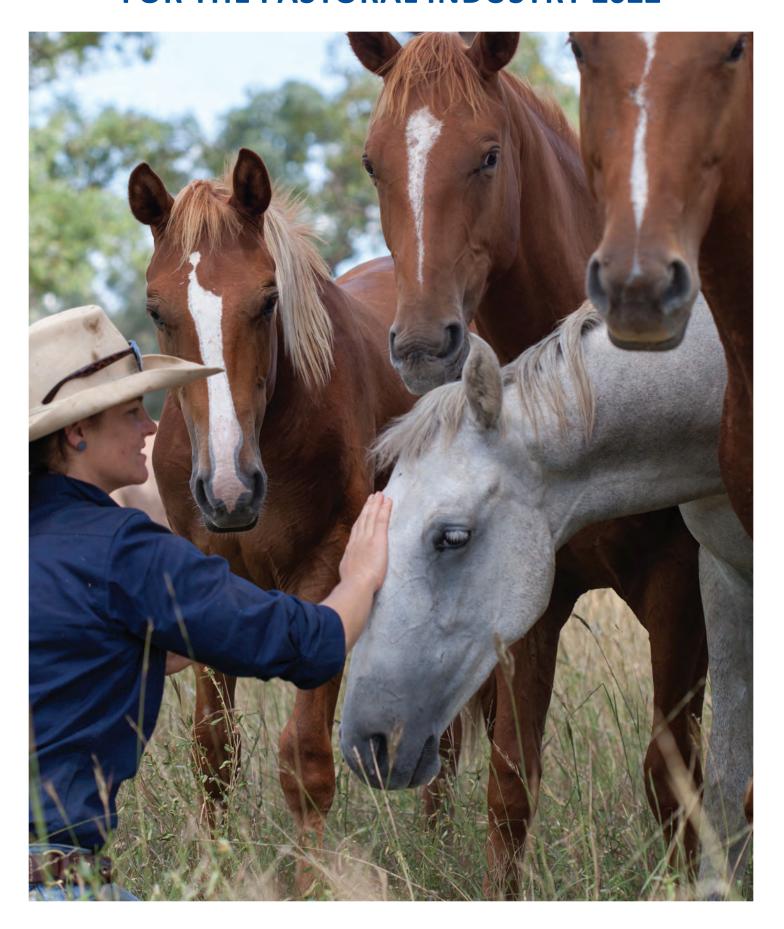
SAFE HORSE HANDLING AND RIDING GUIDE FOR THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY 2022



DISCLAIMER

This guide does not cover all hazards or risks which may arise in a workplace, and does not replace the duties under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (the WHS Regulation), which require duty holders to consider all risks associated with work.

The information presented in this Guide is intended for general use only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the Guide, the advice contained herein may not apply in every circumstance. Accordingly, WHSQ cannot be held responsible, and extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information for your specific circumstances; or actions taken by third parties as a result of information contained in the Guide.

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DEVELOPED BY THE BEEF INDUSTRY SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP IN COLLABORATION WITH THE AGRICULTURE UNIT, WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY QUEENSLAND

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HAZARD AND RISK MANAGEMENT FOR HORSE HANDLING AND RIDING IN THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY



1. BACKGROUND

This industry guide was developed by the members of the Beef Industry Safety Advisory Group (BISAG) in collaboration with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

The BISAG was formed in November 2013 and is made up of representatives from the corporate beef companies operating in Queensland. The group meets regularly to discuss health and safety issues affecting the beef industry.

The group recognised the need for an industry guide in relation to risk associated with horse riding and handling due to the absence of a regulatory Code of Practice specific to the horse-related activities undertaken in the pastoral livestock industry.

The following information is a compilation of the Safe Work Australia's "Guide to Managing Risks When New or Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses, 2014" and input from the members of the BISAG.

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2. INTRODUCTION

Horses are used widely in the pastoral industry as a tool for livestock handling, with them being one of the most common mechanisms of injury. Falls from heights are the most common nature of injury and an area that needs to be considered when undertaking a risk assessment.

Pastoral businesses commonly involve work activities with horses such as mustering livestock, feedlot pen walking and breaking-in horses. Horses pose a significant safety risk at work. One worker is hospitalised each day in Australia due to a horse related injury, at work or during recreational riding activities.

The most common causes of horse related death or injury are falls from a horse or being bitten, struck or kicked. (Guide to Managing Risks when New or Inexperienced persons interact with horses, Safe Work Australia 2014). On average there are 90 compensated injuries related to horses in the Beef Cattle industry per annum in Queensland. The average age of people injured was 29 years with a range from 15-80 years. The average number of days off work was 6.25 (range 0-337). The average compensated cost was \$14,000. Common injuries included fractures and wounds / lacerations / soft tissue trauma. The three most common body locations were lower limbs, upper limbs an trunk followed by the head and neck.

This guide aims to help businesses manage the risks involved when working with horses within the pastoral industry and to contribute to making the workplace a safe place for all. The guide may also be useful for other people who might interact with horses at a workplace, for example teachers, volunteers or visitors.

Even more significant, is the importance of owners/operators or managers and their families setting a good example for workers.

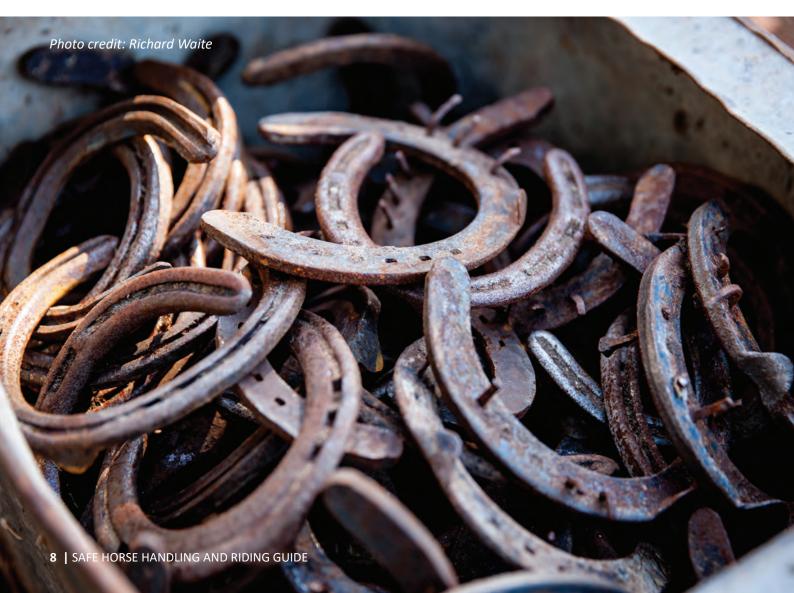
3. LEGISLATION

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (the WHS Act) provides a framework to protect the health, safety and welfare of all workers at work. It also protects the health and safety of all other people who might be affected by the work. All workers are protected by the WHS Act, including employees, contractors, sub-contractors, apprentices, trainees, volunteers, work experience students and employers who perform work.

The WHS Act (S19 - Primary duty of care) places the primary health and safety duty on a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU). The PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers at the workplace. Duties are also placed on officers of a PCBU, workers and other persons at a workplace. All duties under the WHS Act are qualified by the term 'reasonably practicable'.

The Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011, (the Regs) Chapter 3, Section 34 Duty to identify hazards, states: A duty holder, in managing risks to health and safety, must identify reasonably foreseeable hazards that could give rise to risks to health and safety.

People who carry out activities which involve interacting with horses as part of their business or undertaking have duties under the Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws to manage the risks associated with horse use. Horse riding and handling are 'foreseeable hazards' and therefore must be effectively managed.



4. MANAGING THE RISK

The risks associated with interacting with horses should be managed by following a systematic process to ensure a business has a clear understanding of levels of ability and expectations when it comes to handling and riding horses and other environmental factors, including weather and geography and the behaviour of each horse and rider, that may influence our decision-making.

The risk management process involves four steps:

- identifying hazards find out what could cause harm and what has caused harm,
- assessing risks if necessary understand the nature of the harm each hazard could cause, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening,
- controlling risks implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstances, and
- reviewing control measures to ensure they are working as planned.

In order to demonstrate a commitment to a safe workplace and a strong safety culture it is vitally important that for each step in the risk management process, the actions taken are adequately recorded.

Further guidance on the risk management process may be found in the Code of Practice: How to manage work health and safety risks:

https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/58170/Manage-WHS-risks-COP-2011.pdf

4.1. CONSULTATION

Consultation involves sharing information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and taking those views into account before making decisions about health and safety matters.

Consultation with workers and their health and safety representatives is required at each step of the risk management process. By drawing on the experience, knowledge and ideas of your workers you are more likely to identify hazards and choose effective control measures.

You should encourage your workers to report hazards and health and safety problems immediately so the risks can be managed before an incident occurs.

4.2. CONSULTING, CO-OPERATING AND CO-ORDINATING ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER DUTY HOLDERS

There may be more than one business or undertaking involved in work which includes interacting with horses. In these situations, the duty holders should share information about the hazards and risks and work together in a co-operative and co-ordinated way to eliminate or minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Further guidance on consultation can be found in the Code of Practice: Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination: <u>https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/58205/WHS-consultation-coop-coord-COP-2011.pdf</u>

5. MANAGING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH HORSE USE IN THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY

5.1. IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARDS

Effectively managing the risks associated with interacting with horses should start with identifying the hazards and assessing the risks so effective control measures can be implemented.

Identifying hazards involves finding out what could go wrong and what could cause harm for all activities involving horses and should incorporate relevant environmental factors.

Employers can identify and better understand the hazards by reviewing causes of previously recorded incidents or safety concerns at their workplace for horse related activities.

Table 1 Common hazards related to horse activities in the Pastoral Industry.

	PEOPLE	HORSE	ENVIRONMENT
•	Inexperienced riders who cannot manage and control a horse safely. Rider ability is not matched to horse experience, ie inexperienced riders who are unable to understand or anticipate horse behaviour. Rider losing control of the horse Rider not being prepared for the job prior to mounting the horse.	 Horse acting unpredictably. Horse has not been prepared for mounting. Horse acting in a defensive manner towards a person. Worker being struck or bitten by a horse. Horse trips and falls due to ground conditions. Horse reacts to being spooked. Horse is not trained or capable for the task. 	 Low hanging objects impact the rider. Terrain, ground conditions, hidden hazards e.g. logs, holes, ant beds. Dust and bad weather impacting horse. Damaged or worn equipment. Damaged fencing or gates. Horse charged by cattle. Machinery, vehicles, helicopter, loud noise, etc

nearby.

5.2. ASSESS THE RISKS

As part of the process of managing the risks, it is important to assess the horse as well as the worker's riding and handling skills before they commence any horse-related tasks. This will enable their skill to be matched to an appropriate horse and determine what tasks they can safely undertake, and identify any training required. Privately owned horses should also be assessed for competency in the tasks that will be expected of them.

Horse is fatigued or injured.

Owners of private horses should also be assessed on their handling of their own horse/s to verify competency. Observation and consultation at the workplace on how workers and others interact with horses to establish potential hazards and risks associated with horse handling.

If contractors are employed on site, then a review of contractual arrangements to ensure contractor riders and horses meet competency requirements for tasks to be undertaken.

Observe how things are done in the workplace and how workers and others interact with horses to predict what could go wrong. Reference to records of incidents or near misses, causes of incidents/near misses, lessons learned and corrective action taken are also informative when making assessments.

The hazards identified will have the potential to cause harm ranging from minor injuries to more serious injuries or death.

It is important to remember a number of hazards can interact together and this might change the risk. For example, in normal circumstances a horse might be calm and not pose a serious risk to an experienced rider. However, when ridden by a beginner the horse might be more unpredictable and the risk to the rider may be significant.

A record of these assessments should be maintained, refer to the attached Rider and Horse Assessment checklists.

For more information about how to carry out a risk assessment see the <u>How to manage work health and safety</u> risks Code of Practice 2011.

5.3. CONTROLLING THE RISKS

The best way to control a risk is to eliminate the risk from the workplace. In practice on the farm, this is not always possible or practical. If not possible, you must minimise the risks, so far as is reasonably practicable. Talking with workers when finding ways to control risks is important and their experience can help you choose the best control.

Provision of effective training and instruction is key to managing the risks associated with horse use (refer Section 6).

Some controls can be implemented easily and should be done straight away, while others will need more effort, cost and planning to resolve. You should manage the hazards with the highest risk first. If the solution is long-term then interim control measures to minimise the risk should be implemented.

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks, you should:

- Substitute the hazard with something safer e.g. replace an intermediate level horse with one suitable for a beginner rider;
- Engineering controls, e.g. use fences to physically separate people from the harm;
- In exceptional circumstance, it may be possible to receive an exemption from the requirements of the regulations where an alternative approach in place achieves the same or greater level of safety as the approach set out in the regulations: <u>https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/work-health-and-safety-laws/exemptions-to-the-regulation</u>.

If a risk remains you must then minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable by using administrative controls, ie training and/or providing and ensuring the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

5.4. REVIEW CONTROL MEASURES

Check regularly to make sure the control measures are working as planned. Reference should be made to records of incidents or near misses, causes of incidents/near misses, lessons learned, and corrective action taken. If problems or weaknesses are found you should go back through the risk management steps, review the information, and make further decisions about controls that will be more effective.

You should also review controls when there is a change at the workplace. Think about whether the changes will create a new risk that existing controls won't manage. If so, identify a new or better control. Consultation with your workers is an important part of the process.

Sometimes when reviewing controls, a new hazard or risk may be identified. Therefore, you should reassess the new hazard and if necessary, control the risk.

As part of your commitment to continuous improvement, you should also consider if changes are required to induction processes.

Further information about the risk management process can be found in the Code of Practice: <u>How to manage</u> work health and safety risks.

Use the hierarchy of controls to determine how to implement practical and effective risk management. The hierarchy of control includes elimination or substitution, collective control measures through engineering and work organisation, and personal protective equipment.



The following tables 2-4 provide a summary of common hazards, risks and examples of available controls for Riding Horses in the Pastoral Industry. Consideration should be given to the degree of risk proposed by these examples off hazards and risks and that there is an appropriate level of control for that risk. Note the list is not exhaustive and each workplace should undertake a review of the hazards and risks specific to its operations.

 Table 2 Common Hazards, Risk and their Controls relating to People when Riding Horses in the Pastoral Industry.

HAZARDS AND RISKS	CONTROLS
Inexperienced riders who cannot manage and control a horse safely	 Assess levels of competency of riders and horses. Match each rider to a horse of the appropriate assessed level. Only horses assessed as appropriate for beginner riders are to be ridden by beginner riders. A rider must never ride a horse assesse higher than their individual level of assessment. Provide training for inexperienced riders and provide on-going riding skills training. Inexperienced riders to use helmets until deemed competent in their workplace (helmets must comply with AS/NZ 3838:2006 Helmets for horse riding and horse-related activities).
Rider ability is not matched to horse's assessed level	 Assess competencies of both horses and riders for task and match appropriately. Only horses with proven history to be "quiet" should be ridden by beginner riders.
Rider is injured while riding or handling a horse	 Assess saddlery to ensure it is appropriate, well maintained and correctly fitted for the activity being undertaken. Ensure that the gullet of the saddle is suitably fitted to the horse and consider the use of a breast plate or crupper to prevent saddle shift. Ensure all equipment being used is appropriate for task i.e length of lead rope when lunging. Provide training of inexperienced riders to the tasks being undertaken including how to respond to a horse that reacts adversely to a person or situation. Wear appropriate clothing (longs) and covered in footwear, and
Rider loses control of the horse	 helmet for inexperienced riders. Ensure rider is matched to a suitable horse for their ability. Competent supervising rider to always accompany an inexperienced (non-competent) rider. Competent rider to supervise and be available to assist to regain control. Ensure the rider understands and can demonstrate safe control methods if a horse does become out of control eg. One rein stop reaction.

 Table 3 Common Hazards, Risk and their Controls relating to Horses when used in the Pastoral Industry.

HAZARDS AND RISKS	CONTROLS
HAZARDS AND RISKS Horses acting unpredictably and/or unsafely	 CONTROLS Horses and riders to undertake continual training. Assess levels of competency of horses. Horses to be regularly assessed for their suitability to competency levels of riders and identify any re-training needed. Purchased horse assigned only to experienced riders until nature/competency of horse is established. Consider breeding programs/genetics - horses should be selected for predictability and calm qualities in breeding stock. Horses to be broken in and continually trained / ridden by experienced riders at they have a good early education and don't learn bad habits. Assess horses (as needed) to identify changes in habits created by different riders. Leaders/ experienced riders to continually check in on horses to ensure that bad habits are not being created. Exclude horses with histories of unpredictable and/or adverse (bad) reactions. Limit use of stallions in environments with beginner riders.
Horses reacting in adverse manner to external factors (e.g. bolting, bucking, shying, kicking, pigrooting).	 Assess horses for competency of working quietly around dogs, motorbikes, stock whips, cattle and helicopters. Ensure riders are trained in the use of communication devices before operatio Ensure horses are accepting of communication devices. Horses should be worked or lunged in a safe area prior to mounting. Horses to be reviewed prior to work to assess for injuries, hoof problems/ soundness. Exclude horses with a history of reacting adversely to external factors. Horses are trained to work with dogs.
Herd behaviour of horses causing rider safety issues	 Train workers and others in leading a horse in/near a group of other horses. Exclude horses that behave aggressively from the herd. Ensure there is enough space for horses to move around without becoming agitated. Train people to recognize hazardous situations. Identify escape routes. Limit interaction of stallions with other horses. Awareness of mares "in season" and changing behavioural patterns.

HORSE	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	CONTROLS
Being crushed or trodden on by a horse	 Limit access to the horse yards and stables. Provide appropriate supervision and training. Identify escape routes in yards. Identify appropriate size yarding for horse handling. Identification of non-horse interaction areas. Ensure gates open both ways. Wearing of appropriate footwear. Rider training in how to work/move around a horse and understanding of horse reactions and behaviours. Dedicated safe area for veterinary work on horses.



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Table 4 Common Hazards, Risk and their Controls relating to Horses and their Environment when used in the Pastoral Industry.

ENVIRONMENT	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	CONTROLS
Weather conditions change affecting rider &/ or horse behaviour	 Have contingency plans for changes in weather. Assess if horse is right tool for the task in adverse weather conditions. All workers have a communication device available and functioning. Ensure staff change their riding styles according to changing their environment, e.g. ground conditions - wet slippery surfaces require riding style to be altered.
Others entering enclosed horse areas/yards	 Provide barriers to prevent unsupervised access e.g. child proof fencing to nearby houses. Exclude other animals like dogs from areas where horses will be present.

6. INFORMATION, TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

Provision of effective training and instruction is key to managing the risks associated with horse use, particularly for new or inexperienced workers and others who interact with horses that are more at risk.

For example, new or inexperienced workers:

- are likely to be over-confident as they don't understand the potential risks,
- are less likely to understand horse behaviour,
- may be nervous or frightened,
- are more likely to be young,
- may not understand the significance of instructions and directions, and
- are unfamiliar with the workplace environment.

Protecting new and inexperienced workers requires special consideration because:

- they are likely to have limited information to assess their skills and knowledge,
- horses of different temperaments and different levels of training will respond differently to them, and
- young people are at different stages of their personal growth and development.

Managing these risks involves:

- creating a safe work environment,
- providing induction and safe work procedures,
- providing initial and on-going training,
- providing/ensuring supplied equipment is fit for purpose and fitted for the person using it,
- undertaking regular rider competency assessment and reassess as skills develop,
- ensuring horses are fit for purpose, and
- ensuring supervisors and instructors have suitable skills and capabilities.

Instruction and Assessment

Instructing your riders about the potential hazards associated with horse use in your workplace is essential, this can be achieved through an Induction process as well as other training options such as safe work procedures and external training sessions.

Assessing the competency of riders is a critical step in ensuring their safety on horses, and this can be achieved by undertaking the rider competency assessment (example of an assessment is attached, Appendix 1). This process will identify the worker's horse-riding ability, and will help identify the following information:

- identify the training required for each rider,
- identify the horse they are most appropriately matched to,
- identify that the correct equipment is being used,
- identify the level of supervision required,
- identify if use of a horse-riding helmet is to be continued, and
- Identify when they are next to be assessed.

Supervision

Supervision is a critical safety control for new or inexperienced riders. Supervisors should ensure that:

- Horses of known breeding and temperament are provided to staff.
- Working horses are sound, healthy, fit, with correct hoof preparation and care to suit terrain and expected work.
- Staff are trained and assessed competent in the various aspects and levels of horsemanship, for the class of horse that they are to handle or ride, prior to riding unsupervised.
- Ensure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them (if any) and ensure compliance to those restrictions.
- Riders are allocated horses and tasks appropriate for their level of experience and competency.
- Safe and practical handling and riding guidelines are developed and periodically reviewed.
- Riding gear, including the saddle, is suitable, sound and kept in good order and repair.
- Riders wear appropriate clothing, footwear, headwear and protective equipment.
- PPE ie helmets, is available for use when and if required by all levels of riders.

Employees should be responsible for ensuring they:

- Conduct a safety check on horses and riding gear prior to riding.
- Satisfactorily prepare the horse for riding or the task it is about to perform.
- Follow established, safe horsemanship practices before, whilst riding and post riding.
- Do not ride horses that are beyond their ability to safely ride.
- Do not ride horses that are unsound or have physical injuries including but not limited to saddle sores, girth galls, cuts and bruises.
- Do not overheat or exhaust their horse.
- Do not, at any time, act in a manner or play practical jokes on other horsemen that might lead to injury.
- Keep riding gear, including the saddle, clean and in good order and repair.
- Report horse injuries and damaged or unserviceable riding gear to Management.
- Report, to management, any horse that is considered dangerous or otherwise unsafe to ride.
- Assist with the development and review of safe and practical handling and riding guidelines.
- When riding, wear appropriate clothing footwear and any protective equipment deemed necessary by management or the rider.

Contractors

Many property owners engage contractors to assist with mustering and other activities on their properties. If you own or manage a property, you have specific duties under the WHS Act 2011 to ensure the health and safety of workers and other persons. Health and safety duty holders cannot transfer that duty to another person. Whether the property owner is working with a contractor or the contractor is working in isolation, good consultation needs to take place, so everyone knows about potential hazards and risks associated with the activities to be undertaken. The property owner, manager and contractors all have duties to ensure the health and safety of workers and others.

For example, the owner/manager of the property consults with the contractor about the competencies of the horses and riders that are going to be used for mustering; the skill sets of workers and any other known risks such as terrain (rabbit holes/washouts) which they need to be made aware of.



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Photo credit: Richard Waite

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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX 1: HORSE ASSESSMENT (EXAMPLE ONLY)

Property / site:		
Employee Name:	Date:	
Horse (s) Name:	Station:	

Name of horse:	Is the horse privately owned? Y / N
Colour:	Horse experience:
Age:	 Green Horse – limited work in this field (e.g. 1st season of work or less)
Sex:	 Intermediate Horse – some work in this field (e.g. 2nd season of work)
Height:	 Experienced Horse – significant work in this field (e.g. 3 or more seasons of work)

Attributes	Excellent	Good	Some issues	Difficult	Comments
Trainability					
Catch and halter					
Lead					
Lunge					
Accept being tied up					
Allow all feet to be picked up					
Shoeing					
Grooming					
Bridle					
Saddle / unsaddle and adjust girth					
Accepts additions to saddle- saddle bag, pliers, wire, water bottle					

Attributes	Excellent	Good	Some issues	Difficult	Comments
Mount					
Dismount					
Open/close gates while mounted					
Behaviour under pressure					
Behaviour with other horses					
Behaviour in confined space					
Load onto truck or float					
Wash					
Respond to commands through leg pressure					
Respond to directions from rider					
Stop					
Back up					
Use of stockwhip					
Work with dogs					
Work with motorbikes					
Work with vehicles					
Work with helicopter /aeroplane					
Flexes neck left/right without resistance					
Use of Communication devices					
Use of firearms					

Evaluation result:

Suitable for:

Learner
Intermediate
Advanced

Completed by:

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX 1A: COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT - HORSE RIDER

- All Horse Riders must be supervised and assessed by a Station Manager or an authorized (competent) person as directed by the Station Manager (e.g. Overseer, Head Stockperson).
- These criteria should be assessed periodically, depending on the employee's responsibilities, required tasks and/or experience.
- The emphasis should be on the safety of the horse and rider. Protective headwear must be worn whilst riding throughout this assessment phase and until deemed competent.
- Any personal tack or equipment is to be checked by the assessor for suitability and safety of both horse and rider.

1. RIDER DETAILS

Employee Name:	Date:	
Horse (s) Name:	 Station:	

Tick to indicate if the employee has been assessed as 'Not Yet Competent' (NYC) or Competent (C);

Preparing to work with horses	NYC	С
Listens to instructions		
Prepare and check equipment is suitable for task and in sound condition, free of debris		
Approaching, catching, and restraining a horse		
Approach the horse calmly and quietly		
Catch and restrain horse in quiet and safe manner using headstall and lead		
Lead the horse correctly and secure horse using appropriate quick release knot		
Preparing a horse for work		•
Pick up and clean horse's feet, checking for soundness, bruising and or soreness and that shoes are firmly attached		
Ensure the horse is clean and in a ridable condition; free from mud, sweat, tangles and burrs		
Correctly fit bridle and saddle to horse, ensuring correct placement of all equipment		
Lunge horse to ensure free movement of horse		

Mounting Horse, Riding and Dismounting	NYC	С
Mount horse correctly, standing at the shoulder, always remaining in control of the horse		
Move horse off in a calm manner, demonstrating control whilst walking		
Trot a Figure 8, good balance and position, control of direction and pace of horse		
Canter a Figure 8, good balance and position, control of direction and pace of horse		
Bringing the horse to a stop from all gaits		
Making the horse stand still on a loose rein in a normal situation		
Appropriate techniques on inclines and declines		
Rider in control/safe around stock, displays cow sense and low stress handling		
Rider positions horse to avoid contact with livestock behind the shoulder		
Dismount the horse maintaining control at all times		
Post Riding Check of Horse and Tack		
Unsaddle the horse in a quiet and safe manner. Check the horse for any abnormalities e.g. cuts, lameness or lost shoes		
Grooms and washes down horse as required		
Clean riding gear, establishing that it is in good condition, reporting any damages to supervisor. Store tack appropriately		
Feeding		
Ensure clean water and feed available for horse after work		
If feeding grain, ensure appropriate quantities are fed to horse		
Ensure feed and feeding equipment is stored appropriately and free from contaminants e.g. dirt, insects and rodents		
Transporting		
Load horse into a truck in a calm and safe manner for horse and handler		
Unload horse at destination in a calm and safe manner for horse and rider and check soundness before riding		
	<u> </u>	

2. OVERALL COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Rider Rating:	Learner		
	Intermediate		
	Advanced		
Comments:			
Required to wear helmet?	Yes / No		
Can break in/start young horses/colts?	Yes / No		
Can ride green / young horses	Yes / No		

3. ASSESSOR DETAILS

Assessor name:	Date:	
Rider signature:	Date:	
Re-assessment date:		

3. TRAINING REQUIRED

Task / Process	Date completed	Trainer	Signature

Photo credit: Brooke Harwood