

The new Austrian legislation on animal welfare

Special provisions for horse keeping




lebensministerium.at



lebensministerium.at

New Austrian Animal Welfare Act




lebensministerium.at

- In Austria a new animal welfare act entered into force in 2005
- The federal government is now responsible for animal welfare legislation
- The former animal welfare acts of the „Länder“ (9 provinces) are repealed (with the exception of hunting and fishing)
- The execution is still in the competence of the „Länder“
- Special provisions are laid down in 12 regulations
- „1st Animal keeping regulation“ deals with keeping of farm animals

Seite 2 06.07.2005

Selected elements




lebensministerium.at

- Prohibition of conventional cage systems for laying hens in 2009 and prohibition of furnished cages
- Tethered cattle must have at least 90 days per year access to pasture or outdoor runs
- Compulsory Pre-Testing of new types of serially produced housing systems and equipment
- Animal welfare ombudsman
- Animal welfare council
- A minimum of 2% of the holdings inspected per year

Seite 3 06.07.2005

1st Animal keeping regulation



lebensministerium.at


lays down minimum requirements for the keeping of
horses, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, domestic poultry, ostriches, hoofed game, lamas, rabbits and farmed fish

>> in force since 01.01.2005

Annex 1: Minimum requirements for the keeping of horses
(including donkey, mule and hinny)

Seite 4 06.07.2005

General Conditions I



lebensministerium.at

Qualifications of the keeper


- The keeper must possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional skills
- Keeper without practical experience need special courses and training

Interventions performed on horses

- Only the following interventions are permitted:
 - Castration (only veterinarians only after effective anaesthesia)
 - Identification of horses by branding
- Clipping of sensory hairs around the eyes, nostrils and mouth is forbidden

Seite 5 06.07.2005

General conditions II



lebensministerium.at

Stable floor and litter

- The floor must be non-slippery and constructed and maintained so as not to cause injuries or suffering
- The lying area must have appropriate and dry litter and must allow all horses to lie at the same time

Climate

- A sufficient air exchange has to be ensured

Lighting

- A light intensity of 40 lux is required in stables for at least 8 hours/day
- If there is no permanent access to an outdoor run, stables must have a total translucent surface in walls or ceiling of at least 3% of the stable floor space

Seite 6 06.07.2005

Feeding I



Quality of feed and feeding time

- Roughage must be fed at least 3 times a day
- Grains or concentrate according to performance

Feeding places in group housing systems

- The keeper has to ensure, that every horse receives enough feed and water without disturbance
- One feeding place per horse
- A ratio of 1,5 horses per feeding place is allowed when horses have permanent access to roughage

Seite 7

06.07.2005

Feeding II



Requirements for feeding places

Withers height ¹	Minimum width of feeding place
WH up to 120 cm	60,00 cm
WH up to 135 cm	65,00 cm
WH up to 150 cm	70,00 cm
WH up to 165 cm	75,00 cm
WH up to 175 cm	75,00 cm
WH up to 185 cm	80,00 cm
WH more than 185 cm	85,00 cm

¹ mean of the group

Seite 8

06.07.2005

Care



Maintenance of health

- The well-being of horses must be checked daily
- Sick or injured horses must be housed, cared for and treated according to their condition
- Hooves must be cared for in regular intervals

Work

- At least one uninterrupted resting time of 8 hours a day
- After (restricted) feeding 1 h resting time
- Sick or injured horses must not work

Seite 9

06.07.2005

Movement



- **Tethered horses** must have the possibility of a daily free movement in outside runs
 - Leading by machine or by hand is no free movement
 - If the outside run is to meet the requirements for free movement, the minimum area must be twice the minimum area for individual boxes
- **Horses kept in individual or group housing systems** must have the possibility of free movement or must be used for sports or have similar movement several times a week

Seite 10

06.07.2005

Keeping of horses on pasture



Permanent keeping on pasture

- Access to a roofed weather protection with a dry, littered lying area that allows all horses to lie at the same time
- Permanently used feeding- and watering places must have concrete floor
- Sick or injured horses have to be housed separately

Fences

- Barbed wire and knotted wire fences are forbidden for pastures solely used for horses

Seite 11

06.07.2005

Tethered Housing




Keeping horses tethered is prohibited

- Transition period for existing accommodations:
31.12.2009
- **Generally prohibited for:**
 - Horses less than 30-month-old
 - Mares about to foal or mares accompanied with her foal
- **Temporary tethering** is allowed
 - If necessary for specific care and treatment
 - During mating
 - At exhibitions and events

Seite 12

06.07.2005

Individual housing in boxes I



Lebensministerium.at


Minimum requirements for Individual boxes

Withers height of the horses	Minimum area ¹	Short side
WH up to 120 cm	6,00 m ² / animal	1,8 m
WH up to 135 cm	7,50 m ² / animal	2,0 m
WH up to 150 cm	8,50 m ² / animal	2,2 m
WH up to 165 cm	10,00 m ² / animal	2,5 m
WH up to 175 cm	11,00 m ² / animal	2,6 m
WH up to 185 cm	12,00 m ² / animal	2,7 m
WH above 185 cm	14,00 m ² / animal	2,9 m

¹ This area also applicable for mares with an unweaned foal until or for two foals up to one year of age

Seite 13 06.07.2005

Individual housing in boxes II



Lebensministerium.at

Construction of boxes

- Direct visual contact to other horses
- Height of dividing walls
 - 0,8 x withers height
 - 1,3 x withers height for stallions

Movement


- Free movement or use for sports or similar several times a week

Free Movement:

- The minimum area must be twice the area of individual box
- Leading by machine or by hand is no free movement

Seite 14 06.07.2005

Group Housing I



Lebensministerium.at


Minimum area of group boxes

Withers height of the horses ¹	Area for the 1 st and 2 nd animal ²	Area for additional animals
WH up to 120 cm	6,00 m ² / animal	4,00 m ² / animal
WH up to 135 cm	7,50 m ² / animal	5,00 m ² / animal
WH up to 150 cm	8,50 m ² / animal	6,00 m ² / animal
WH up to 165 cm	10,00 m ² / animal	7,00 m ² / animal
WH up to 175 cm	11,00 m ² / animal	7,50 m ² / animal
WH up to 185 cm	12,00 m ² / animal	8,00 m ² / animal
WH above 185 cm	14,00 m ² / animal	9,00 m ² / animal

¹ mean of the group ² feeding stalls are not included

Seite 15 06.07.2005

Group housing II



Lebensministerium.at


Example for required minimum size of group boxes

Table for groups with mean withers height up to 175 cm

number of horses	total area	per animal
2	22,0 m ²	11,0 m ²
5	44,5 m ²	8,9 m ²
10	82,0 m ²	8,2 m ²

Seite 16 06.07.2005

Summary



Lebensministerium.at

- The new Austrian animal welfare act is in force since 01.01.2005
- Detailed requirements for the keeping of horses are laid down by regulation
- Tethered housing is prohibited, individual housing in boxes and group housing are regulated in detail
- Special provisions exist for management and care
- Minimum requirements are the lowest acceptable standard!

Seite 17 06.07.2005