communications system to quickly report information to local law enforcement, the veterinarian and the executive offices of American Humane Association.

b. Facilities for the holding, restraint or examination of animals by a veterinarian.

c. Transportation arrangements for evacuating sick or disabled animals from remote or difficult-to-access locations.

d. The ability to humanely relieve pain or euthanize animals suffering from severe injury or illness.

e. Independent oversight of international investigations and the report issued to the local animal control agency.

2-4........ Animals must be checked daily for injury and/or illness. If an animal is injured, sick or lame or becomes incapacitated, it shall receive immediate medical care.

a. Such an animal shall not resume work until the veterinarian determines that the condition has been corrected.

b. If veterinary care is required, the veterinarian shall assess the extent of the injury and send a copy of his or her report to American Humane Association.

c. American Humane Association staff may accompany the animal to the veterinarian’s office and remain until a diagnosis/prognosis is made.

2-4.1 ...... Sick animals must be isolated from other animals on the set and will not be permitted to work. When possible, sick animals shall be removed from the set.

2-4.2 ...... Animals with mechanical (i.e., non-painful) limitations or defects that give the visual appearance of lameness or injury may be used only if a veterinarian has examined the animal, determined that using the animal in the manner intended will not cause pain or stress, and provided American Humane Association with a letter certifying that the animal is serviceably sound.

2-5........ In the event of a death or an injury resulting in the subsequent euthanasia of an animal during production, a necropsy of the animal must be performed. The result of the necropsy shall be provided to American Humane Association.

2-6........ No drugs, including anesthetics, sedatives and chemical laxatives, may be administered to an animal for the purpose of filmmaking.

a. Under certain circumstances and with prior approval by both American Humane Association and the animal’s veterinarian, the administration of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs may be permitted.

b. At no time shall an animal be used which has been administered a drug to conceal any defects or lameness of the animal.

c. The practice of nerve-blocking an animal for performance purposes is prohibited.
**ADVISORY:** Sedatives induce behavioral changes that render animals quiet, calm and relatively indifferent to their surroundings. Clinical signs of tranquilization, especially in horses and other equines, include lowering of the head and extension of the neck, relaxation and drooping of the lower lip, and slight prolapse of the third eyelid. Males may exhibit protrusion of the penis, which could lead to injury. Additionally, some horses may exhibit excitation, sweating, trembling and convulsions. Repeated doses can cause renal failure. Older animals and animals suffering from heat stress are more susceptible to complications from sedation.

The most common sedative is Acepromazine (Atrave, PromAce). Overdose can cause excessive sedation, slow respiratory and heart rate, pale gums, unsteady gait, poor coordination and inability to stand, and it may cause sudden collapse, unconsciousness, seizures and death. It can be detected in the blood for 36-120 hours, although repeated doses may make it remain present for several months.

2-7 Animals known to be pregnant shall not be used in intense action scenes.
2-8 The birth of animals shall not be induced for filming purposes. The natural birth of animals may be filmed “documentary style,” which means that filming shall have no impact on the birth process and no actors will appear in the birth scene.

a. A veterinarian must be present, and crew shall be limited to the minimum necessary for filming.
b. American Humane Association shall remain on set at all times to adequately monitor the health and welfare of the animals being filmed.
c. To prevent the spread of disease, strict biosecurity measures such as hand washing and foot baths shall be in place for all persons entering and leaving the set.
d. No other animals may be present when filming scenes involving an actual birth process.
8-77 ....... Anyone required to ride on a production must first be auditioned by the wrangler boss to determine his/her riding ability. Productions, animal handlers and American Humane Association shall work collaboratively to ensure that people required to ride are qualified to perform the action required.
   a. Only riders from the approved wrangler boss list may be hired.
   b. Production must provide adequate lead time for such demonstration and determination prior to filming American Humane Association will have final approval of the skill, knowledge and physical limitations of any rider.

8-78 ....... Spectators and crew should be discouraged from petting, handling or feeding horses and livestock. Never, under any circumstances, should anyone other than the owner or person designated to perform such activities be allowed to mount/ride or feed horses or livestock.

8-79 ....... Whenever a large group of horses and/or livestock is used for a particular scene, especially when they are brought together from different areas, American Humane Association may inspect the animals and check appropriate documentation, including health certificates and Coggins tests.
   a. A veterinarian shall be present to give each horse a basic health examination before it comes in contact with the other horses.
   b. Animals must be adequately trained, conditioned and prepped for use on a film set. American Humane Association has the jurisdiction to remove any animals deemed unfit for use.

8-80 ....... When a scene calls for the filming of a “herd,” untrained animals may be used — provided the herd is pre-existing, is located on familiar terrain, and there is a safety plan in place to prevent animals from escaping or deviating from the intended path. When a herd will be controlled/moved by outriders, the outriders shall be familiar with that particular herd. (Also see Guideline 1-36.)

8-81 ....... Horses and livestock shall not be allowed to escape the set or location. Production and the animal handler must have a safety plan in place that will prevent animals from escaping the set or location and/or deviating from the animals’ intended path. Production and the animal handler shall also have a safety plan in place for an animal’s safe recapture should an accident or escape occur. American Humane Association shall approve these safety plans prior to filming. The requirements of the safety plans shall be determined by the training, conditioning and preparation of an animal, and if the animals used are confined, loose and/or liberty animals. (Also see Guideline 1-36.)

8-82 ....... No drugs, including anesthetics, sedatives and chemical laxatives, may be administered to an animal for the purpose of filmmaking.
   a. Under certain circumstances, and with prior approval by both American Humane Association and the animal’s veterinarian, the administration of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs may be permitted.
b. At no time shall an animal be used which has been administered a 
   drug to conceal any defects or lameness of the animal.

c. The practice of nerve-blocking an animal for performance is prohibited.

**ADVISORY:** Sedatives induce behavioral changes that render a horse 
   quiet, calm and relatively indifferent to its surroundings. Clinical signs 
   of tranquilization include lowering of the head and extension of the 
   neck, relaxation and drooping of the lower lip, and slight prolapse of the 
   third eyelid. Males may exhibit protrusion of the penis, which could lead 
   to injury. Additionally, some horses may exhibit excitation, sweating, 
   trembling and convulsions. Repeated doses can cause renal failure. Older 
   horses, horses suffering from heat stress, draft horses and ponies are more 
   susceptible to complications from sedation. The most common sedative 
   is Acepromazine (Atravet®, PromAce®). Overdose can cause excessive 
   sedation, slow respiratory and heart rate, pale gums, unsteady gait, poor 
   coordination, and inability to stand, and may cause sudden collapse, 
   unconsciousness, seizures and death.

Acepromazine can be detected in the blood for 36-120 hours after dosage, 
although repeated doses may make it detectable for several months.

8-83 ........ Hitching rails shall be fastened in the ground in such a manner that 
   the tugging of a frightened horse cannot pull them loose (e.g., sleeve 
   installation). On stage, hitching rails shall be bolted or fastened in a rigid 
   manner. (Also see Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee 
   Safety Bulletin #6, “Animal Handling Rules for the Motion Picture Industry,” paragraph 11. For stampedes, also see the Stampedes and Large 
   Groups of Horses and Livestock Guidelines in this chapter.)

**HORSE/LIVESTOCK STUNTS AND STRENUIOUS EQUINE ACTION**
(Also see Chapter 7, Stunts.)

American Humane Association shall consider any animal performance intense or 
   a stunt when the performance involves great effort or activity of an animal, and/or 
   provides for a degree of potential risk to the animal.

Production, including the stunt coordinator, shall work collaboratively with 
   the animal handler and American Humane Association to ensure the safety of 
   horses and livestock. When stunts involve horses and livestock, it is ultimately 
   the responsibility of the animal handler and American Humane Association to 
   determine if the stunt is safe for horses and livestock.

American Humane Association field personnel are trained and experienced and 
   shall be considered a part of a production’s safety team, ensuring a collaborative 
   effort for the safety and welfare of the animals. Being a part of pre-production 
   resolves many issues on set. Contact American Humane Association early in 
   pre-production when animals will be involved in stunts.

* Notes a federal, state or local animal welfare statute, code or permit consideration.
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d. Horses demonstrating lameness equal or greater to Obel grade 2/5 or who are positive to joint flexion, or flexor tendon palpations.
e. Horses with a temperature over 101.0.
f. Nasal discharge.
g. Cough or diarrhea.
h. Are currently on any Horse Racing Board “Vet List.”
i. Are registered as a bleeder with any state horse racing board and were not scoped after their last race.
j. All horses used for filming racing scenes must submit to a standing endoscopy. The results must be dated within thirty (30) days of use in filming racing scenes. The results must state that the horse is free from any pathology or abnormalities that would affect performance as an athlete.
k. Race horses are required to have seven (7) days off since their last race to ensure appropriate recovery time.
l. Horse is found to be pregnant.
m. Horse is found to be under 4 years of age.

8-141.1... Productions are required to keep a detailed medical file on each horse participating in horse racing scenes. All medications must be declared and registered with American Humane Association and the veterinarian and logged daily in the horse’s medical file. The medical file should include the following:

a. The date, time, dosage, and person administering any medications along with the name and contact information of the prescribing veterinarian.
b. Medical exams of each horse shall be performed daily, in the morning and after exercising or working. The horse’s temperature shall be taken twice a day. All exams should be documented in the horse’s medical file indicating the date, time, findings, and the name and contact information of the examiner.
c. A copy of Negative toxicology screen for sedatives, NSAIDS, Corticosteroids, and anabolic steroids shall be kept in each horse’s medical file.

8-141.2... All horses participating in horse racing scenes shall be micro-chipped. American Humane Association Certified Animal Safety Representative(s)” shall be present to oversee the micro-chipping of all horses. Production shall ensure that American Humane Association Animal Safety Representative(s)” have access to a universal scanner.

8-142...... No drugs in system of any horse used for racing scenes. Drugs do not take the place of rest, conditioning, and training of the animal. Drugs, including anesthetics, sedatives and chemical laxatives may not be administered to an animal for the purpose of filmmaking. Any horse with a positive drug test shall be permanently wrapped from all production activities. The main purpose of controlling medication is to protect the welfare of the animal and the safety of the rider or driver.
h. An animal with non-painful mechanical limitations or defects that give the visual appearance of lameness or injury may be used only if a veterinarian has examined the animal, determined that using the animal in the manner intended will not cause it pain or stress, and has provided American Humane Association with a letter certifying that the animal is serviceably sound.

i. In the event of an animal's death, including the injury of an animal resulting in the subsequent euthanasia of that animal during production, a necropsy of the animal must be performed. The result of the necropsy shall be provided to American Humane Association.

j. A conveyance must be available and shall be used to remove animals from the arena in case of injury. The conveyance must be large enough to safely and comfortably remove the animals used. Injured calves shall be removed from the arena in a pickup truck or calf stretcher or by conveyance. Animals removed from the arena, pursuant to this section, shall be placed in a situation as isolated and comfortable as possible to reduce stress.

**PRCA R8.8/R8.1.1.2
PRCA R11.3.8

8-162...... No drugs, including anesthetics, sedatives and chemical laxatives, may be administered to an animal for the purpose of filmmaking. Under certain circumstances, and with prior approval by both American Humane Association and the animal’s veterinarian, the administration of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs may be permitted. At no time shall an animal be used which has been administered a drug to conceal any defects or lameness of the animal (Also see Guidelines 2-6 and 8-82.)

**PRCA R9.7

8-163*..... Any person who abuses or mistreats an animal by any unnecessary non-competitive or competitive action may be dismissed for the remainder of the film. A person or persons involved in any act of animal abuse, mistreatment or intentional cruelty is in violation of American Humane Association’s Guidelines and may also be in violation of federal, state or local statutes pertaining to animal welfare, resulting in possible prosecution.

**PRCA R9.10/R9.11

8-164...... Horses and livestock must be maintained in facilities that provide proper humane care for each species of animal, to prevent injury. American Humane Association will determine whether facilities for shelter and protection are:

a. Safe from sharp objects that may cause injury
b. Temperature-controlled when necessary for the health or comfort of the animals
c. Well-ventilated
d. Located in an area that minimizes stress
e. Kept in a sanitary condition
f. Constructed to prevent escape