



# USETA Horse Welfare Objectives Poll

## Overview

The United States Equestrian Trainers Association (USETA) conducted a poll of verified, professional members to better understand and prioritize key horse welfare objectives within the industry.

The goals of this poll were to:

- Identify the **most important welfare priorities** from the perspective of active professionals.
- Establish a **clear, data-driven ranking** of focus areas.
- Inform future **policy advocacy, education, and resource allocation**.

Respondents were asked to rank their **top three priorities** from a defined list of welfare-related issues.

## Key Findings

1. "Footing" was ranked as the top priority.
2. "Drug Policies" was ranked as the second priority.
3. "Facilities" was ranked as the third priority.

## Table of Contents

Priority Options Considered	2
Results	3
Methodology	5
Recommendations & Conclusion	6
Individual Responses	7

## Priority Options Considered

Here is the list of all options given to participants along with the examples that were given.

### **Facilities**

- Examples:
- The amount of concrete at competitions
- Proper stall cleaning between competitions
- Security responsibilities

### **Stalls**

- Example:
- Is stall size appropriate for the size of horses we have now (i.e. tents)

### **Footing**

- Examples:
- Grooming of schooling and lunging rings
- Synthetic footing hard on horses
- Maintenance between shows

### **Lunging**

- Examples:
- Proper space available
- Time given
- Should rings stay open longer to minimize lunging
- Lighting in lunging rings

### **Number of Shows**

- Example:
- Does too many cause over-showing to qualify for year-end awards / indoors

### **Drug Policies**

- Example:
- How can we be responsible for environmental factors we cannot control

### **Tack/Equipment**

- Example:
- Is using tack in a proper manner a better choice to lunging or paste? (i.e. chain noseband)

# Results

## 1. Footing — Top Priority

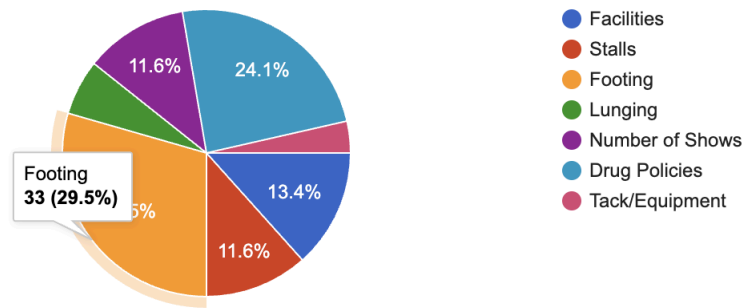
- **29.5% of Priority 1 votes**
- The most frequently selected first-choice concern

### Interpretation:

Footing stands out as the most urgent issue among respondents. This reflects a strong consensus around the importance of **safe, consistent riding surfaces** as a foundational element of horse welfare and injury prevention.

Priority 1

112 responses



## 2. Drug Policies — Second Priority

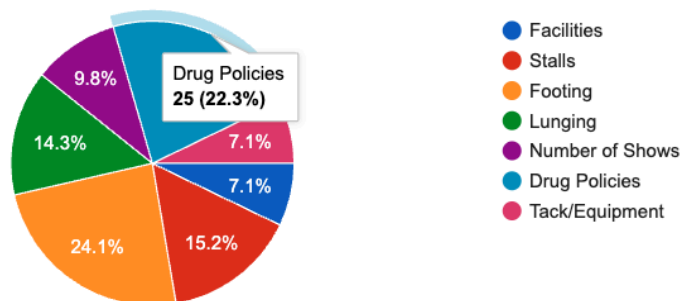
- **22.3% of Priority 2 votes**
- This was the most frequently selected second-choice concern (*after removing Footing*)

### Interpretation:

Drug policies emerged as the next most critical concern, highlighting the importance of **horse health and welfare protections**, fair competition standards as well as consistency and enforcement of regulations.

Priority 2

112 responses



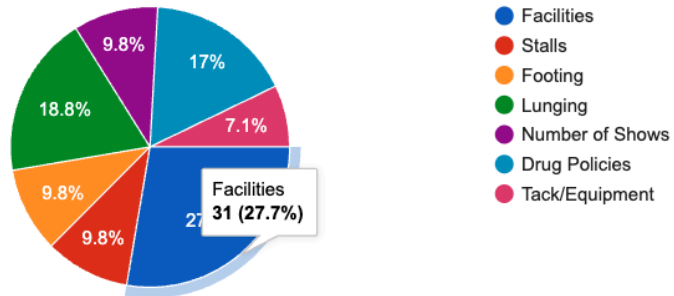
### 3. Facilities — Third Priority

- **27.7% of Priority 3 votes**
- This was the most frequently selected third-choice concern.

#### Interpretation:

Facilities received the strongest share of votes for the third priority, indicating broad recognition of the role that stabling conditions, showground infrastructure and general environment play in supporting horse welfare, even if not always viewed as the most immediate concern.

Priority 3  
112 responses



# Methodology

## Analysis Approach Used

### Ranked Elimination Approach

To determine the top priorities, responses were analyzed using a ranked elimination approach:

1. Priority 1 votes were analyzed first
  - The option with the highest percentage of votes was selected as the top priority
2. That winning option was removed from consideration
3. The same process was repeated for:
  - Priority 2
  - Priority 3

This method ensures each final priority reflects the next most important issue after higher-ranked concerns are accounted for.

## Another Option to Analyze This Data

### Weighted Ranking Approach

Instead of elimination, assign weights like so:

- Priority 1 = 3 points
- Priority 2 = 2 points
- Priority 3 = 1 point

This approach shows overall importance, not just top picks. It is useful for identifying broadly supported issues vs. polarizing ones.

Here is a table with the weighted ranking approach to analyzing the data:

Option	# times ranked Priority 1	Weight of Priority 1	Points for Priority 1	# times ranked Priority 2	Weight of Priority 2	Points for Priority 2	# times ranked Priority 3	Weight of Priority 3	Points for Priority 3	Total Points
Footing	33	3	99	27	2	54	11	1	11	164
Drug Policies	27	3	81	25	2	50	19	1	19	150
Facilities	15	3	45	8	2	16	31	1	31	92
Stalls	13	3	39	17	2	34	11	1	11	84
Number of Shows	13	3	39	11	2	22	11	1	11	72
Lunging	7	3	21	16	2	32	21	1	21	74
Tack/Equipment	4	3	12	8	2	16	8	1	8	36

As you can see, the top three items are still Footing, Drug Policies and Facilities.