

Jaana Ojuva (ed.)

ANIMAL WELFARE IN TOURISM SERVICES

- Examples and Practical Tips for
the Well-being of Animals Used
for Tourism in Lapland

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Contents

Eija Raasakka & Jaana Ojuva

1 Foreword 8

José-Carlos García-Rosell & Mikko Äijälä

2 Animal-based tourism in Lapland 10

2.1 Animal-based tourism in figures 10

2.2 Tourists' views on animal-based tourism 12

2.3 Tourism operators' views on animal-based tourism 15

2.4 Audits by international travel agents 23

Bibliography 24

Karoliina Majuri

3 Animal welfare 26

3.1 Defining welfare 26

3.2 Individual treatment of animals 27

3.3 Good practices of welfare of animals used for tourism 28

Bibliography 29

Karoliina Majuri & Sanna Koljonen

4 Sledge dog welfare 30

4.1 Species-typical behaviour 30

4.2 Physical well-being 31

4.3 Mental well-being 35

4.4 Stimulation 38

4.5 Housing 40

4.6 Feeding 48

4.7 Hydrating 51

4.8 Breeding 51

4.9 Handling a sled dog 56

4.10 Sled dog at work 59

4.11 After the working career 61

Bibliography	64
--------------	----

Veikko Maijala

5 Reindeer welfare 65

5.1 Species-typical behaviour	65
-------------------------------	----

5.2 Physical well-being	67
-------------------------	----

5.3 Mental well-being	71
-----------------------	----

5.4 Stimulation	72
-----------------	----

5.5 Animal premises	73
---------------------	----

5.6 Feeding in winter	76
-----------------------	----

5.7 Training	76
--------------	----

5.8 The work	78
--------------	----

Bibliography	81
--------------	----

Outi Kähkönen

6 Horse welfare 82

6.1 Species-typical behaviour	82
-------------------------------	----

6.2 Individuality	83
-------------------	----

6.3 Physical well-being	84
-------------------------	----

6.4 Mental well-being	87
-----------------------	----

6.5 Stimulation	88
-----------------	----

6.6 Animal premises	89
---------------------	----

6.7 Feeding	92
-------------	----

6.8 Training	93
--------------	----

6.9 The work	95
--------------	----

6.10 Safe and healthy customer-service horse	97
--	----

6.11 Instructing guides and grooms	99
------------------------------------	----

6.12 Customer and horse	100
-------------------------	-----

Bibliography	102
--------------	-----

Guest columns

Why should you think about responsibility towards animals? 14

Sveinn Hólmur Guðmundsson, Quality and Environmental Manager
Elding Whale Watching, Iceland

Is it worth putting so much effort on animal welfare in a truly challenging business environment? 14

Meike Witt, Sales and Product Manager and Guide
Exploring Iceland, Iceland

What does the law require from safe animal services 17

Jaakko Leinonen, Senior Inspector
Tukes, Finland

Quality starts from horses and their welfare 17

Meike Witt, Sales and Product Manager and Guide
Exploring Iceland, Iceland

Buying a responsible holiday – that is just the beginning 18

Vicki Brown, Travel Writer and Editor
Responsible Travel, UK

Should a company have a social media presence? 20

Joonas Rokka, Associate Professor of Marketing, Director of the Lifestyle Research Centre at
EMLYON Business School, France

<i>Following standards and codes</i>	22
Sveinn Hólmur Guðmundsson, Quality and Environmental Manager Elding Whale Watching, Iceland	
<i>Need for an ambitious Code of Conduct for horse riding business</i>	22
Meike Witt, Sales and Product Manager and Guide Exploring Iceland, Iceland	
<i>Demanding customers – a new phenomenon</i>	24
Jaakko Leinonen, Senior Inspector Tukes, Finland	
<i>Breeding of sled dogs</i>	51
Riitta Kempe, Researcher and Musher LUKE – Natural Resources Institute Finland, Finland	
<i>Veterinarian's FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions</i>	56
Terhi Ritvanen, Control Veterinarian Rovaniemi, Finland	
<i>Castration of reindeer used for tourism</i>	70
Marja Nuorgam, Municipal Veterinarian Inari, Finland	
<i>Safe and healthy customer-service horse</i>	97
Anna Kilpeläinen, Riding Instructor and Animal Trainer Finland	

FOREWORD

Today, animals are an important attraction in tourism. They play many different roles in tourism, such as entertainers in animal shows and activity providers on safaris. Animals have also become symbols of many destinations. Tourists mentally connect reindeer to Lapland, whales to Iceland and kangaroos to Australia. Today, destinations without any kind of animal encounters are the exception rather than the rule.

The values of tourists influence their purchase decisions. Most tourists require companies to provide animal-based tourism services in a responsible manner that promotes the well-being of the animals. Tourists are also very conscious of the potential negative effects of tourism to animals and can pay attention to shortcomings, actively sharing their positive and negative experiences online.

In addition to individual tourists, large international travel agents have also called attention to animal welfare. Some of them have already changed their policy and terminated cooperation with questionable service providers. Neglecting animal welfare is a huge risk for companies.

We have compiled into this guide information about the current situation of animal-based tourism in Lapland and good practices for supporting the well-being of the three key animals used for tourism in Lapland: sled dog, reindeer and horse. The guide has been produced as a part of the "Animal Welfare in Tourism Services" -project (2016–2018). The project was funded by the Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment/European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and carried out by the Multidimensional Tourism Institute (Lapland UAS and University of Lapland) along with the School of Industry and Natural Resources of Lapland UAS. The materials produced are freely available on the project website at www.matkailuelaimet.fi.

The law specifies the minimum requirements for the consideration of animal welfare. Companies who provide animal-based tourism services and the staff of such companies are familiar with them, and so they are not discussed in this guide. Instead, we have compiled a comprehensive package of good practices. They are examples and practical tips from which each entrepreneur can pick the ones that best apply to them. We do not take a stand on how everyone should operate because there are many different ways to promote well-being.

We have compiled the good practices from many different sources. They are all based on the collaboration with numerous Finnish and international experts consulted in the project. We have had the pleasure of getting to discuss animal welfare with a diverse group of professionals, including tourism entrepreneurs from Finland and abroad, staff of activity services companies, veterinarians, international researchers, representatives of associations, tourists, representatives of regional tourism marketing companies and international travel agents.

Our collaboration with experts produced too much information to fit into one guide, requiring us to make some cuts. For each animal, we focus on the areas considered the most significant by our partners. The

guide also includes tips for excellent existing materials focused on the well-being of horses, in particular.

The voices of our partners are also heard in the guest columns and comments from entrepreneurs. The guest columns were produced by our partners and can be found throughout the guide in Finnish and English. The columns delve deeper into a few topics connected to well-being. The comments are quotations from various animal tourism entrepreneurs and travel agents. They have been condensed and edited for standard language in order to ensure the writer's anonymity and to improve readability.

Most of the guide has been produced by our project team, each expert writing about their specialty. Maria Hakkarainen and Minni Haanpää have contributed to the guide's contents by commenting. The biggest thanks for the finished guide, however, go to the companies that have shared their knowledge and experience. Finally, we want to extend special thanks to the members of our project steering group, who actively contributed to planning and producing the project materials – Päivi Hiukka (Polar Lights Tours Oy), Pasi Ikonen (CAPE Lapland Ltd, Hetta Huskies), control veterinarians Raisa Kiimamaa (Fell Lapland) and Maarit Salmi (Rovaniemi region), Miia Merkku (Arctic Reindeer Ltd), Jussi Soppela (Lapland UAS), Anna-Kaisa Teurajärvi (Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment), Jarno Valkonen (University of Lapland) and Joonas Vola (University of Lapland/Arctic Centre).

Rovaniemi, 1 August 2018

Eija Raasakka, Project Manager and Jaana Ojuva, Communications Specialist
Multidimensional Tourism Institute (University of Lapland and Lapland UAS)

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ANIMAL-BASED TOURISM IN LAPLAND

José-Carlos García-Rosell, University of Lapland/Multidimensional Tourism Institute

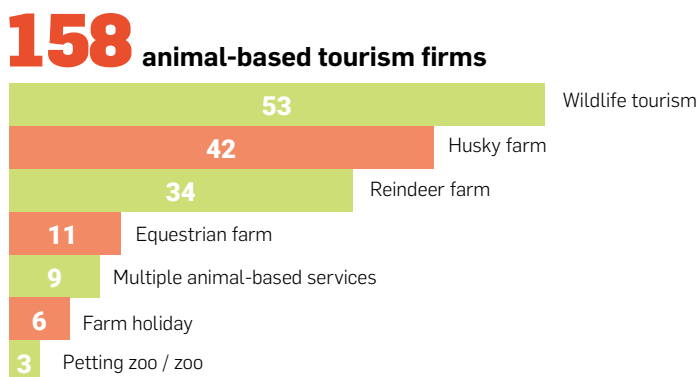
Mikko Äijälä, University of Lapland/Multidimensional Tourism Institute

2.1 Animal-based tourism in figures

Lapland's tourism operators are very aware of the great significance of animals as a part of the tourism service selection. However, information about animal-based tourism services has been sparse and lacking in many ways. This is why we conducted an extensive study of background information and the current situation. For example, we determined the number and location of animal-based tourism companies, the number of animals and economic impact of animal-based tourism in Lapland. The information is based on the situation in 2016.

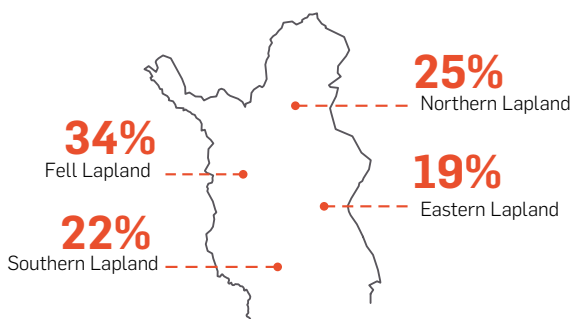
There is a total of 158 animal-based tourism companies in Lapland. Of these companies, 42 are sled dog kennels, 34 are reindeer farms and 11 are horse stables providing tourism services.

Number of companies providing animal-based tourism services in Lapland (pcs).



Animal-based tourism companies are distributed fairly evenly across Lapland. A third (34%) are situated in Fell Lapland (Levi, Ylläs, Muonio and Enontekiö). One-quarter (25%) are situated in Northern Lapland (Inari, Saariselkä and Utsjoki) and nearly as many (22%) are situated in Southern Lapland (Rovaniemi, Ranua, Tornionlaakso and Sea Lapland). Slightly under one-fifth (19%) are situated in Eastern Lapland (Pyhä-Luosto, Sodankylä, Salla and Kemijärvi).

Regional distribution of companies providing animal-based tourism services in Lapland.



Lapland has a total of 1,022 tourism companies, which produce a combined annual turnover of MEUR 630. Some 15% (158 pcs) of all tourism companies are companies, which provide animal-based tourism services and their total annual turnover is MEUR 15.1.

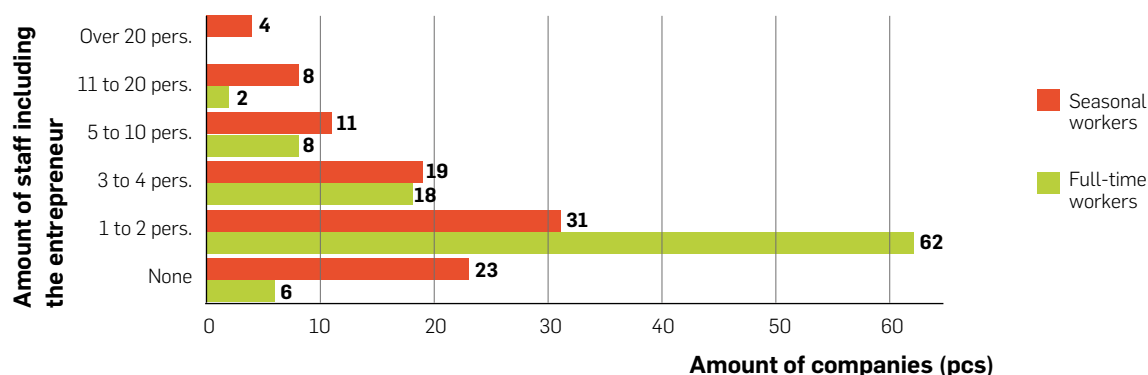
Approximately 5,400 domesticated and semi-domesticated animals and a countless number of wild animals participate in the production of animal-based tourism services. By numbers, sled dogs are the largest animal group, followed by reindeer, captive (wild) animals and horses. Calculated per head, the most productive animals from an economical point of view are reindeer; the annual turnover per reindeer was in excess of EUR 5,000. The annual turnover per horse was slightly under EUR 5,000, and the turnover per sled dog was approximately EUR 2,400.

Number of sled dogs, reindeer and horses and turnover per animal.



Two-thirds of the animal-based tourism companies operating in Lapland are micro-businesses that mainly provide full-time work for one or two people including the owner. There are many part-time workers in animal-based tourism companies, regardless of the size of the company.

Amount of staff working in animal-based tourism services, including the entrepreneur.



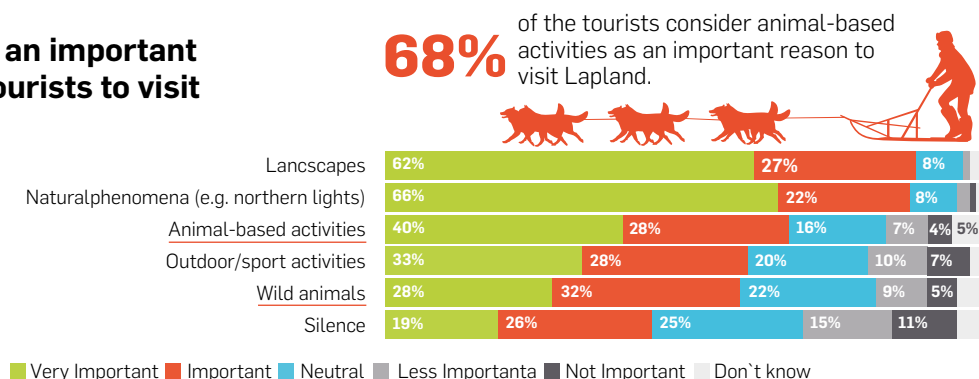
2.2 Tourists' views on animal-based tourism

An animal-based tourism entrepreneur needs to have enough background information about the consumption behaviour of tourists coming to Lapland and their attitudes towards animals and animal-based tourism.

Tourists are interested in animals and animal welfare and they are more conscious of the issues around animal-based tourism than before. Tour groups usually consist of members of the same family. Tourists usually book a trip package through a travel agent and gather information about Lapland and the services available before their journey especially through social media channels.

And what attracts international tourists to Lapland, in particular? Most tourists who come to Lapland are attracted by various natural phenomena. One of the most important of these attractions are animal-based activity services, such as sled dog and reindeer safaris.

Animals are an important reason for tourists to visit Lapland.



The values of tourists affect their purchase decisions. Most tourists (83%) see deeper values in animals and are concerned about the treatment of animals in modern society. They also note whether, for example, the products and services they purchase are produced locally and in a way that does not harm the environment.

Tourists make value-driven purchase decisions.



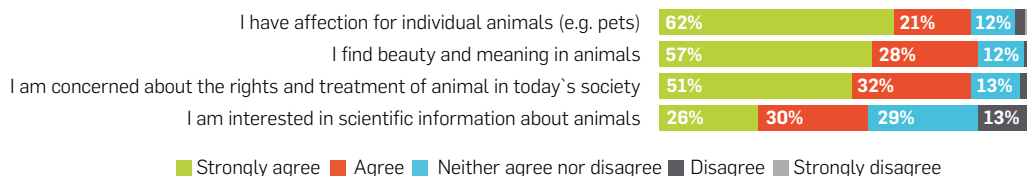
71%
prefer **products**
and **services from**
local companies.

57%
show concern about
the origins of good
they consume.

50%
prefer
environmentally
friendly products.

Tourists are interested in the treatment of animals working in tourism. They consider animal welfare and appropriate treatment of animals as important. It is noteworthy that only one-fifth of tourists would always allow animals to be viewed and photographed.

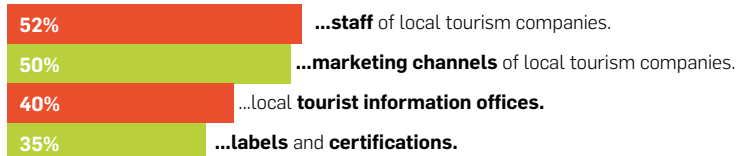
Tourists' views on animals and their position in the travel industry.



Tourists also want more information about animal welfare from the staff of local tourism companies and their various marketing channels. This should be taken into account in the marketing communications of companies and regions.

Tourists want information about animal welfare from local tourism operators.

Tourists want information about animal welfare from...



Animal-based tourism is acceptable as long as animal welfare is taken into account.

"Animals (e.g. huskies, reindeer) make travel experience more unforgettable, but I agree that they should be treated well (e.g. enough rest)."

"I do not like to participate in activity that requires animals to overwork."

"No cruelty should be allowed. Tourists should understand what impact is made on animals when they are used in tourism."

Animal-based tourism is unacceptable.

"No matter what kind of activity, animals should not be used for any kind of benefit."

"The use of huskies is deplorable. They are thin, tired and don't have a place for recovery. I have Galgos that have been rescued from maltreatment."

"Personally, I don't like activities such as reindeer and husky sledding. Animals are supposed to have freedom and their own living environment."

There is not enough communication about animal-based tourism.

"I hope that animal-based activities can give tourists more time to know about animals' life, food and training activities. I think that these are very interesting and can make us to know better animals and their daily life."

"I would like to see more of correct feeding and right treatment of animals through videos, photos etc. to ensure it is ok."

"Often we are probably unaware of the true welfare of animals we see. But we need to be aware of and educated about animals. Therefore it is necessary, but needs control."

Guest Column

Why should you think about responsibility towards animals?

Sveinn Hólmar Guðmundsson, Quality and Environmental Manager, Elding Whale Watching, Iceland

Elding is a Reykjavik, Iceland based company which was founded in year 2000 and since the beginning responsible whale watching has been one of the main priorities of the company. Since then a lot has changed as in two decades whale watching has turned from small-scale seasonal tours to year-round products whale watching being now one of the top three tourist activities in Iceland.

What is it worth putting a lot of effort and resources to promote responsible whale watching on our tours? Making optimal use of the natural resources and high quality services that our tours are built around requires us to respect nature and give as much back as we possibly can. For example by using the certificates such as EarthCheck and Blue Flag we can prove to the customers that we are looking after responsibility in our tours and therefore our rate is a little bit higher. The whales bring us the revenue and we want the situation to be like that also after ten, twenty and many more years.

Guest Column

Is it worth putting so much effort on animal welfare in a truly challenging business environment?

Meike Witt, Sales and Product Manager and Guide, Exploring Iceland, Iceland

Exploring Iceland is an Icelandic tour operator which was founded in December 2015. It offers versatile programs from family holidays to specialized activities like hiking or horseback riding. Its operation is grounded on values such as high quality tours, authentic experience through teaming up with our local partners, genuine experiences by travelling in the traditional ways with hand horses and loose herds, very good horses and experienced professional guides and tours that are fair trade and animal friendly.

We do not expect fast growth and high profits, at least to start with our target group as it will be small and limited. We still believe it is a more stable and rewarding market group and certainly growing. Money isn't everything: If you are planning on working in this industry for several years, you want to be proud of what you are selling and you want to be able to be honest about what you are selling. However, our emphasis on high quality, fair trade and animal welfare comes at a price as our tours are up to 20% more expensive than comparable tours from our competitors. This brings a big challenge for marketing more expensive tours for the benefit of animal welfare.

2.3 Tourism operators' views on animal-based tourism

Tourists' divergent perceptions of animals

The providers of animal-based tourism services do not always consider enough their highly diverse customers and their needs. In some cases, the service provider is also clearly uninterested in doing so. However, considering the needs of diverse customer groups is beneficial as it helps to build better customer relationships.

In general, tourism operators feel that customers' behaviour towards animals is largely explained by the differences between nationalities. Entrepreneurs, in particular, feel this way. They usually contrast Europeans and Asians – especially Chinese tourists. The language barrier sometimes causes problems with how to behave with animals if customers do not understand the instructions of the staff.

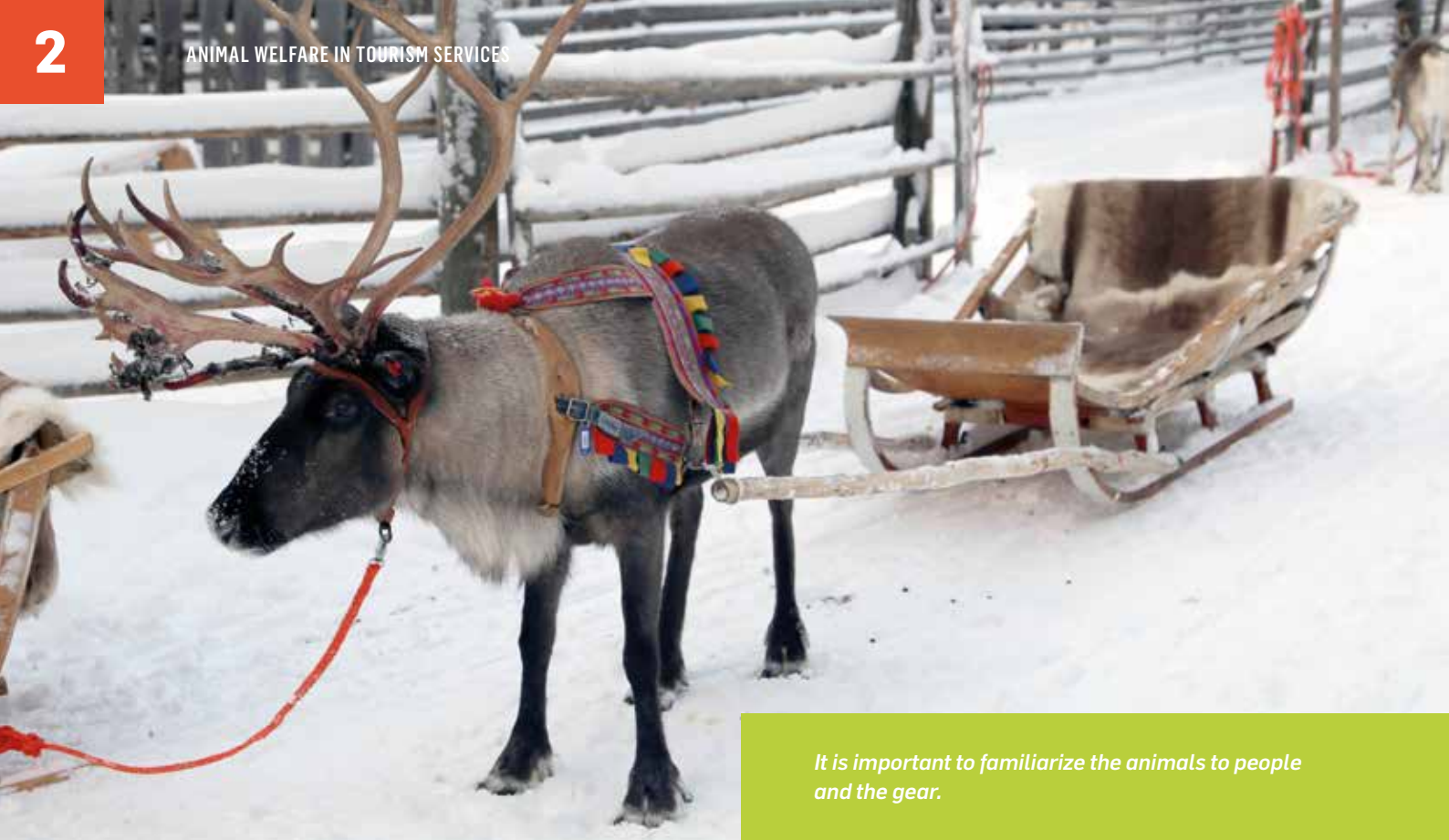
However, the differences between nationalities do not explain everything. Sometimes, the differences are explained by whether the tourists live in an urban or rural setting. Their previous experiences with animals – or a lack thereof – also affect their attitudes and behaviour. For example, fear towards animals is lessened when tourists can be in contact with the animals. Customers' views and attitudes can also be intentionally guided in a certain direction by openly and clearly telling reasons for certain practices related to animals

Animals and service quality

For a successful service package, the key factors are the attitude and expertise of the entrepreneur and guides. The staff have a great responsibility to serve as experts of animal welfare and customer service. A skilled staff can ensure, for example, service quality, animal welfare and safety.

The quality of animal-based tourism services can be ensured in many different ways. For example, quality involves the safety of the services, adapting to circumstances and anticipating them. Factors affecting the implementation of a service include the weather and actions of the tourists, among other things. The rapid growth of tourism in Lapland is a more wide-scale change and therefore more difficult to adapt to.

Companies expend a lot of resources in training the animals. The animals are made accustomed to humans and other animals and educated how to behave during safaris. Furthermore, animals are given the opportunity to keep their distance from tourists, when needed.



It is important to familiarize the animals to people and the gear.

It is vitally important that animal tourism services are safe for the animals and people. This is ensured through exact driving instruction, for example. Most safaris increase safety by using several guides and a snow mobile on sled dog safaris. Interaction between the animals and tourists can also be restricted for safety reasons.

"Driving instruction is always provided before a safari, and it can be enhanced by integrating the most important instructions into a story, which will make the customers listen and focus more. The three important instructions are: Do not let go of the sled, use the brake and always help the dogs, if needed – for example when going uphill. At the end, ask the customers to repeat these three instructions back to you." (Sled dog entrepreneur)

For travel agents, animal welfare is an important part of the service quality. However, they are not experts of animal welfare, which is where the expertise of the local entrepreneurs comes in. Indeed, entrepreneurs should actively and openly communicate what animal welfare means and how they promote it in their operations.



Tourists can be instructed using different kinds of instruction signs.

Guest Column

What does the law require from safe animal-based services?

Jaakko Leinonen, Senior Inspector, Tukes, Finland

Based on Section 5 of the Consumer Safety Act, operators must, by observing the care and skills required by the circumstances, ensure that a consumer good or service does not involve any risk to the health or property of any person. This means that the law requires a service to be designed and implemented such that it causes no risk to the participants (customers) or those involved in its provision (staff and animals).

How, then, are animals linked to the safety of services? Animals must not, through their behaviour, cause risk to customers, or customers to the animals. Animals must be provided with sufficient food, water and rest. Animals must also be permitted to conduct species-typical behaviour as much as possible during the service. All in all, ensuring safety is a multifaceted entity when animals are involved in services.

Guest Column

Quality starts from horses and their welfare

Meike Witt, Sales and Product Manager and Guide, Exploring Iceland, Iceland

We purposely do not offer many departures in a row. We want the horses and the human team to get some breaks in between tours. We want them to be well rested and we want them to look forward to welcoming our guests. Interacting with the team is essential on our tours, our clients want to get to know the locals, hear their story. We pay our partners 70–100% more per guest but in return ask them to follow our Animal Welfare policy which has strict requirements regarding the number of horses used, the age of riding horses, breaks, feeding and medical care and others. They are contract bound and failure to follow this code of conduct may be grounds for terminating our contract.

Communicating about animal welfare

Animals are an important image factor for tourism in Lapland. Any neglect connected to animal treatment has a negative effect on the tourism image of whole Lapland. Tourists are more aware of the issues connected to animal treatment and actively participate in social media discussion on the subject, giving a lot of feedback based on their experiences.

"Due to the increased transparency and information brought by the Internet, tourists are more interested in animal welfare than before." (Representative of a travel agent)

Guest Column

Buying a responsible holiday – that is just the beginning

Vicki Brown, Travel Writer and Editor, Responsible Travel, UK

Consumer education is so vital when it comes to tourism, more so than in most other areas. It's not just about your purchasing choices, it's how you act. Probably the most effective way for us to communicate responsibility are Responsible Travel's holiday reviews, which are trusted because they can only be submitted by customers who have actually been on the holidays. We ask questions like "Did you feel that your holiday benefited local people, reduced environmental impacts or supported conservation?" This makes customers think about the responsible tourism angle of their holidays, and also acts as a red flag to us if they report anything negative. If necessary, we will follow up with the tour operators to find out more about the issues. Our customers are our auditors!

Companies providing animal-based tourism services communicate about animal welfare to their customers when the customers are physically present on the company premises. Things and situations that they consider indicating welfare include clean and neat surroundings, service encounters and transparency of operations. Furthermore, some companies share information about the animals and their lives in other communication channels in social media, in particular.

However, also travel agents feel that communication about animal welfare is insufficient as planning and co-operation is lacking. Effective communications require cooperation between companies, and the role of animal-based tourism associations is seen as vital. Associations can make companies' voices heard in regional development work at a whole different level than a single entrepreneur. Furthermore, selecting the most appropriate communication channels also plays an important role. Electronic communication channels and social media, in particular, are cost-efficient when used properly.

Bulletin

Associations that promote animal tourism

In Finland, the associations working to develop animal-based tourism include Suomen Vaellustallien liitto ry (SuoVa) for horses, Porotilamatkailu ry for reindeer and Lapin Koiravaljakkoyrittäjien yhdistys ry for sled dogs. They bring together actors in their field and help to develop animal tourism from the viewpoints of both animal welfare and business operations.

SuoVa was established by trail riding entrepreneurs, and its purpose is to increase cooperation between trail riding stables. SuoVa also promotes the interests of trail riding and horse tourism companies and helps its members with development and marketing. For example, SuoVa has created the Priimatalli ("premium stable") system as a quality development tool for its members. More information is available at www.vaellustallit.fi

The objectives of Porotilamatkailu ry are to support the tourism operations of reindeer farms and reindeer owners, strengthen the cooperation between its members and create networks with other partners. The association provides tourism companies with training and tools for quality work, safety planning and business development. Examples of their activities include annual tagging events for reindeer used for tourism and a guidebook (Porotilamatkailuyrittäjän kultajyvät, "Pearls of wisdom for reindeer farm tourism entrepreneurs") created with partners. There is more information available at www.porotilamatkailu.fi

Lapin Koiravaljakkoyrittäjien yhdistys ry strives to promote the interests of Lapland's sled dog entrepreneurs, increase cooperation between the entrepreneurs and raise the profile of the dog sledding tourism on a national and international level. In particular, the association supports information distribution about the best practices connected to sled dog welfare, service quality and responsible operations.

Highlighting values in communications

One opportunity for improving communications is to use the idea of storification. Stories help to communicate about actions that match the company's values in an open and genuine way. Important values include respecting animals as individuals and traditions linked to animals. The stories produced must not be "tacked on" the activities – untruthful communications always turn against the company.

When the services offered by the company are presented in a way that involves a plot and experiences, we reach the core of storification. Stories can be built around staff members, animals, services or customer experiences. A story must be unique and rise emotions. The storytelling can include talk, text, images and video, for example. Choosing the best suited channels for the telling – whatever feels the most natural for the company – is important.

Example: Elding Whale Watching in Iceland has a long-standing commitment to producing responsible tourism services. Elding's story (website, Facebook and Twitter) speaks of a family company working full-heartedly for welfare of the whales. For example, the story includes marine biologists, who are not referred to as guides but as "naturalists", which better highlights their professional expertise in marine biology. The website contains photos of whales that have become familiar faces over the years and have been given names. In the Whale Diary, tourists can read about the events of each whale-watching tour.

Guest Column

Should a company have a social media presence?

Joonas Rokka, Associate Professor of Marketing, Director of the Lifestyle Research Centre at EMLYON Business School, France

We live in a time of transparency. It is difficult for a single company to control its messages because things spread and mutate very quickly in social media. As such, a presence in social media is not in the company's own hands – in a way, everyone is already there. However, a company can define for itself the way in which it wants to be present in social media. It can take a passive, defensive stance and try to minimise the risks. Transparency and openness are a more challenging approach. The most effective way to be in social media is to be creative, spontaneous and encouraging, which engages all of the employees in the company's social media activities.

Transparency and openness are an important part of responsibility. A company should consider what responsibility means in its own activities and what are the key facts and forums where that responsibility is communicated. A company should actively "listen" to what is being said about it in social media and, if necessary, react by correcting factual errors in what is being said. Negative comments should not be deleted but answered honestly. Each employee of the company plays a major role in the construction of the company's responsibility and related communications.

Future of a quality system for animal welfare in Lapland

Different kinds of quality systems are often seen as a positive thing. They standardize the company's operations and appear to the customer as guarantees for value or quality. Quality systems require a lot of resources, which is why companies need to work together and have the support of, for example, an industry association behind them. It is important to the customer that the quality system is well-known, but achieving this may be extremely difficult

"I consider it as important because it is the only way to create any kind of standard for small enterprises. I consider it as important even if customers may not do so. The only problem is that if there are very many different certifications, they will not read them or recognise the logos. Because of this, there is no sense in having a wall full of certificates if the customers do not understand a thing about them." (Representative of a regional marketing company)



Integrating a global-level quality system focused on animal welfare with animal-based tourism in Lapland could be difficult because there is a great deal of variation between the needs of different animal species and forms of tourism. A quality system for a smaller geographical area that takes local conditions into account would be more practical.

If it is decided to start building a quality system suited to the conditions in Lapland, the work should include experienced animal-based tourism operators, representatives of associations and at least veterinarians in terms of authorities. The system should regularly consider feedback from tourists and be as hassle-free as possible for entrepreneurs, requiring limited resources. An outside party should be responsible for its maintenance. Electronic channels could be utilised in its practical implementation.

Guest Column

Following standards and codes

Sveinn Hólmar Guðmundsson, Quality and Environmental Manager, Elding Whale Watching, Iceland

We base our work on the EarthCheck and Blue Flag's standards along with IceWhale's codes of conduct for responsible whale watching as well as following our own stricter guidelines. There is proof that following these guidelines has mitigated the negative effects of whale watching on whales. We take part in international cooperation on the future of whale watching, e.g. IWC and Planet Whale. To advance our knowledge we participate and support marine biologists research on wildlife in our area. It is essential that all our staff from vessel captains to office staff is committed to promoting sustainability and our environmental policy.

We support scientific research on cetaceans by offering a platform for the researchers on board our boats. It is also important for us that our customers have something to take with them after they have participated in our trips. We want to educate our guests and therefore all our guides are naturalists who have more advanced knowledge on whales. We also want to educate our guests about the whaling in Iceland and encourage them to support our case further by avoiding whale meat which is not a part of traditional Icelandic cuisine.

Guest Column

Need for an ambitious Code of Conduct for horse riding business

Meike Witt, Sales and Product Manager and Guide, Exploring Iceland, Iceland

In Iceland we would need an ambitious Code of Conduct for horse riding business that companies feel obliged to sign up to. In terms of regulations we would need to raise minimum requirements of horse management. We would need more monitoring on management of animals from independent agencies. In that way the monitoring would be more comprehensive and credible. To reach all these objectives we would need a clear leadership and strategy in tackling animal welfare in Icelandic tourism. After all that we should have a transparent way for customers to choose and evaluate companies in terms of how they are performing in animal welfare matters be it in the form of certifications or other kind of reward systems. On the contrary, greenwashing in forms of empty policies and certificates would be very harmful for animal welfare in tourism business.

2.4 Audits by international travel agents

Audits are an important tool for travel agents for obtaining information about the quality of the animal-based tourism services they sell. (For more information about the various quality monitoring systems used in the travel industry, see the report “Quality monitoring practices in animal-based tourism” Salmela & Äijälä, 2017). International travel agents perform audits in order to ensure that the activities of their partner companies meet the travel agent's own principles.

The principles used by many travel agents are based on the Global Welfare Guidance for Animals in Tourism guidelines created by ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents). ABTA has also created more detailed manuals for specific forms of animal-based tourism. In addition to the general guidelines, the manuals 'Working Animals' and 'Unacceptable and Discouraged Practices' are applicable to the examination of animal-based tourism in Lapland. The publications are available to ABTA members and their partner companies.

The ABTA guidelines on animal welfare are global. As such, audits performed or commissioned by travel agents apply the same guidelines regardless of the animal species or local conditions. This setting has strengths and weaknesses, which was manifested in the first animal welfare audits conducted in Lapland in winter 2017–2018.

One definite strength is that, with audits, more attention is paid to animal welfare in the travel industry. However, it is a weakness that audits, based on global criteria, do not consider the special characteristics of different animal species and the local conditions. Many audits were originally created for assessing the well-being of wild animals, such as elephants and dolphins, and so the assessments emphasise their needs. Animals such as elephants and sled dogs have completely different needs, so promoting their well-being requires completely different measures.

Audits cause major challenges for animal-based tourism companies in Lapland. For example, with sled dogs it is not unambiguous whether it is better for the dog's overall well-being to keep it on a chain or in a kennel. In audits, however, chaining animals can be seen as something negative. The reindeer is also a problematic species in terms of audits because it is not truly a wild animal. There is still little international knowledge and expertise about reindeer well-being. Indeed, the current criteria used in audits lack special criteria better suited to determining the well-being of the animals used for tourism in Lapland.

The first audits conducted in Lapland are an indication that animal welfare is becoming an important factor for companies and consumers. In the future, the number of audits will likely increase. The first experiences give an opportunity to develop audits to better correspond with the needs of the animals used for tourism and the companies operating in Lapland. Despite their shortcomings, animal welfare audits have a place in the travel industry.

Guest Column

Demanding customers – a new phenomenon

Jaakko Leinonen, Senior Inspector, Tukes, Finland

A new phenomenon that is taking root in services is safety requirements presented by customers that may exceed the requirements of the national legislation. For example, customers may request to see the "hour logs" of the animals before using the service. They want to ensure for themselves that the animal has had enough rest before starting the services and thus can enjoy the service with a clear conscience. Elevated safety requirements demonstrate that customers are increasingly interested in how services are produced, and they may have extensive advanced knowledge about the service. Not only the entrepreneur and legislation, but also customers are becoming increasingly engaged in the development of services. In the future, this customer viewpoint should be listened carefully.

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ANIMAL WELFARE

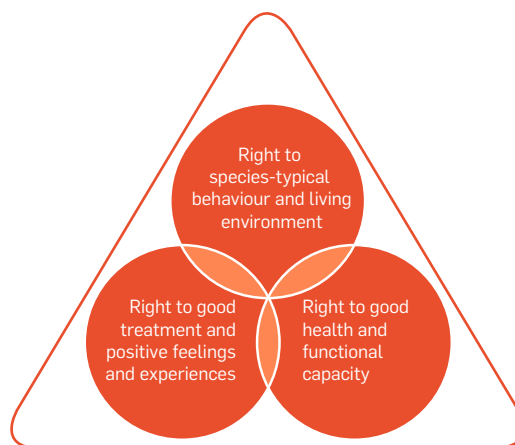
Karoliina Majuri, Lapland UAS

3.1 Defining welfare

Animal welfare refers to its own experience of its mental and physical well-being. According to the Companion and Hobby Animal Welfare Council, animals – as feeling creatures – have rights, and humans have complementary obligations towards them. This means that people have the obligation to treat animals in a way that supports their well-being.

Animals have a right to well-being and treatment that supports the realisation of said well-being.

(Figure: The Finnish Centre for Animal Welfare 2018)



Well-being is a multifaceted subject. The health and production and living conditions of an individual animal are important factors of well-being, but they alone do not tell everything relevant. Often, animal behaviour is a more viable and sensitive indicator of well-being.

Species-typical behaviour

Species-typical behaviour refers to the natural behaviour of various animal species. It is inborn and regulated by hormones. Behaviour can be divided into maintenance functions, social behavioural needs, special characteristics of young individuals and behaviour connected to reproduction and caring for young.

Important behavioural needs include social activity, sleep and rest cycles, feeding, movement, body maintenance, heat regulation, reproduction, nurture between parent and young, play behaviour and investigative behaviour.

Animals have a strong need to conduct species-typical behaviour. If an animal is unable to satisfy this need, its well-being is endangered, which may manifest as behaviour disorders. The inability to con-

duct species-typical behaviour always reduces an animal's well-being even if the behaviour disorders are not clearly visible abnormal behaviour, such as stereotypical movements, phlegmatic behaviour or restlessness.

Species-typical behaviour is extremely important in terms of animal welfare. It is a natural need to act in a certain way, not just a need that the animal satisfies through its actions, such as feeding. Conducting natural behaviour makes an animal feel good because it causes the brain to start secreting pleasure chemicals.

In order to enable species-typical behaviour, it is important to know the typical behaviour of the animal species in question. These behavioural needs are taken into account in all animal care and in the conditions to which the animal is exposed while in the care of humans. The needs must be taken into account in the actual location where the animal is kept and during its work on safaris, for example.

Sometimes, it is impossible for an animal to behave in a species-typical way while in the care of humans. Some natural behaviours may also be detrimental to the animal, such as aggressive behaviour between animals. While in the care of humans, an animal does not need to find food for itself, so it is left with a lot of free time, which can be compensated for by stimulating activities and play, for example. The species-typical behavioural needs of all animals used for tourism include the opportunity to move freely and maintain social relationships.

3.2 Individual treatment of animals

In order for an animal used for tourism to be well, its needs must be considered at an individual level. The animal's characteristics and its behaviours, preferences and social relationships affected by previous experiences all influence the handling, care and use of an animal used for tourism.

The experience of an individual animal of its own well-being is personal because it is always influenced by its genotype and environment. In individual care, it is vitally important to know the species-typical behaviour and the operating modes and needs typical of the species. The keeper must also know each animal individually in order to ensure well-being. Animals have major individual differences in, for example, the ability to withstand stress, sociability, motivation and physical activities.



Dog name plates help new workers and communicate to customers that the dogs are individuals.

3.3 Good practices of welfare of animals used for tourism

Animals used for tourism must be physically, mentally and socially well in order to enjoy comprehensive well-being. Species-typicality and individuality must be taken into account under all circumstances and in all activities that affect the animal's physical, mental and social well-being.

Areas that influence the well-being of animals used for tourism can be depicted using the following diagram. From time to time, animal keepers should assess the effects of the different areas on well-being in their work because sometimes work can “blind” you.

Factors in the well-being of animals used for tourism



The following chapters of the manual include good practices that support the well-being of the most typical animals used for tourism in Lapland – sled dogs, reindeer and horses. The practices have been compiled from the views of the experts interviewed for the project as well as previously published materials.

Veterinarian's greetings to ensure the well-being of animals used for tourism

- The Animal Welfare Act is a minimum requirement.
- The animal must be guaranteed a daily opportunity to withdraw into a stress-free environment to calm down.
- Animal health should be monitored at least twice a day and deviations should be handled swiftly, consulting the on-call veterinarian as needed.
- A dry and clean place to rest is vitally important to animals.
- Animals must look healthy and act like healthy animals – animals that are not suited to tourism must be transferred out of such tasks and placed elsewhere.
- Better care should be taken of the hydration and recovery of animals used for physical labour.
- When an animal is under the care of humans, it is at their mercy.

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The Alaskan husky is a mixture of many breeds. It is not a registered dog breed, so it has no official size or appearance description

◀ *Siberian huskies have thick coats, and because its' appearance, for many people it is 'the only real' sledge dog.*

SLEDGE DOG WELFARE

Karoliina Majuri, Lapland UAS

Sanna Koljonen, Lapland UAS

4.1 Species typical behaviour

The dog is well when it can carry out species-typical behaviour. The strength of the behavioural need varies between different breeds. Dog welfare is improved when the dog can move freely and use its sense of smell. Mental-physical activation is important to dogs.

Semi-feral dogs spend their time acquiring nourishment, resting and tending to the social relationships within the pack. Behaviour related to the acquisition of food and eating is a significant need for any dog. It entails searching for food, hunting and tearing food to pieces.

Sled dog breeds: Several breeds are well-suited to acting as sled dogs. Siberian huskies and Alaskan huskies are the breeds most commonly used as sled dogs in the tourism industry in Lapland.



4.2 The physical well-being

The dog's well-being and state of health should be evaluated on a daily basis. The assessment should always be done carefully in order to detect the smallest of changes. Changes in dogs' appetite, water consumption, urine and faeces and also their behaviour are often the first signs of health issues.

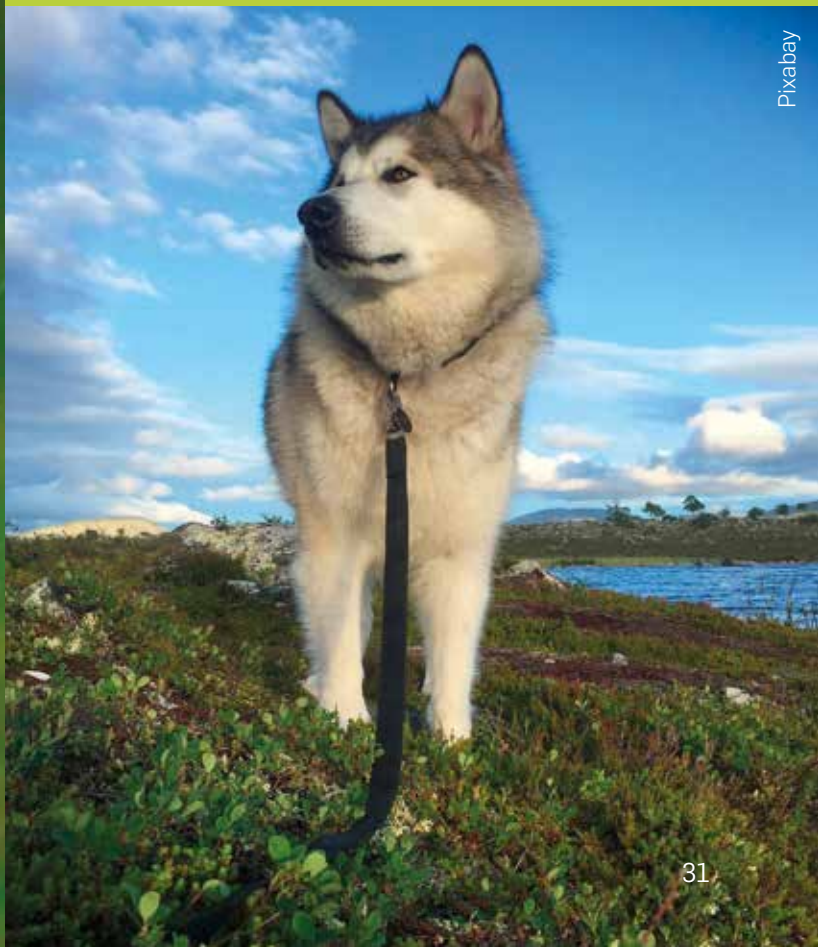
A good health inspection routine is to palpate the dogs thoroughly and bend their joints when taking off their harness after mushing. When the dogs are routinely inspected when they are healthy, it becomes easier to spot a dog that is unwell. Two minutes per dog is all it takes.

It is a good idea to give the dogs a more thorough physical examination once a week. A dog's physical well-being is estimated by a visual inspection as well as by palpating the dog.

Pixabay



The Samoyedi (on the left) and the Alaskan Malamute are also sled dogs but are less often used for tourism in Lapland.



Pixabay

OBSERVE	How?	Healthy dog	Dog that is unwell
Moving	Visual observation	Moves symmetrically	E.g. Limp -> sign of pain Head is tilted -> sign of ear infection, dental issue, injury to the cervical spine or head
Body	Palpating	Muscles are symmetrical Joints are bendy Dog does not shun away from being touched	Deviations, especially in females' nipple tissue.
Activity	Observing behaviour	Interested	Note that behaviour is breed, individual and age-specific
Eating		Healthy appetite	Difficulties swallowing Lack of appetite
State of nourishment	Body condition score and palpating	Body condition score 4–5 (on a 9-step scale)	Over and underweight are both negative issues
Coat	Visual inspection	Clean and shiny	Worn out
Nails			Chipping cracked, overlong, broken.
Pads and areas in between toes	Palpating		Skin ulcers and signs of extensive licking
Lymph nodes	Feeling: armpits, hollows of the knees, groin, throat	Lymph nodes are not identifiable	Swelling may be a sign of illness
Skin	Observation	Elastic When the scruff of the neck is pinched, it flattens in 1–2 seconds	Acute eczema (hotspot), cuts, scars, redness, external parasites, symptoms caused by snot
Body temperature	Measured from the rectum	38–39°C	
Pulse	Measured from the inner surface of the thigh by pressing the femoral artery against the thighbone	60–160 beats per minute	
Mucous membranes	Observation, pressing Mucous membranes of the eyes are inspected by pulling down the lower eyelid	Pink colour returns in 3 seconds	Light, clear or bluish
Eyes, nostrils, ears	Observation		Discharge, secretion, ulcers, itching, does not breathe with both nostrils
Mouth	Observation		Odour, slobber, dental issues
Breathing	Measurement, palpating	10–30 times per minute, both the stomach and the rib cage move	Pronounced breathing from the stomach or the sides can be a sign of pain Coughing, wheezing, other abnormal sounds Accelerated breathing can be a sign of dehydration
Genitalia and external urinary organs, anus	Observation		Discharge, swelling (also signs of heat), signs of diarrhoea or urinary issues (hair stuck together)



Letting the dogs run free before and after exertion promotes their muscle health.

Training

Dogs need exercise throughout the year. It is easier for them to reach working condition in the autumn when their physical condition has been maintained also during the summer. The actual training is started in good time before the tourism season begins so that the dogs are able to work. A four-wheeler is a safe training tool thanks to its good operability, speed indicator, breaks and lights. Training is started little by little with short distances (starting at 400 m) and plenty of breaks. More intensive training of dogs is usually started only after the outdoor temperature has dropped below +10°C.

Dogs in the same team should have a similar working condition so that they are able to keep up their work enthusiasm. In order to keep up their motivation, dogs should not be regularly asked to exceed their capability. The training is intensified while keeping an eye on when the dogs finish training looking strong. The condition of the foot pads of dogs training on gravel and hard surfaces should be observed particularly carefully. It is a good idea to keep a journal of the training.

Muscle maintenance and recovery from exertion

Even if the dog is willing to work, its workload and endurance must always be assessed individually. Muscle soreness and contraction can be seen in the way the dogs move in the team and when running free. Muscle health is promoted by ensuring the dogs get enough rest and recovery time. Good dog houses, proper clothing and insulated containers to transport the dogs to safaris ensure a well-functioning and pain-free muscle system. Massage, dietary supplements, bedding at the start point and proper timing of bringing the dogs to the team also play a great role in muscle maintenance. The dogs warm up their muscles when they get excited as the teams are collected. However, if the take-off is postponed, the dogs' muscles cool off.

Temperature regulation

It is very important to recognise when a dog is too cold or hot. The normal body temperature of a dog is 38–39°C. The temperature is lower during the night than during the day as exercise and mental stress raise the temperature. Temperature regulation is affected by the dog's age, coat, colour, size, body condition score and health.

Pups, older dogs and sick dogs are less tolerant of cold than healthy adult dogs. Ears and areas of body with less hair, such as the belly, nipples and testicles, are particularly prone to frostbite.

The early symptoms of hyperthermia, or overheating, include panting. When viewing a dog from behind during mushing, the dog's head is raised as it opens its mouth wide open to cool off. It is vital that every musher is able to recognise this tiny movement. At this point, there is still time to cool the dog off. Other symptoms include excessive salivating, fast heart rate, bright red gums, stumbling and vomiting.

Issues related to health

Dogs are dewormed 2–3 times a year. The deworming schedule should be carefully planned, as it can impact the dogs' performance in the following weeks.

If possible, racing activities should be scheduled towards the end of the tourism season, so that possible infectious diseases, such as kennel cough, do not ruin the entire season. It is a good idea to plan the dogs' vaccination programme together with a vet.

Fights between the dogs

Careful planning can help avoid fights between dogs. The handlers know the dogs, observe their behaviour and supervise them when they participate in teamwork, are running free, eating and engaging in other activities. Dogs with amiable personalities are selected for breeding and dogs that are not used in breeding are sterilised.

The dogs are taught at an early age that fighting is not tolerated. Providing stimuli, especially during holidays, also helps keep the peace. Dogs with personalities that suit each other are housed together in pens. Dogs that prefer to spend time alone are tethered. When moving inside the kennel area with dogs, ensure that there is no opportunity for them to get into a fight with tethered dogs.



Stopping a fight

Fights should be stopped immediately before the situation gets out of hand. Attempt to avert the dogs' attention by sounding a loud noise or throwing water on the dogs fighting. The safest place to grab a hold of a dog is by its hind legs or waist; this reduces the risk of being bit. However, people intervening in a dog fight should always primarily tend to their own safety.

Transport boxes can be used to limit the interaction between dogs and the risk of fights breaking out when moving to the starting point.



4.3 Mental well-being

"Boredom is the biggest issue with dogs housed in stationary kennels. The same routes, same people, same places, over and over again." (Sled dog entrepreneur)

Satisfying species typical behavioural needs and providing enough stimuli are the foundation of mental well-being. There are numerous signs of weakened mental well-being. The dog may become passive: it sleeps all the time, has a delayed response to stimuli and poor posture. The dog may also become overactive: it starts to bark too much and whine. Stereotypical obsessive compulsive symptoms include running from one end of the pen or chain to the other or running around in circles while tethered, prancing from one foot to another or chasing their tail.

Motivation

The motivation to work is an extremely important factor in mental well-being as well as the quality of work. Motivation must be maintained on a dog-specific level, as some sled dogs are more easily motivated than others are. The choice of breed may also affect the motivation to provide different types of event services. Sled dogs that are suited to their work love their job, in other words, pulling the sled and running, but their working motivation must be kept up. Once motivation is lost, it may be difficult to rediscover it.

Varying the routes keeps up motivation: making route changes, changing directions, varying runs etc. Also changing positions in the team keeps up the dogs' motivation. For example, to balance off the responsibility placed on the leading dogs, it is good to allow them to work in other positions as well. Excessive work load, stress and fatigue bring down motivation. It is, therefore, important to ensure that the teams are as balanced as is possible, so that dogs in weaker condition do not have to exert themselves too much and dogs in better condition do not lose their motivation as they have to slow down.

Also breaking brings down the dogs' motivation. For this reason, suitable clients should be selected for the dog teams, for example, elderly clients are paired together with calmer dog teams. Selecting routes that are suitable for each client group, considering the route's degree of difficulty and placing slower dog teams last ensures that the dogs are able to keep up their working motivation.

Every dog needs personal social relationships with humans.

Social relationships

A dog is a pack animal and needs social relationships with humans as well as with other dogs in order to enjoy a good quality of life. The group size within a pen must be carefully considered. In Norway, the recommendation is no more than four dogs in the same pen. Professional handlers who know that they must spend time regularly observing the dogs, preferably undetected, for example by videotaping the dogs or by observing them through a window.

Signs that a dog is suffering from social stress include withdrawing from the company of other dogs, for example, to the far end of the pen, low position, ears laid back, suspended tail and licking corners of the mouth.





Being familiar with the dogs' social relationships is highly important when selecting pen-mates.

Stress

Sled dogs experience stress in kennels for several reasons. The most common causes of stress for sled dogs in kennels is the ever-changing flow of employees, tourists, constant hubbub and going off the work, which excites the dogs as they are eager to work. The ability to tolerate stress is dog-specific; some dogs are braver and more social by nature. Good approaches to reducing the dogs' stress is to have full days off for the dogs, to place dogs that are more likely to react to stress in a quieter location at the kennel, as far away as is possible from the starting point and to ask the tourists to behave as calmly as possible around the dogs. It is also important to organise the start to be as effortless and easy as possible for both the dogs and the employees so

that it causes as little excitement and stress as possible. Good, steady and calm employees are also important as dogs are very sensitive to observing humans' mood and then adopting the same mood.



When selecting teams, the relationships between the dogs as well as the best position for each dog are considered. Dogs are able to fully focus on the task at hand, when they do not have to worry about their partner.

4.4 Stimulation

According to a Norwegian food safety scientific committee, dogs should be allowed at least ten hours of free exercise per week. Various kinds of memos, journals and calendars make it easier for animal handlers to keep track of what is happening and what has happened and when. Separate times of stimulating each group of dogs can be set in a stimulation calendar. Such notes also act as documentation of what is being done to look after the dogs' well-being.

Providing this kind of stimulation activates the brain and the muscles and prevents undesirable behaviour, such as constant sleeping, running around in circles, excessive licking, chasing the tail, depression and withdrawal, lowered working motivation and deterioration of muscle power.



Providing stimulation for the pups and socialising them go hand in hand. Spending time with the adult dogs stimulates them and also deepens the bond between the animals and their handler.

Ways of providing stimulation

A boring run can be made more interesting by adding hills and holes and bringing in rocks or tree trunks. A varied terrain activates both dogs' muscles and their mind and promotes their well-being. The run can also be partitioned into several sections used together or separately.

During the summer season, dog teams can pull carts with wheels or kick bikes. The dogs can also be harnessed to a running belt and taken for a hike and a pack of pups can be taken for a walk in the forest. The dogs' minds can also be activated by visiting different environments. Agility, obedience training, rescue and animal assistant services also activate the dogs. There is no activity that would not be suitable for sled dogs. The toys are easily broken, so playtime should always be supervised or directed by a human. Dogs can also be given wooden sticks or branches to chew.

Spreading dry food or giving bones in the pen to stimulate the dogs may cause fights to break out between pen-mates. Some dogs like to hide bones, and when these turn up, for example, in the run, they may cause surprising disputes. As bones are slowly digested, it is not a good idea to give them to the dogs too often during the tourism season.



In a run that has extensive and varying terrain, a dog can behave like a dog: run around, dig, explore, sniff around and play.



A swimming pond or paddling pool can be constructed for the dogs or a lawn sprinkler be placed in the run to help the dogs cool off during the summer heat.



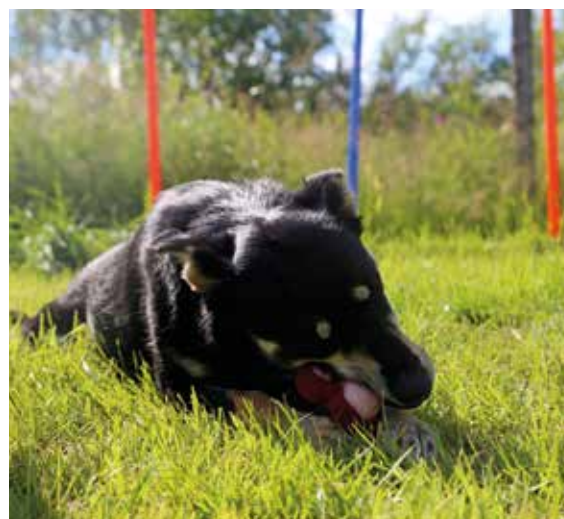
A pasture is a more durable choice than traditional lawn for a run that is covered with grass. The run is also beneficial for the dogs during the tourism season, as running free promotes their recovery.



The company of other dogs also provides important stimulation. This can be made even more interesting by occasionally changing pen-mates and having groups of dogs of varying ages spend time together.



Summer programme services and other time spent with the dogs is important summer season stimulation.



Some dogs like to play with different kinds of toys.



The kennel area should be fenced throughout to keep the dogs from escaping and stray dogs, wildlife and trespassers from entering.

4.5 Housing

When establishing a kennel, particular attention should be paid to keeping the ground dry and constructing subsurface draining, when necessary. The individual characters of dogs should be considered when placing them. If dogs are not comfortable, their location has to be changed; some dogs get stressed if they are placed too close to the starting point, others react to being tethered. Dogs who love humans prefer to stay close to the clients.



It is good to pair dogs together in pens whenever possible. Dogs that are penned or tethered alone should be placed so that they can see other dogs.



The dog house must be insulated and even heated, if the dog housed in it is not of a purely arctic breed, such as a Siberian husky.



Placing the entrance way to the side of the front wall prevents wind and snow from entering. The dog house should not be too large or too small; the dog must be able to turn around inside it.



The dog house must be raised off the ground, so that moisture and cold are not able to penetrate it.



Dog house

A good dog house promotes recovery from work and training, provides protection from the weather and gives the dogs privacy. All dogs must be provided with a clean, dry place to lie down.

Different mixtures of breeds, such as Alaskan huskies, do not endure cold as well as purely arctic breeds. Thus, their dog houses must be insulated to ensure their well-being. Dog handlers must have enough time and skills to recognise a dog that is cold. If the dog gets cold it is a sign that their well-being has not been invested in at an early enough a stage.

The dog house must have bedding throughout the year. A thick enough a layer (10–15 cm) of bedding ensures that the surface remains dry, even if the bottom of the bedding freezes.



Wind-blocks provide shelter for the entrance.



Separate entrance room adds to the warmth of the dog house.



Screws can be used to lift the roof to remove humidity from the dog house.



The service life of a dog house can be improved by adding steel reinforcements to the dog house and its entrance ways.



Wood chips and hemp fibre (in the picture) are considered better options than hay and straw, which can cause respiratory issues. A high-enough threshold helps keep the bedding inside the dog house. The bedding must be changed sufficiently often.



Many dogs enjoy spending time on the flat roofs of their dog houses.

Kennel structures

All kennel structures must be safe for the dogs. For example, the oxidation of the welding should be monitored to spot potentially hazardous spikes. The suitability of structures and their effect on welfare must be assessed individually; for example, a plank floor may give some dogs sore muscles.

It is important that also the shiest dogs receive enough human attention and company in the kennel. Pen-mates must always be selected so that they are comfortable with each other and all dogs are able to relax. It is important that pen-mates do not shy away from each other or submit to one another.

According to *Mush with Pride* (3 ed.) dogs spend more time moving around in a kennel that is rectangular than in a square-shaped kennel.



The dog pens line the kennel area so that the dogs can be allowed to run free inside.



Dense enough netting for the pens prevents fights between dogs in neighbouring pens and calms the dogs by providing visual shelter. 5x5 cm netting is durable and strong enough and the dogs are not able to stretch it as they would if the netting was larger.



Boarded separating walls offer additional peace and also protection from the sun and snow.



Dogs are not able to dig their way out as the netting or, for example, plywood is dug approximately 50 cm into the ground.



The base of the kennel penetrates water and is easy to clean as the base material is gravel (on the left) and the surface material is a denser substance with smaller grains.



Bolt cloth prevents the kennel sand from sinking into the clay ground and stops water from rising from the clay into the kennel.



Boarding the base of the kennel promotes hygiene and prevents the dogs from eating the gravel. A digging hole left in the boarding provides an activity for the dogs and they are also able to cool off in it during the summer.



Protection can also be provided with covers. Even a partial cover provides shelter from rain, creates a shadow and protects from the heat of the summer sun. Covers can also be used to stop dogs who like to climb from escaping the kennel.



The kennel doors are also functional during the winter, if the threshold is high enough. Attention should be paid to measures to prevent the dogs from escaping.





Twisting of the chain must be prevented. Daily maintenance routines include checking the mobility of the chains and shovelling snow away from the chain poles.

Tethering

According to the legislation a dog under the age of one year may not be tethered. For dogs that are older than one, however, tethering may be useful: they can learn how to untangle themselves in the gangline. Metal or choke collars are not allowed to be used for dogs that are tethered.

In order to satisfy a tethered dog's need for space, the running wire must be at least 10 metres long and the dog must have at least 2 metres of latitude on each side. When the chain is attached to a pole, the chain has to be at least 3.6 metres long. This meets the dog's need for space of 40 square metres.

If the tethered dogs can reach each other, it is vital to ensure that the chains do not get tangled.



The height of the pole can be used to stop the chain from spreading faecal matter.



Dogs that are tethered also often enjoy spending time on the roof of their dog house.



Some of the lower ribs of a working dog may show, but not the hips.

4.6 Feeding

The dogs' feeding varies according to their energy consumption. This is determined by their age, breed, size, gender, activity level, time of year and weather conditions, amount and type of work they engage in, gestation and lactation. Feeding planning can be intensified with the help of a calculation application.

Working dogs must not be over or underweight; they should have a low fat percentage and a muscular build. A dog's body condition score is evaluated by palpating the dog. The ribs, backbone and hipbones should be palpable. Looking from the side, the stomach line pulls up, and looking from above, the waist starting after the ribs grows narrow. The dog's muscle tone should be evaluated regularly, at least every 2–3 days.

Dogs that are too skinny have no energy for working to the full and they get cold easily. Dogs that are overweight cannot cope with working and suffer from heat. Maintaining an ideal body condition score all year round allows the training season in the autumn to be launched to the full effect as no time has to be spent on rehabilitating the dogs.

Consistency of nutrition

The dogs' basic diet consists of snacks, baited water and dry food.

Feeding technique

The main rule is to hydrate the dogs approximately two hours before working and to feed them only after they have finished their work. Dogs are often fed in the evening, when they have finished their work and are able to rest without feeling hungry.

When the dogs are always fed in the same order, the stress caused by expectation is reduced. This way, the dogs know they will get their food as soon as it is their turn and there is no need to fuss about it



when the first dogs receive their share. Feeding the dogs roughly at the same time every day reinforces their routine and makes life easier for both the humans and dogs. Feeding changes are made gradually.



The bowls are placed so that every dog gets to eat their own share. The bowls are located behind the dog houses or inside them, so that pen-mates do not see each other.



The bowls are never placed to the edge of the pen, where a pen neighbour may disturb the dog being fed up to the point that the dog is too scared to eat at all.



Attachment solution to a feeding opening



Feeding openings

Problems in feeding and preventing them

In order to prevent feeding problems, it is important that the feeders are aware of not just the feed type and amount but also the dog's individual preferences, habits, needs and any deviations in eating.

In order to prevent problems related to feeding, the aim is to pair the right pen-mates together. It is also important to prevent feeding problems caused by clients. Clients must be informed that especially during the mushing season, when the dogs work a lot, they have to be fed very precisely. The dogs may also be allergic to a certain ingredient, fall ill or get an upset stomach.



When pups are taught proper feeding manners from a young age, they learn to eat briskly and to appreciate their food. For example: the pups are first fed from a large, shared bowl. After this, a couple of pups are fed from the same bowl, then two and eventually every pup gets their own bowl.



4.7 Hydrating

Hydration is a particularly important aspect of a sled dog's nourishment, particularly when the dog is working. As the dogs engage in physically arduous work, it is important that they are not fed before working. This helps prevent conditions such as stomach twists and the dogs are able to perform better as they do not have to run with a full stomach.

Dehydration among dogs is caused them refusing to drink and eat when they are tired or stressed. Dogs suffering from diarrhoea, or even just stress, may end up dehydrated, even if they have constant access to water.

Recognising the symptoms of dehydration

If you pinch the scruff of the neck of a hydrated dog, the skin should flatten back to its original position in 1–2 seconds. The pinching test may be more reliable when conducted on the dog's shoulder blade. When pressing the gums of a hydrated dog, the white colour that first appears should immediately turn back to normal. The colour of the dog's urine and their habit of eating snow should be monitored. Accelerated breathing may be a sign of dehydration.

4.8 Breeding

Guest column

Breeding of sled dogs

Riitta Kempe, Research Scientist and Musher, Natural Resources Institute, Finland

Breeding can only be used to improve genetic characteristics. If the characteristic is not genetic, it cannot be improved by breeding. Therefore, sled drivers must have some understanding or experience of the genetic desirable characteristics of sled dogs as well as undesirable characteristics to be eliminated. What the "best" sled dog is like depends on its tasks and environment. For several generations, sled dogs have been selected for two different directions: dogs that run long distances and dogs that sprint, which has caused them to be genetically different types of sled dogs.

The key characteristics to be improved in sled dogs include speed and endurance, size, structure and its durability, efficiency of step and trot, coat thickness, heat and cold endurance, toughness of nature and work motivation, behaviour towards other dogs and people, appetite, ability to utilise feed and health. A sled dog that is capable of a long work or race career, healthy, good-natured (social, brave, confident, relatively tough) and easy to handle with excellent results in performance-related characteristics is a good choice for

breeding. In practice, only tried and tested lead dogs are used for breeding, because their significance for the team's performance is 70–80% and they have almost three times more offspring that run as lead dogs than other sled dogs do (Conn 1991).

Dogs that have demonstrated their abilities at top levels in the intended competition or work task are the most likely to embody the characteristics necessary for success in the said task or competition. The improvement of work motivation aims at a dog that always pulls evenly without letting the lines grow loose. The dog must not stop or try to take breaks at its own initiative or have any displacement activities that disrupt work. A balanced structure helps prevent stress injuries and makes movements more economical. If a sled dog does not move cleanly, it will get tired more quickly than the others. Incorrect movements show best at trot. Often, structural characteristics have high heritability, so a dog with a poor structure should not be used for breeding. On the other hand, small structural issues are easy to eliminate through complementary mating. The idea of complementary mating is to find a breeding partner that is clearly better in terms of the characteristic in question.

A dog has good endurance if it can run well throughout the work day or race. Safari dogs used for breeding should be able to run journeys of approximately 200 km. In competition results, a large number of wins indicates a nature suited to sled races, and a large percentage of placements reflects steadiness and reliability in competitions. The lack of results is also important and often eliminates a dog from breeding. In addition to the dog's own results, the results of its parents and siblings should also be considered. They should also be above average, preferably with results from the top level. Dogs with inheritable diseases or any undesirable characteristic at all should not be used for breeding. Sled dogs sometimes have diseases that should be eliminated, such as epilepsy, autoimmune diseases, thyroid or kidney diseases and eye diseases, such as progressive retinal atrophy (PRA). Carriers of PRA and Alaskan husky encephalopathy (AHE) can be found through genetic testing. Laryngeal paralysis, also known as "wheezers", runs in the families of some blue-eyed dogs, which is why it is not recommended to breed two blue-eyed dogs. In recent years, the back diseases spondylosis and lumbosacral transitional vertebra (LTV) have grown more common in several breeds, so medical imaging of bone structure is recommended to ensure the health of breeding dogs. Other undesirable characteristics that disqualify from breeding include aggression towards other dogs or people, timidity or the tendency to overheat, because the problem is often caused by a genetic predisposition.

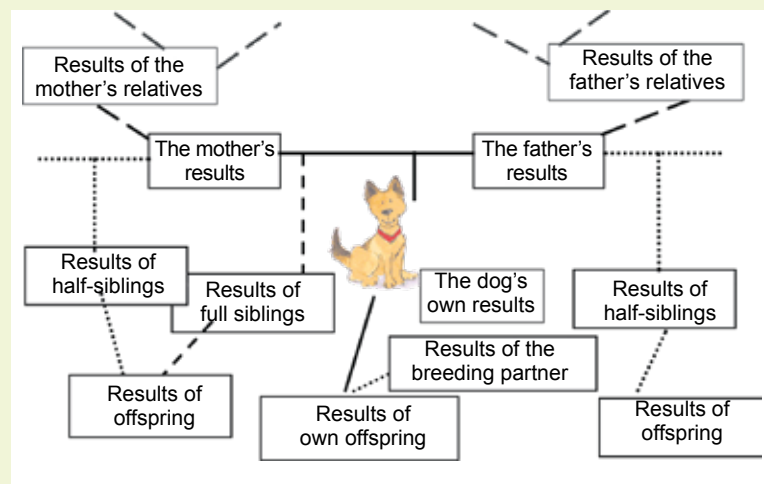
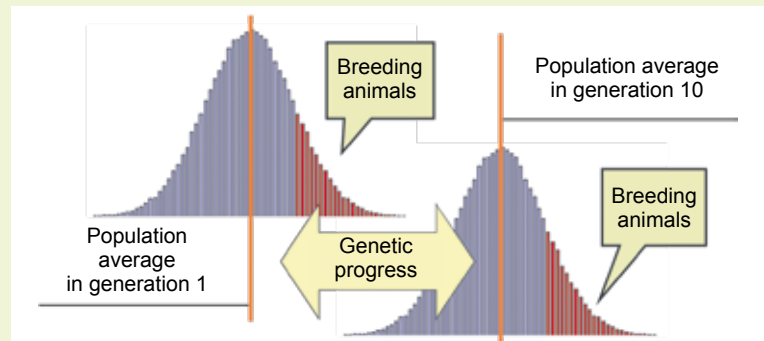


Tips for choosing breeding animals

- Set clear breeding goals.
- Do not let emotions control your breeding decisions.
- Know the characteristics to be bred.
- Select dogs from kennels with a long history of success.
- Select dogs that have run at the top level of the competition you want to win (or similar competitions).
- Select a lead dog to produce lead dogs.
- Select tested dogs rather than untested siblings or relatives.
- Select dogs with many successful full siblings or close relatives.
- A breeding dog whose offspring have performed extremely well is a safe choice.

Breeding means improving the genetic level of the entire kennel or population in terms of characteristics connected to performance, health and nature. The aim is for the next generation to be better than its parents. The aim can be achieved by only using above-average dogs as parents for breeding the next generation.

Information about relatives is the more reliable the closer the relationship is. The diagram shows the most important relatives of a dog in terms of breeding assessment; their information should be studied. The farther away we go in the genealogical table, the greater uncertainties there are in the assessment.



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Various pen signs can help identify females in heat.

Preventing unwanted litters

According to the Lapland regional veterinarians, abortion of unwanted pregnancies and putting down litters of pups are among the largest veterinary service requirements at sled dog farms. This is unethical and causes additional costs.

Accidental litters can be prevented through systematic operations, functional structures and castration/sterilisation of dogs. The symptoms of pre-heat should be observed and recognised. The company of males may lure the females to express the signs of heat more intensely: males and other females start to sniff the female's rear end and urine. The female often becomes more aggressive and urinates and marks more frequently than usually.

Dogs that are not used for breeding are systematically spayed and neutered. In the long run, this is a profitable investment on the dog. The procedure calms the dog, reduces fighting, facilitates working with the dog and is a fool proof way of preventing unwanted litters.

Pen-mates should be of the same gender and males and females should be kept at separate ends of the kennel. Females in heat must be kept in escape-proof pens. When collecting teams, it is important to know and recognise the dogs and to be familiar with their current capacity to work

Littering

Whelping dams must be observed without disturbing them. A safe and calm place is reserved for the whelping and the pups. During the winter, the dog house must be at least insulated; during the summer it is vitally important it provides adequate shelter against the insect plaque, i.e. flying, blood-sucking insects. Furthermore, the dog house must be large enough, there has to be plenty of bedding and a roof that opens or other such measure for maintenance. The dam cannot be kept in tethered as the chain may twist around one of the pups. When necessary, the edges can be rounded by placing a cover on the walls. A ramp or stairs lead from the ground to the dog house, so that the pups can climb in and out.

Insect plaque, or the mass occurrence of flying, blood-sucking insects, poses a risk to the dogs' well-being and pups in particular must be protected against it. The dogs have a varying ability to tolerate blood-sucking insects and, when necessary, adult dogs should also be moved indoors during the worst insect season.



Other dogs may pose an immediate threat to pups. The netting, particularly on the lower part of the pup pen, must be dense enough so that the pups cannot get stuck in it and that dogs in the neighbouring pens are not able to harm the pups. Pup pens should be separated from pens for adult dogs.

The pups should be handled right from the birth. When the pups are 3–16 weeks old, it is the primary time to socialise them and to form a trusting relationship with them. Pups should also be handled on an individual level, not only as a pack. Pups need a lot of new experiences and human company, but when they want to, they are allowed to sleep, and when they are sleeping, they are never brought out for clients. Pups are given toys, stimulation, safe chewing items and plenty of activities. They should not be weaned before they are eight weeks old.



The ramp ensures that the pups have access to the protection provided by the dog house whenever they want.



This designated area for whelping located inside a maintenance building is warm and dry and allows for easy monitoring of the pups.



Motorised insect collector



As the pups grow, the dam appreciates having a roof to have a moment to spend alone.



As the pups meet clients, they get used to humans and are socialised. At its best, meeting and greeting clients is a joy to both parties.



4.9 Handling a sled dog

Directing dog handlers

Every dog farm has its own style and practices when it comes to working and acting with the dogs. Therefore, every new employee must be instructed on how to work at the farm. Different farms may also provide fresh ideas and thoughts on how things could be done.

The dog farm entrepreneur and employees who have worked at the farm for several years recognise and know the dogs, remember where they are housed and how much food each of them is given, which harness is suitable to which dog and are also able to perceive the big picture and instantly know if something is wrong. This “eye for the dogs” is not developed overnight.

Induction training is best provided through practical work, but written instructions and background material are also a part of successful induction. For example, feeding instructions as well as maps and photographs/names of the dogs' locations at the kennel are good tools for helping new employees begin their work and learning process.

Different codes help staff members operate at the kennel. In addition to names, for example, squares of different colours can be used to indicate which dogs are in heat or need to be monitored during feeding, how much food they are given or possible deviances in feeding, intact males or dogs who like to chew their harnesses.

It is important to plan how guides can be reached and how they communicate and move around. Radio-phones and applications that provide real-time location data help keep track of the dog sled in real-time to see if the sled is approaching the kennel or to determine its exact location, for example, in case of an accident.

The dog handler plays the biggest role when it comes to the daily well-being of the dogs. This is why induction training, proper instruction and work experience of a new dog handler are worth the investment.

Guest Column

Veterinarian's FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

Terhi Ritvanen, Control Veterinarian, Rovaniemi, Finland

What to do if a dog blacks out in the team or the sled runs over a dog?

Stop, unfasten the dog from the team and examine it carefully. If the dog's mucous membranes are pale, its breathing is shallow, it is in pain or fails to react to its surroundings, the dog may be in shock or have internal bleeding. Contact a veterinarian.

What to do if a dog breaks bones in an accident?

First, prevent further injuries by protecting the area of the break. If the dog has a compound fracture, protect it from contaminants. Otherwise, protect the breaks by supporting the area so that the sharp ends of the bone do not cause a compound fracture. Contact a veterinarian.



What to do if a dog keeps trying to vomit but is unable to do so?

The dog may suffer from a life-threatening condition called gastric torsion, which requires urgent care. Contact a veterinarian.

What over-the-counter medicines are suitable for dogs?

Wounds can be cleaned with non-irritating local antiseptics (such as Betadine or saline solution 0.9% NaCl). Ear wash can be used for cleaning the ears when the dog has slight secretions but no painful inflammation.

Eye discharges, or conjunctival irritation, can be treated with saline solution (0.9% NaCl) applied at least twice a day. Always clean the eye before applying eye drops/ointment.

Treat diarrhoea with preparations that calm the bowels (such as Attapectin or Canikur), and treat dehydration by adding electrolyte powder to the dog's drinking water.

How to treat small wounds and skin infections?

The treatment of skin problems starts with shaving off any fur that is in the way. If there is debris in the wound, remove it. Spray the irritated area clean with water and clean it with disinfectant (such as Betadine or another non-irritating local antiseptic). Allow the irritated area dry, apply a healing ointment (such as Vetramil) and cover with a sterile bandage. If necessary, put a cone or protective shirt on the dog to prevent it from licking the wound.

How to treat a mild ear infection?

If the infection does not cause pain, the ear can be treated by cleaning it regularly with ear wash and drying it with cotton wool.

How to treat diarrhoea?

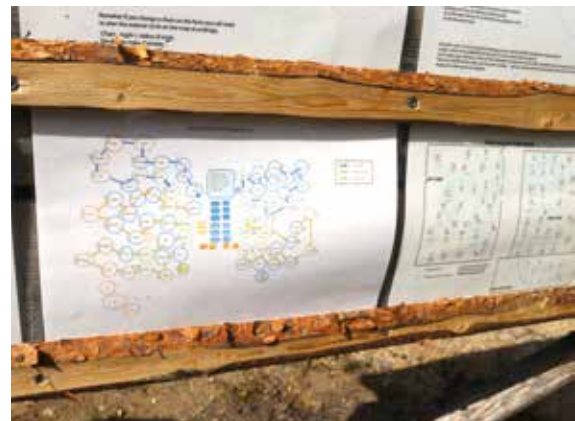
A dog with diarrhoea must be moved to a private kennel, preferably one with a heated shed, so as not to infect others. Lighten its diet and only give it small portions of nutritious fluid (such as the water from boiling rice) along with rice several times a day. The need for fluids is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ dl per kg of weight. Monitor the fluid balance by pinching a fold of skin and monitoring its fall back to place – in a normal condition, the skin falls back to place immediately. If the dog refuses to drink, you can put water into its mouth with a small syringe. Drinking water must be available at all times. You can add electrolyte powder, which is available from pharmacies, into the water to provide salt. You should also use preparations that calm the bowels (such as Attapectin or Canikur). The next day, you can add a light protein, such as cottage cheese or boiled chicken, into the rice in small portions several times a day. You can return to a normal diet gradually within approximately three days.

Rule of thumb for treating animals

You have the right treatment if every day is better than the one before. If there is no improvement, you must change the treatment and, if necessary, take the animal to a veterinarian.



Instructions related to the recognition, harnessing and team position of dogs help new staff members and they also illustrate to the clients that the farm is looking after the dogs' well-being.



Instructions regarding the order of dog maintenance and location at the kennel are also useful to new staff members.



Cloths pegs are an easy way to keep track of the dogs' whereabouts at the kennel map.



Marking the pens with the dogs' names and birth years helps new staff members.



Removable name tags go with the dogs.



Collar tags with the dog's name and colour codes indicating the gender are helpful to new staff members.



Having a guide travel ahead of the dog sled on a snowmobile provides safety for both the dogs and humans.

4.10 Sled dog at work

The snowmobile can reach the dog sleds quickly in case assistance is needed. They can also be used to carry both humans and animals, monitor the last minute condition of the route and to shoo away reindeer that may venture on the route before the dogs arrive.

When the weather turns hot or when working at extremely low temperatures, dog welfare must be monitored with special care. Selecting dogs based on their coat quality, protecting dogs with clothing and lowering the running speed are ways to enable dogs to work in extreme conditions.

Spending the night on a safari and rest

An adult dog sleeps about ten hours a day. The dogs should have houses when temporarily spending the night away from the kennel. Selecting the correct breed and individuals helps ensure the dogs can endure the cold. The dogs' age, coat and condition also affect their ability to endure cold. Allowing the dogs to sleep on snow and providing them with straw for bedding helps conserve their energy and promotes their well-being. A constructed snow wall can help protect the dogs from wind. Coats can also be used to keep the dogs warm and help them recover.



A clear daily routine at the kennel ensures that the dogs get enough rest.

Routes

When possible, the starting points of routes are located uphill and on a long stretch. The beginning of the route should ideally be even and easy terrain to ensure that the client learns the ropes of operating the sled. The clients may accidentally run over the dogs when going down a long hill. Excess snow and break grooves along the route should be removed while ensuring that enough snow for breaking remains.

The client and the animal

The client should always be given mushing instructions. Mushing instruction should be given in a location in which the client keeps focus on instructions. The person giving the instruction must have the confidence, responsibility and linguistic skills to ensure that the client is able to follow the instruction. The instructor's own motivation and style of providing information has a major effect on how the clients are able to absorb the instruction. Background information on why things are done a certain way gives the client understanding and motivation to follow the instructions. It is a good idea to prepare the clients to expect the early excitement and loudness of the dogs, as these may otherwise take them by surprise and cause unnecessary delays and the risk of the dogs becoming overexcited. Only experienced guides should take care of situations that require overtaking.



It is good to let the clients know during mushing instruction that they may need to take off for the safari without any delays so that the dogs will not get frustrated and that the dogs will calm down once they get going.

Collecting preliminary information from clients before the safari

Dog teams can be planned in good time before a safari by collecting preliminary information on the clients, such as their age, weight and previous experience either on the telephone when making reservations or using an online form. It is also a good idea to make arrangements with travel and safari agencies to ensure they also collect preliminary information.



Retired dogs also do important PR work by interacting with clients and communicating the values of the kennel and the respect paid to long-term employees.

Even though preliminary information is used to plan dog teams, the final decision regarding the client's ability to mush and the number of people allowed to ride along can only be made once the clients have arrived. For example, someone originally categorised as a child may be perfectly able to mush the sled with their size and skills, while it might be better to sit an elderly client on a sleigh so that they are best able to enjoy the safari.

4.11 After the working career

Retirement

Dogs are in need of attention and activities, even if they are no longer able to work. Elderly dogs need special attention and maintenance. They may get cold easier than younger dogs and are also more likely to suffer from heat. The working load of an ageing dog should be reduced. Old dogs have a way of balancing the pack and they may play an important role in teaching younger dogs how to act in a team.

Re-homing

A sled dog, which can no longer be used for tourism either because of retirement or another reason, can with certain prerequisites still enjoy a wonderful life as a pet or a hobby dog.

Checklist for a person giving away a dog

- Never give somebody a dog on a whim or out of pity. Dogs should only be taken and given as a result of careful consideration.
- Carefully consider whether the dog is suitable for re-homing.
- Select the dog's new family based on the dog's needs. For example, many dogs require the company of another dog in order to be happy.
- Be completely honest with the people considering giving your dog a new home. Working dogs can make for challenging pets. They have usually not been house or leash trained. They may be highly independent and take off on their own.
- Ensure that the new owners will take good care of the dog.
- Ensure that they understand they are adopting a highly active dog and what it takes to keep such a dog happy.
- Prepare the dog for re-homing. Train the dog and let it live in your home.
- Ensure that a dog that is not suitable for breeding is not used for this purpose.
- Give the dog to the new owners on a trial basis and give them the opportunity to return the dog.
- Keep in touch with the new owners and help them when necessary.
- The dog should be kept in leash for at least one month so that it has the time to get to know its new home.
- It will take about a year for the dog to be fully adapted to its new home. It is only then that the dog will begin to show its true nature, ways of reacting and habits.



Euthanising a sled dog

The average loss of a dog farm practising responsible breeding operations is about 10% of the population. Euthanising pups is not the correct way to control procreation. A dog can only be euthanised by a veterinarian or another person with adequate experience, in other words, a person licensed to carry a gun and equipped with enough experience on the physiology and handling of a dog. The person euthanising a dog must ensure that the animal is dead before any measures are taken to destroy its remains.

Animal suffering must never be prolonged. The following questions provided in *Mush with Pride* (3rd ed.) can help determine the fate of an injured dog or a dog that is weakened by old age or illness:

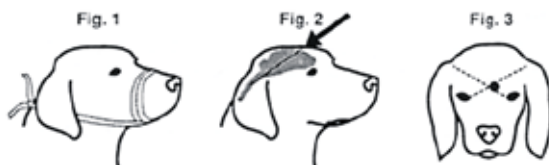
- Is veterinary attention available?
- Can you afford the necessary veterinary care?
- How likely is it that the issue or need for care will reoccur?
- Is the dog in pain? How efficiently can the pain be controlled?
- Is the dog able to eat and digest enough food to stay nourished?
- Is the dog able to move adequately?
- Is the dog able to breathe effortlessly?
- Does the dog enjoy life?

(*Mush with pride* 2009, 35)

The remains of a dog can be stored in a freezer to await burial or cremation. The remains must be stored in such a manner that animals are not able to get to them and third parties cannot see them, not even accidentally.

The dog is buried, with the permission of the landowner, to the depth of at least one metre. No plastic bags or other non-decomposable material is used in the burial. The grave must be covered immediately. The burial may not cause any hazards to the environment. This is why burial is not permitted at ground-water catchment areas or within the protective zones of water intake plants. The grave must be located at least 250 metres away from wells and slopes leading to water systems. It is a good idea to prepare some graves before the ground freezes. This way, dogs that pass away during the winter can be buried even when the ground is frozen.

Dogs



A dog is euthanised quickly and painlessly by shooting it in the brain. The euthanising must be organised in a manner that does not cause distress to other animals.

(Sled dog code of practice 2012, 51)

Read more:

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Valtioneuvoston asetus koirien, kissojen ja muiden pienikokoisten seura- ja harrastuseläinten suojelusta 8.7.2010/674.



Reindeer velvet antlers.

REINDEER WELFARE

Veikko Maijala, Lapland UAS

5.1 Species-typical behaviour

The reindeer is a part of the deer family and most closely related to the mountain reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus tarandus*), which also has some forest reindeer mixed in (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*). Reindeer herding in Finland started in the late 1400s, but the reindeer has changed very little from its wild original form. It is still important for reindeer to survive in the wild, and reindeer breeders pay attention to this when selecting reindeer for breeding. The greatest difference between reindeer and mountain reindeer is domestication, which has been necessary to make reindeer easier to herd and handle. In the wild, reindeer migrate between feeding grounds depending on the season and weather conditions, and its range can cover thousands of square kilometres. The natural diet of reindeer consists of over 350 food plants, approximately 100 of which are the most important.

Reindeer have large ranges

In summer, the metabolism of reindeer is many times faster than in winter, which imposes some requirements for pastures. Digestible plants rich in energy and proteins must be easily available. In summer, the reindeer also favours plants high in minerals and trace elements. The reindeer is classified as an intermediate ruminant. Its manner of browsing differs from roughage eaters, such as sheep and cattle, in terms of its manner of nutrient uptake. The reindeer does not eat rougher and less digestible food plants or their parts.

After summer, the amount of food plants decreases and reindeer metabolism slows down. In winter, reindeer stop growing, and nutrients are mainly needed for maintenance. Excessive protein intake in the winter is detrimental to reindeer.

Special characteristics of reindeer

The reindeer has several special characteristics that those taking care of reindeer well-being should know. The thick coat keeps reindeer warm even at extremely low temperatures. In summer, the old winter coat falls out in large wads, and the new winter coat grows in August. Reindeer have no sweat glands, and hot summer days may thus cause stress. Reindeer have an excellent sense of smell. They can smell the largest, most nutritious target under thick snow.

Reindeer have adapted to snowy conditions. They can walk on very soft snow by spreading their shovel-like toes. When reindeer move, the hoof bone joints make a cracking noise. The clacking of hooves informs other reindeer that their neighbour is moving around. The noise also serves as a warning to others if a reindeer is moving quickly or restlessly.

Thanks to its ability to sense ultraviolet radiation, the reindeer sees much better than other animals, which makes it easier for it to survive under difficult Arctic conditions. For example, the cell tissue of reindeer's most important winter food, lichen, and the cells of wolf fur absorb UV radiation. When the UV radiation from the sky and reflecting from the snow and ice is bound in food and predators that need to be avoided, it helps reindeer distinguish good and bad targets from their background. The ability to see radiation of shorter wavelength than visible light is also an advantage when moving in winter terrain. Different types of snow and ice reflect UV radiation differently, and detecting such differences shows the reindeer the best routes for moving on snow.

The male and female reindeer each regrow true bone antlers each year. The growing or velvet antler phase takes 3 to 4 months. Unlike other types of cartilage, the cartilage of growing antlers is covered by velvety skin and a lot of veins and nerves, making it very sensitive to pain and prone to injury. This limits the ability to handle and transport reindeer during the velvet antler phase from early summer to August or September, even later for calves and castrated males, or geldings. In order to familiarise reindeer used for tourism with car transport, they should be transported sufficiently and



calmly outside the velvet antler phase. These individuals that are used to transport can be safely transported to summer pasture after the tourist season, for example.

Adult males cast their antlers in autumn after the end of the mating season. Young males cast their antlers in mid-winter. Geldings may keep their antlers up until early spring. Female reindeer cast their antlers in the spring after calving.

5.2 Physical well-being

Physical conditioning and training

Early in the season, after the summer holiday, the physical condition of reindeer can be improved by walking them on leads and doing light work. As the season progresses, the workload should be increased gradually once the reindeer have regained some muscle tone. Reindeer need days off sometimes in order to recover from work and rest. Reindeer should have regular safaris to maintain good muscle tone throughout the season.

Muscle maintenance

The independent movement of reindeer maintains their muscle tone and also serves as recovery exercise after safaris and on days off.

When the pen is large enough, reindeer have the opportunity to move as they like. Reindeer tied to posts do not have opportunities for independent exercise, so they should be exercised outside their work activities. This promotes the muscle tone of reindeer and the animal's overall well-being. If an animal is tied to a post in the daytime, it can be let loose in a pen at night, for example.



Reindeer lose their winter fur in summer.



A reindeer being walked on a lead before the season starts.



A reindeer moving freely in a pen.

A healthy reindeer is watchful, alert, active and aware of its surroundings. Its eyes are clear and clean. The winter coat is thick. The reindeer moves normally and does not throw its foot sideways while walking, for example. A healthy reindeer's dung and urine are typical of its species. Reindeer health is monitored daily.

When a sick and weak reindeer gets to recover fully before going back to work, this prevents further injuries and allows the reindeer to work at maximum capacity. Recovery and treatment are done according to the condition of the reindeer, providing rest and the necessary care. If needed, a veterinarian is called in to have a look at the reindeer. It may be necessary to isolate a sick reindeer if there is a risk to its well-being or that of the other reindeer. After sick leave, a gradual return to work helps the reindeer's muscles get used to the strain of working again.



A reindeer recovering in a stall.

Animal diseases

Most of the customers taking part in reindeer farm tourism come from abroad. Some tourists come from countries that have dangerous and highly contagious animal diseases. In reindeer tourism, attention must be paid to ensuring that diseases do not spread to the reindeer. If a reindeer farm has more reindeer than those used for tourism, it is recommended to keep the groups at a sufficient distance from each other. This allows for more effective prevention of any diseases spreading to the other reindeer. A sick reindeer must not be let loose in the wild with other reindeer until the cause of the disease is ascertained.

Disease can be prevented from spreading by having customers wear clothes and footwear provided by the safari company while in the vicinity of the places where the reindeer are kept. Reducing unnecessary customer access to the areas where the reindeer are kept also reduces the risk of spreading diseases.

Many employees of reindeer tourism companies also own some reindeer. For them, special care must be taken to ensure that any diseases do not transfer from one farm to another with gear.

One route of transmission of infectious diseases is feed. Reindeer tourism farms mainly use feed



Customers wearing clothing provided by the safari company.

that they produce or gather themselves or purchase commercially. Under normal conditions, giving this feed to reindeer does not cause a risk of infectious animal diseases. There is a risk if tourists bring their own treats and give them to reindeer.

In normal reindeer husbandry, parasite prevention medicine is given once a year, usually in autumn. Reindeer used for tourism are kept in closed pens, causing a higher environmental parasite pressure, which may make it necessary to give preventative medicine more often than once a year.

Reindeer castration

As a prey animal, the reindeer does not exhibit clear signs of feeling pain. Reindeer used for tourism are castrated at the age of 2 to 4 years. Unless the reindeer are given pain relief beforehand, the operation is a painful one.

Geldings used as draught animals may grow extra tines at the base of their antlers as they grow older, which must be removed by a veterinarian.

Guest Column

Castration of reindeer used for tourism

Marja Nuorgam, Municipal Veterinarian, Inari, Finland

Gelded reindeer are calmer and easier to handle in tourism. Their purpose is not to transport tourists at the speeds of reindeer racers at the championships on the ice of Lake Inarijärvi. There are also fewer injuries because the geldings have stable and low testosterone levels. If male reindeer were allowed to keep their testicles, draught reindeer would need a lot of sick leave, especially in autumn, due to eye injuries and other wounds received in fights. Geldings also stay in good condition throughout the year, unlike entire males, whose condition may deteriorate greatly after the mating season, causing them to lose the ability to work for an extended period.

Castration is usually done in the reindeer's second year or later. There is significantly more blood circulation in the sexual organs during the mating season, so castration should not take place until after the mating season in autumn. In practice, a suitable time should be chosen based on the weather and at a time when the reindeer can be given two weeks of sick leave after the castration.

Consumers of tourism services are increasingly interested in ethical questions connected to the services they use. In tourism, activities should be transparent so that when a customer asks about ethical matters connected to the well-being of reindeer used for tourism, the actor does not need to try to hide their operating practices.

Testicles are a body part that has a lot of nerves, which makes castration a painful operation to start with. According to the Animal Welfare Decree, reindeer castration is permitted using Burdizzo castration forceps performed by a qualified person.

In general, a veterinarian is called in for the castration; after all, the visit can be combined with annual parasite prevention, for example. The veterinarian can use tranquillisers, sedatives and pain medicines to carry out the procedure humanely. Otherwise, the castration itself is similar when performed by a veterinarian – breaking the testicular blood vessels with Burdizzo forceps. Feeding the reindeer should be restricted before and after the sedation (this is agreed on with the veterinarian), and preparations should be made to keep the reindeer fully isolated until it wakes up. It is not sensible to sedate reindeer in extremely cold weather. There are long-acting and short-acting anti-inflammatory drugs, and the vet can leave more pain relief to be used on the following days, if necessary.

As a prey animal, the reindeer is good at hiding pain. It submits and hangs tough through the procedure even when pain relief is not used. Only the eyes get red. This is a species-typical behavioural model: submission and paralysis under duress. However, the reindeer has just the same nerves in the area as other species. Reindeer used for tourism are valuable, long-term work partners for tourism entrepreneurs; let them be treated as such at all times.



5.3 Mental well-being

Motivation

In order to guarantee good work motivation, reindeer must be known individually. During a reindeer's training, it is also important to know what motivates it. Some reindeer prefer to take long safaris at a calm walk, others prefer to run short rides, and the rest benefit from variety. When the activity is meaningful for the reindeer, it is also more meaningful for the keeper.



Reindeer resting at the same time.



Reindeer eating at the same time.

Social relationships

As herd animals, reindeer spend a lot of time moving, browsing and resting together. When reindeer used for tourism are kept in a pen instead of tied to a post, this enables their social interaction with their own kind. However, not all reindeer get along with each other, so there should be several pens into which the reindeer can be grouped.

Stress

Stress reduces the well-being of reindeer and can cause illness. However, stress can be avoided and reduced through many different means. Positive methods should be used in training. People should act and move calmly in the presence of reindeer. Customers must be instructed in what to do. The reindeer should be given conditions where it can conduct its natural behaviour. Other things that must be ensured include access to sufficient and clean feed and water, an appropriate ratio of work and rest as well as enough space to move around.

5.4 Stimulation

Everything that reindeer do as they browse freely in the wild is natural reindeer behaviour. This includes searching for food, digging, eating, ruminating, rubbing antlers on trees and seeing, scenting and touching other reindeer. Facilitating these activities also in the winter season, when reindeer used for tourism are in more restricted circumstances than during the summer pasture season, is important for reindeer welfare. They are also stimulating activities for reindeer.

The premises where reindeer are kept should have diverse terrain and growing trees. It is important for reindeer to get to keep company with other reindeer. Feed that is high in roughage should also be available at all times to enable rumination. In winter, reindeer spend most of their time searching for food and ruminating, and it is natural to arrange hay or silage for reindeer used for tourism. Ripping apart leaves also takes a lot of time. The digging behaviour of reindeer can be supported by putting a large treat dispensing ball filled with lichen into the pen. Each entrepreneur can come up with the best ways to provide stimulus for their own reindeer.



"Extra shrubs" have been created in the pen for the reindeer to rub their antlers against.



Minerals for salt licks and pre-wilted silage are available at all times.



The reindeer spends most of its time searching for food.





A reindeer used for tourism browsing in a large pen in summer.

5.5 Animal premises

Reindeer are browsers

In the wild, reindeer utilise large areas in their search for digestible food plants. In summer, their pasture behaviour is also affected by insects. At those times, reindeer seek out areas with less trouble with insects, such as open swamps or cool woodlands. Reindeer also strive to avoid areas where browsing is disturbed by things like predator, large numbers of people, mining or traffic routes.

Reindeer can be trained for use in tourism with patient efforts. Reindeer used for tourism are more dependent on human care than normal reindeer. Normal reindeer are dependent on care for approximately 3 to 4 months of the year if they are pen-fed during winter. The reindeer used for tourism are completely dependent on human care for approximately 6 months during winter. After that, some reindeer used for tourism are on natural pasture and some in large pens where they can browse. The place where reindeer used for tourism are kept must be planned carefully to support natural reindeer behaviour as far as possible.

Winter premises for reindeer

The group pen must be large enough so that the reindeer have enough space to withdraw from individuals that are above them in the herd hierarchy and enough room to eat. The feeding method and place should be such that, even later in winter, the reindeer will not be forced to eat their feed off dung-soiled snow.

When the pen is smaller than 200 m² per reindeer, it will grow too small as the winter progresses, and the fresh snow fit to drink will be trampled and become unusable. The pen must have water or snow freely available to all reindeer. Reindeer waiting for their work shift must also have access to snow or water. During long frosts, snow becomes trampled, making it necessary to bring in large volumes of snow for the reindeer to drink.

Reindeer used for tourism usually have a trailing rope, which may become tangled in shrubbery. The pen must be cleaned of uneaten feed (hay, silage, leaf fodder) often enough to ensure that the rope stays free and does not get tangled on anything. Pens must be safe for reindeer. They must not contain deep holes or sharp upright sticks. Pens should be such that a reindeer cannot get tangled or hurt itself on anything. Pens must not be built to have sharp or cramped corners because reindeer could pack into them, unable to make way to each other. Dividing fences should be wooden to prevent reindeer from getting tangled in mesh when making their way through the fence.

The pen should contain trees against which reindeer can rub their antlers when needed. Trees also provide reindeer with some shelter from the weather.

Preferably, separate stalls or at least posts or trees should be available for isolating reindeer for individual care, for example in case of illness.

A reindeer tourism farm should have several pen structures for different purposes. Reindeer waiting to be harnessed.



A reindeer at a post

It is not recommended to keep reindeer continuously tied to a post or tree for long periods of time. When a reindeer is kept tied, it is unable to exercise independently or conduct species-typical behaviour.

Nevertheless, if a reindeer is kept tied, it must be ensured that it cannot hurt itself on the post or tangle its rope around other posts. The rope should be long enough so that the reindeer can stretch their legs properly. Reindeer also need water or snow when tied. If the post cannot be moved, water or snow must be brought to the reindeer.

The post should be placed so that any freely moving reindeer cannot harass the tied reindeer. Reindeer still in training may be skittish of sudden movements or noises, which may trigger a flight response. Such reindeer should be placed in a quiet place near more experienced reindeer which are used for tourism. Older reindeer have a calming effect on younger reindeer. Customers should not be allowed near reindeer tied to a post.



Reindeer also interest tourists in summer. Some reindeer used for tourism browse on the reindeer tourism farm.



Fresh water is available in a penne summer pasture.



Mosquito protection reduces nuisance from insects in summer.

Summer premises for reindeer

A reindeer used for tourism can manage well at natural summer pastures without any assistance from humans. Depending on the reindeer owners' association, the reindeer has access to areas spanning up to thousands of square kilometres. In a summer pen, the care needs and intensiveness of reindeer used for tourism depend on pen size and pasture quality. In large pens, reindeer can browse more naturally and select the best food plants to feed on. In summer, reindeer need several times more nutrients than in winter, which is why the supply of energy and proteins should be ensured with additional feed even in large pens. A varying terrain ranging from open terrain to thickets reduces the nuisance from insects as long as the reindeer are allowed to freely choose their pasture.

On smaller premises, ensuring reindeer welfare requires more actions. Reindeer receive enough feed of sufficient quality and appropriate hygienic nutritional value. Fresh water is continuously available. The premises have insect protection that is also effective in hot weather. During the worst mosquito season, mosquito deterrents protect reindeer. Predators, loose dogs and unauthorised persons must be prepared for.

Feeding places and equipment are cleaned and disinfected by whitewashing, which reduces the on-ground disease pressure. The feeding places are moved annually, if possible.

The handling fence is reserved for care measures, to which the reindeer can be safely transferred. Reindeer wear a collar to avoid the need to touch velvet antlers.

5.6 Feeding in winter

Winter feeding meets the nutrition maintenance needs of reindeer. The aim for a healthy reindeer is to neither gain nor lose weight. Reindeer used for tourism also expend energy working. The energy needs of reindeer used for tourism have not been studied, which is why the literature does not contain enough guidelines on the feeding needs of reindeer used for tourism. Reindeer tourism entrepreneurs apply the feeding instructions for pen-fed reindeer to the feeding of reindeer used for tourism in the winter.

The feeding of reindeer used for tourism is also based on leafy roughage (hay or silage), energy supplement (grain-based complete feed) and mineral and trace element supplements. Typically, reindeer used for tourism are also given lichen and leaves (leaf fodder). Access to snow or water should also be ensured. Feeding is organised so that all reindeer have equal access to feed of good quality. All changes in feeding should be introduced gradually so that the rumen microbes have enough time to get used to the new feed.

Timing the reindeer's feeding and work schedules requires planning so as not to disrupt their rumination. In the wild, the eating cycle of reindeer is 2 to 4 hours. Reindeer used for tourism should be fed approximately two hours before starting work. This allows the reindeer enough time to ruminate most of the feed. Roughage, such as dry hay and silage, requires a longer rumination time. However, a reindeer pulling a sleigh is unable to ruminate normally. The effects of long-term inability to ruminate are not known, but there are probably negative effects on feed digestion and the reindeer's well-being.

Lichen is quick to digest and needs hardly any rumination. This makes it a highly suitable feed to be given before work and on breaks. Most of the daily feed should be given at the end of the work day. This leaves the reindeer the evening and night to eat and ruminate.

Whenever reindeer are fed, their behaviour should be monitored. Reindeer health should be monitored on an individual basis. If a reindeer does not come to eat with the others, the reason should be determined. If a reindeer seems to be losing weight, it should be transferred to individual feeding and its workload possibly reduced.

Reindeer may also suffer from diarrhoea, the cause of which is not always known. Most often, diarrhoea is treated by adjusting the reindeer's diet: reducing complete feed and increasing roughage and lichen. Reindeer can also be given a commercial product that balances rumen function.

5.7 Training

Reindeer are selected for training as early as their first year. The training takes 2 to 4 years. If the entrepreneurs are reindeer herders, they possess a lot of information and experience of reindeer behaviour in the wild. The entrepreneur observes the calves and assesses their suitability for pulling sleighs. Reindeer tourism entrepreneurs prefer bold calves that are large, mainly calm and curious.

The training involves several different phases. The trainee reindeer should trust people, become domesticated and allow touch. After touch, the reindeer is familiarised with wearing a halter and gradually trained to follow behind a person without the rope going taut. Before putting on a harness, the reindeer is familiarised with



a weight on the shoulder area by touching it with the hands. Only after that should you test how the reindeer reacts to a harness. Once the reindeer is accustomed to a harness, it can be given something light to pull. When the reindeer is no longer afraid of the load behind it, it can move on to pulling a sleigh. At first, someone should lead the reindeer from the front because it may be afraid of the person sitting in the sleigh. Once the reindeer is capable of pulling a sleigh on its own, it is time for the next training phase: moving in a string.

A good way to start working with a string is to put an older, good-tempered and experienced reindeer (Rudolph) in the lead position. Put a reindeer that is experienced in working with a string (Steady) in the third position. Put the trainee reindeer who is still learning how to work with a string (Trainee) in the second position between the two. Rudolph and Steady's calm behaviour calms down Trainee, who is rewarded with some lichen. Getting moving is a new thing for Trainee, who may not want to move. However, Trainee will change his mind when the driver sitting in Rudolph's sleigh offers him some lichen. This gets Trainee's sleigh moving and provides a pleasant start for learning mastery-level skills. Mastery takes time and patience.



Does this calf have a future in the tourism industry?



In reindeer roundups, reindeer used for tourism are taken to the reindeer tourism farm to prepare for the season.



A reindeer learning how to work in a string.



At a tagging event for reindeer used for tourism, the reindeer receives a plastic tag in its ear to indicate that it is a trained draught reindeer used for tourism.

"Once it has learned to walk slowly in a string and is relaxed as it walks and looks around, we start training to go around trees. But now we don't help it. The sleigh may knock into a tree, causing the reindeer to be startled, and gradually they learn that maybe they should go around those." (Reindeer entrepreneur)

In spring after the tourist season is a good time to train young reindeer in their second year. At this stage, they are familiarised with a harness. If the reindeer makes good progress, it can try pulling an empty sleigh. Most sleigh pulling drills start when the reindeer is in its third year. At that age, some reindeer can already participate in the easiest work tasks.

Once the reindeer is just about ready to be used for tourism, it can be brought to a tagging event organised by Porotilamatkailu ry in spring.

Pre-season training

In November, before the start of the tourist season, reindeer used for tourism are walked and accustomed to pulling a sleigh again after the break. Reindeer are also accustomed to working in a string. Once the first tourist groups arrive, work starts off lightly.

5.8 The work

Safaris and rides

In reindeer tourism companies, reindeer rides are typically short loops of 200 to 400 metres where the customer gets to drive the reindeer. Safaris are longer, lasting from 30 minutes to three hours, sometimes all day. On safaris, reindeer are often in a string ranging from a few reindeer to almost ten reindeer. The reindeer in the string are connected to the sleigh in front of them by a rope. On safaris, the first reindeer is managed by an employee who either leads or drives it. Some safaris are run free without a string, in which case the first reindeer is driven by a guide. Long safaris lasting over an hour should be scheduled with a stop, such as a coffee break at a lean-to, so that the reindeer can rest. This also gives the reindeer an opportunity to eat clean snow, and they can be offered lichen, which is highly digestible, for energy.



On short rides and non-stop rides, the hardest thing for the reindeer is taking off because they must pull a load and take off several times within a short period of time. To prevent the reindeer from tiring too much, it is important to control how much weight is on the sleigh. Reindeer should also be switched often enough even if their workload is not massive in terms of distance. The guide can subtly steer the largest customers to the largest reindeer and the lighter customers to the smallest reindeer.

Due to individual characteristics and preferences, not all reindeer used for tourism are suited to all work tasks or all positions in a string. Some reindeer prefer to be on the left side of the sleigh in front of them, some on the right.

Reindeer have adapted to extremely cold temperatures and feel comfortable at temperatures below -30°C . Customers may feel very chilled at such temperatures. Avoid causing the reindeer to be overly winded or strained at very cold temperatures. At such times, it is best to use slow reindeer for safaris because the cold air will not enter their lungs as quickly.



In a string, rope length may vary depending on the temperament of the individual reindeer.

Routes

Safari routes should be planned well and maintained regularly. The route must be wide enough with wide curves, gentle ascents and descents and a sturdy, holding ground. A slippery track may cause leg sprains. Routes should be maintained using a drag pulled by a snow mobile, which levels the track and roughs the surface for better hold. A spiked roller can also be used to roughen an icy track surface. Reindeer safety on safaris is increased by prohibiting any other activities on the route.



A drag keeps the track in good condition.



A drag-levelled track keeps reindeer feet healthy.

Resting periods

During high season, it must be ensured that the reindeer get enough rest. A duty roster can be drawn up for reindeer for the tourist season, indicating their work shifts and rest days. The duty roster helps ensure that all reindeer get an equal number of runs. In reindeer tourism companies with dozens of draught reindeer and several employees, the duty roster also makes it easier to plan and manage work.



The image shows a handwritten duty roster for reindeer. It is a large grid with columns for names and dates. The names are written in the first column, and the dates are written in the subsequent columns. The grid is filled with handwritten entries, indicating the work shifts and resting periods for each reindeer. The title of the roster is 'POKJEN TYST'.

"We mark in the notebook how many safaris each reindeer has done and whether it has done morning or evening safaris or charters. After December, there is a list on the break room wall where the guides mark whether the reindeer did a safari or short rides. This helps us see that all reindeer are used and not just the best ones." (Reindeer entrepreneur)

A reindeer duty roster shows work shifts and resting periods.



A well-fitted harness on a reindeer



An individual reindeer harness improves the comfort of pulling a sleigh.



The smooth slide of sleigh runners is taken care of.

Harnesses and sleighs

Well-maintained and appropriate gear is very important for the well-being of the reindeer used for tourism. The harness must fit the reindeer and the poles must be strong. At the beginning of the tourist season, the harness of each reindeer is adjusted to fit. The muscle mass of reindeer may grow over the course of the season, so the fit of its harness must be monitored and readjusted, if necessary. A leather halter feels more comfortable on a reindeer's head than round nylon ropes. Worn ropes and poles must be replaced so that they do not break during a safari. A sleigh shape that does not collide on trees but only skirts them is recommended. Sleigh runners must slide smoothly so that the heavy load puts less strain on the reindeer. After the end of the tourist season, it is time for sleigh maintenance, which includes checking the plastic parts of sleigh runners for wear.



A reindeer pulling a customer

Effort must be made to anticipate illogical actions by customers during rides. Before the safari, tell them what kind of animal the reindeer is, what it likes and dislikes. The customer needs to know, for example, that reindeer dislike loud noises, sudden movements and petting. Before setting out, customers are informed clearly with words or pictures how to act in a sleigh. The customer's actions during the safari play an important role in the well-being of the reindeer. The instructions are also important for the customer's safety.

The reindeer tourism entrepreneur strives to choose the reindeer that best suits the customer. A customer who seems restless is a good match for an older, calmer draught reindeer that is not startled by the customer's movements or noises. A young and inexperienced draught reindeer should not be chosen for a customer to drive freely. If a young draught reindeer has an unpleasant experience on a ride, it may slow down its development into a competent and healthy worker.

Read more:

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6 HORSE WELFARE

Outi Kähkönen, Lapland UAS/Multidimensional Tourism Institute

6.1 Species-typical behaviour



Horses are curious.

The horse is by nature an animal that moves around a lot. It needs a great deal of exercise to remain physically and mentally fit. The need for exercise cannot be satisfied with just riding or driving. As a prey animal, the horse usually flees when it detects something potentially dangerous. Practising how to flee is a part of the natural behavioural needs of horses. This need may be vented through unexpected spurts with a customer on their back if horses have been forced to stay in a stall due to very severe frost, for example.

Often, a person does not even notice what spooks a horse. The horse can see nearly 360°, so it can observe everything around it. On the other hand, horses are fairly bad at generalising, so a post box recently passed on the left is a new acquaintance on the right.

The horse is a social and curious herd animal that needs the company of other horses. All horses are not necessarily friends with one another, so horses must have enough space to withdraw and have peace from others.

The horse is a roaming food procurer. In the wild, it moves approximately 20 km per day. It spends as much as 15 to 17 hours on food procurement and just 2 to 3 hours sleeping and even that in shorter intervals. In human care, horses use their time very differently.

If a horse is unable to satisfy its species-typical behavioural needs, this causes stress that may be vented through behavioural problems. By observing horses, one can learn to tell what a healthy horse looks like and how it behaves. A horse is not well if it is not curious or social, does not eat with others or is disinterested in food or moves differently.

"If the horse's needs are balanced, everything is well: the horse is getting enough exercise, the feeding is proportional to consumption and the horse has enough equine company. If one of these is out of balance, there is bound to be trouble." (Horse entrepreneur)



Horse breeds used for tourism

The horses used for tourism in Finland are usually Finnhorses or Icelandic horses. The Finnhorse is the only Finnish horse breed. It is used as a draught, riding and trotter horse, and back in the day it was also irreplaceable as a war horse. The Finnhorse is a very versatile horse thanks to its performance, sturdy and balanced structure and calm nature. The average height of a Finnhorse is 15.1 hands (157 cm) at the withers, and the most common colour is chestnut.

The Icelandic horse is a sturdy working horse that can do the typical gaits as well as the tölt and the flying pace. As a cold-blooded breed, the Icelandic horse develops slowly and is not fully grown until the age of 7 or 8 years. The Icelandic horse usually stands at 13.1 to 14.1 hands (135 to 145 cm) at the withers. However, it is strong for its size and can be ridden by adults. Because the horses are raised in a herd, they are usually steady in temperament and easy to handle.



A Finnhorse taking a break on a trail ride.



Icelandic horses taking a break.

6.2 Individuality

The use of horses is influenced by many factors, such as age, experience, temperament, sex, the day's condition and shoeing, which determine how much work the horse can do and how much rest it needs.

Naturally, a horse has individual tack, feeding, shoeing, position in the string, health care and medical treatment as well as paddock arrangements. Each animal must be cared for according to its own needs because every horse is different.

The state and mood of a horse is monitored each day in the paddock, stable, at feeding time, when tacking it up for an excursion or trail ride and along the way. These observations help make decisions about which horse to choose for tasks. An experienced and skilled groom or trail riding guide can and will draw conclusions.

The horse has such a sensitive sense of touch that it can feel a fly walking on its skin. For this reason, a scratch at the withers, for example, is a better reward than a smacking pat. However, horses are individuals and what is a reward to one may be annoying or unimportant to another.



Each horse has its individual tack.



Horse work shifts, behaviour, treatment, etc., are all written down. This way, the information is accessible to all grooms and gradual changes are easier to verify. How the horse seemed with the customer, for example, is recorded in the mood notebook.

6.3 Physical well-being

The well-being of a horse can be documented by keeping track of, for example, work shifts, vaccinations, medication and dental care. Horses are monitored on an individual basis and changes in their behaviour are recorded. There is always a reason for changes.

As a prey animal, the horse does not show pain in obvious ways – the signs are often very hard to detect. The horse is unable to feign things, so there is always a reason for a limp, for example. Fortunately, the research on equine pain behaviour is quite advanced and there is a lot of information available on the subject.



This scratching session brings joy to both parties



OBSERVE	How?	Healthy horse, normal rates at rest
Breathing	Observe	12–20 breaths per minute. Calm, not pumping
Legs	Feel, observe	Dry, even heat distribution, no fluid-filled swelling. The horse does not hold up a healthy foreleg. Takes equally long steps with each leg
Hooves	Half of the fingers on the coronet band, half on the hoof Does the horse rest one leg more than the others?	Cool
Manure	Spherical, soft, breaks when it hits the ground	Horses normally defecate 14 times a day
Mucous membranes	Press the gum with a finger. It regains colour in a second or two	Light, salmon pink, slightly moist
Temperature	Take the temperature of a rested horse. The tip of the thermometer touches the wall of the rectum. The thermometer can be taped to a string	Adult horse: 37.2°–38.2°
Pulse	Feel at the back of the fetlock joint inside or outside the leg	Steady, 28–40 beats per minute
Nostrils	Observe	Clean, dry
Eyes	Observe	Clear
Gut sounds	Listen with a bare ear or stethoscope in a few different spots on each flank	There should always be sounds. No tight, jingling sounds



The expressions of a horse reveal a lot.

Muscle maintenance

Equine muscle maintenance is based on the appropriate alternation of regular exercise and rest. In customer work, the walks at the beginning and end of a ride are long enough, varying routes give the horse comprehensive exercise and gaits are varied as much as possible. A horse that shuffles along half-asleep gets stiff and awkward very quickly. An inexperienced rider can easily cause a horse to “close up”, so a competent rider must regularly ride the horse “open”.

Routes are selected such that the horse must use its body comprehensively, which means combining ascents and descents, paths and bends. When the snow is thick on the ground, footpaths where the horse must lift its feet can be used, and in summer there is wading in water and walking over tree trunks.



Just riding is not enough exercise for horses. Horses can also be exercised by a person on the ground. The best activator is a paddock mate that the horse can play with. It is possible to train as an equine massage therapist, but everyone should know the basics of equine massage. Horses treat their tight muscles by rolling on the ground.

Outside the tourist season, horses get to rest from any activities. However, the dream state for horses is not standing still, and even their digestion is based on movement. To balance work, it would be important for horses to get to have a holiday in the pasture in the summer, eating fresh grass. As the tourist season approaches, horses are ridden in a riding arena to give them exercise and check that they respond to aids. Horses can also be taken on short walks or runs on a lead, without a rider. The horse is monitored and observed for the basics, such as how it manages and recovers from exercise. If a horse is experienced and in good health, its basic condition will not deteriorate fully during periods of rest. Of course, this is individual and depends on the horse's structure and musculature, among other things.



Wading provides exercise and cooling.



Efforts to get the carrot provide exercise for the body and mind.



Shoes or no shoes

Is it better for horses to be shod or barefoot? There are two different camps on the subject with very strong opinions about it. Mistakes in hoof care can cause bad damage.

"They have studs on their shoes so that they will not slip – we move on loose stones and in all sorts of places, and it may be safer. On the other hand, it increases the risks when they kick each other." (Horse entrepreneur)

"The hoof functions much better without shoes. It can function better and more naturally." (Horse entrepreneur)

"When the winter has been snowy, I have ridden without anything at all. There is no problem. The only thing is that the Finnhorses need to be shod when they pull the sleigh. We must put boots on them and screw on studs to get traction." (Horse entrepreneur)

6.4 Mental well-being

The mental well-being of each horse is systematically monitored. If a horse is unable to satisfy its behavioural needs, the stress may manifest through various stable vices, such as cribbing or weaving. If a horse's behaviour changes, for example when it is being retrieved for work, it must be considered whether the horse's work is varying and rewarding enough or whether the horse is perhaps ill. Stress may be caused by, for example, a sense of insecurity if the horse cannot rest and eat in peace or spend time with its equine friends.

The mental well-being of a horse affects its general bearing and behaviour. During the tourist season, horses used for tourism work a lot and may get tired of routines. If a horse has unpleasant experiences with inexperienced customers, it may try to avoid getting caught by grooms to escape work. Mental well-being can be maintained by occasionally doing different and pleasant activities with the horse. Learning new skills is also good exercise for the brain.

In an environment that enables a horse to satisfy its natural behavioural needs, its stress levels stay low and it has pleasurable experiences. This shows in its behaviour as calmness and positive liveliness. For a horse, the most important thing is being able to live in a herd and an appropriate environment that enables comprehensive, species-typical behaviour and rest. In a stimulating living environment, horses spend their free time on food procurement, eating, rest, exploring their surroundings and social communication and play with other horses. This is also a good environment to recover from the stress and strain of the work, for example. On rest days, horses should be allowed to be completely unbothered by human noise and bustle. Horses may become stressed if they hear and see a large group of people arriving and think that they will have to work soon.



Going to work got fun again when there were blueberry snacks in the forest.



Horses need horseplay with friends, although it may look rough at times.



A varying pasture activates horses to move.



Carrots provide stimulus.

6.5 Stimulation

For horses, well-being means being able to conduct species-typical behaviour as much as possible.

The best stimulation is the company of other horses. The horse is a herd animal that needs the company of its own kind. However, race horses, in particular, are often kept in private paddocks due to the risk of injury. According to studies, horses are not at a high risk of serious injury even if they share a paddock with their herd. Not being allowed to socialise with other horses and satisfy species-typical herd behaviour causes greater damage to their well-being. The risk of injury increases if there is a shortage of resources, such as food. In one study, there was 50 square metres of space per horse, and each horse got its own portion at feeding time.

Food works well for stimulating and calming horses. In the wild, horses spend most of their time eating, so freely available hay is a good activity for horses. There should be several feeding points so that horses can practise their natural grazing behaviour and to ensure that every horse gets enough hay. However, the feeding points should not be so far apart that horses stop moving between them.

Other activities for horses include active toys, such as exercise balls, bringing in branches and trees for chewing, sprinkling hay in several piles and hiding treats in snow banks, for example. Having as varied terrain as possible – woods, fields, hills and water – in the paddock would be ideal.



6.6 Animal premises

Stall and stable

The law provides detailed minimum requirements for premises where horses are kept. In Finland, horses are kept in box stables and loose stables, which both have some good sides.

In a box or stall, horses can have individual feeding plans and are easy to groom. It is important to consider how much time a horse can spend in the paddock and whether it can live in a herd while there. In a herd, horses move around more, which is good for their muscles and digestion. When horses are familiar with each other, they also find it easier and safer to move near each other on trail rides. In a group pen, horses must get along with each other so as not to injure each other.

In a loose stable, horses live in a herd and can move freely outdoors and indoors. In a loose stable, horses can conduct species-typical behaviour in that they can touch each other and move freely, and roughage is usually freely available. A loose stable must have a wide doorway or two exits so that horses can withdraw. There should also be enough space that all horses can lie down at the same time if they want. However, horses need just 3 to 5 hours of sleep per day and even that in 15 to 20-minute intervals. Horses also rest for approximately 2 hours and, in the wild, they spend most of their time on food procurement and eating. It is typical for horses to be happy outside even when people find it too cold. A loose stable provides them with shelter, especially during mosquito season.

However, a loose stable requires insight into horses and the time to monitor the herd's behaviour. In a herd that lives in a loose stable, everyone should get to eat and rest in peace in sufficient quantities.



Indoors in the loose stable, hiding from mosquitos.



In a loose stable, horses can choose whether to be indoors or outdoors.



Good paddock and pasture

A good paddock or pasture has well-drained soil so that the horse is not forced to stand in mud and become predisposed to cracked heels, for example. A good paddock also encourages exercise. The terrain is varied with food and water in several locations, although not too far apart. There are dry places to lie down and enough space to withdraw.

When new horses are introduced into the herd, the paddock should have a stretch of fence that is open at both ends. Horses can withdraw from other horses by going behind it.

Water should always be available, during frost in a heated trough. The area is cleaned regularly in order to prevent the spreading of parasites, for example. Pastures and paddocks should be shifted around to let the ground “rest” and prevent it from becoming too tightly packed.

Horses should have shelter from the elements and mosquitos even in temporary locations, such as during trail rides. Trees also provide protection from the elements.



Horses must have room to withdraw.



Trees provide protection from the elements.

Portable fencing and a solar charger, for example, can be used to create a temporary pasture/paddock for horses where they can move around so that their muscles do not stiffen or legs swell after a day's journey. This also allows them to have social interaction with the other horses. Horses are sometimes tied to a tree overnight, but that involves a risk of the horse getting tangled up and hurting itself. Some horses are also capable of undoing knots and releasing themselves. However, an easily opened knot is a safety measure just in case the horse needs to be released quickly in an emergency. Of course, escape from paddocks is also possible.



A loose stable offers shelter and companionship if the horse wants it.



When one stands guard, the others can rest in peace.

6.7 Feeding

The main feed for horses is hay. In the wild, horses spend most of the day moving around and eating, so piles of hay should be placed at several points in the paddock. There should be at least one more feeding point, such as a pile of hay, than there are horses so that the horses at the bottom of the hierarchy also get to eat. Any supplementary feed should be given individually in the loose stable, for example by separating the horses for feeding.

Hay quality is monitored through sensory evaluation and feed testing. Deficiencies or excesses of energy or nutrients may also cause problems for the health and well-being of horses. Dusty or mouldy hay is also a problem. Hay must be clean and smell fresh and it must not be allowed to heat up. Attention should be paid to the sugar, protein and energy contents of hay and the digestibility of feed, and the individual needs and limitations of horses, such as being prone to laminitis, should be considered. All changes in feeding should be implemented carefully and gradually over the course of a week or two.

In order to stay healthy, horses must be able to chew on food throughout the day. However, modern hay is so nutritious that either the horse will gain too much weight or the intervals between meals will get too long. Eating can be slowed down with slow-feeding nets. The feed only remains in the horse's stomach for approximately 3 hours, but gastric juice is secreted continuously. In an empty stomach, its acidity causes sores that lead to colic symptoms, reduce appetite and hinders performance.

A freedom of choice increases horses' mental well-being. Horses benefit from being able to choose what they eat from among several options on a pasture. Horses can also be offered low-energy snacks, such as high-quality straw or Christmas trees after the holidays.

An average-sized horse needs approximately 30 to 50 litres of water per day. Water should be available at all times. In winter, a de-icing water trough increases water intake significantly. Drinking too little, for example due to frost, makes horses prone to colic. Horses can be given water mixed with molasses, for example, after exertion to get them to drink enough.



Freely available hay.



Slow-feeding solutions help eating hay take longer.



An opportunity to choose what it eats increases a horse's well-being.



A water break is needed on trail rides.

6.8 Training

Horses used for tourism must be carefully trained in the basics because they often have to deal with inexperienced people who do not know what to do when a horse is startled, for example. Not all horses are suited to tourism, especially those that are easily stressed. On the other hand, even young horses may behave well on the trail if they can follow a familiar herd.

Bulletin

Horses used for tourism must be good at the basics:

- Trust in humans
- Desensitisation to various things (handling from either side, touch in any body part, skiers, snow mobiles, reindeer, etc.)
- Ability to follow the leader's signals and commands
- Ability to stand still
- Reaction to riding aids
- Experience with different kinds of handlers
- Tolerance of riders who shout or scream
- Ability to rest, eat, drink and stand calmly while tied during breaks
- Mastery of the one-rein stop



The horse is desensitised to touch.

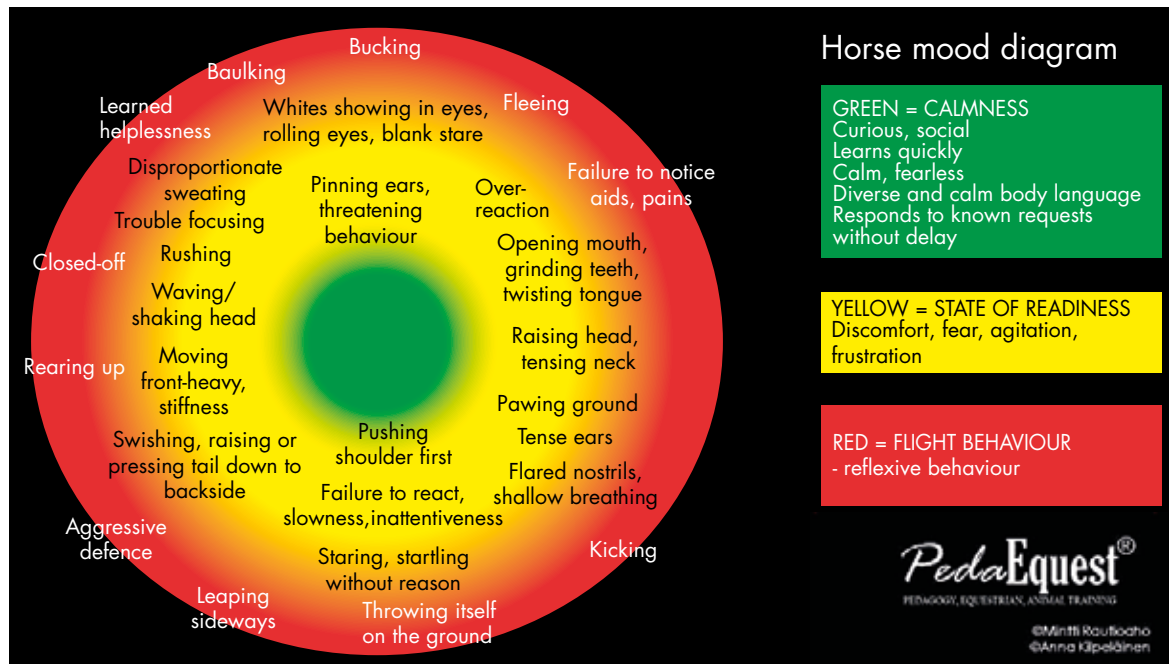
"The day-to-day routines should not be too set in stone. Horses are slaves to routine, and they should be 'desensitised' to new and different practices, a little every day." (Horse entrepreneur)

Horses are bad at generalising. After a horse has learned a new skill, such as entering a trailer, at 6 to 8 different locations, it finally starts to generalise, or learn to do the same thing in different situations. New things are taught to horses in many different ways, in different places and under various disturbances. For example, they should be taught mounting from both sides. Along the trail, it may be easier to mount on the "wrong" side, but it must not be a new thing to the horse in the situation.

Each person teaches a horse something, even without intending to. Horses learn all the time, and they learn best when relaxed. Tense horses also learn, but they learn the wrong things – at the very least, they learn the wrong state of mind that they had at the time. During training, horses must be watched to ensure calmness. If a horse starts to show signs of agitation or frustration, for example (see horse mood diagram), training should not continue until the horse calms down. According to studies, horse welfare is significantly improved by the use of training techniques that generate positive emotional experiences. Horses do what is rewarding for them. On the other hand, only a horse can decide what it considers as a reward.



Stepping onto a bridge can be a little nerve-wracking to both parties at first.



Horse mood diagram (Rautioaho 2016).

6.9 The work

Whereas dressage horses are required to be skilled at collection, have airy steps and be obedient, horses used for tourism must above all have a calm and steady temperament. Horses working in tourism carry both inexperienced and experienced riders and passenger in the wilds and through various terrains. They should get used to different kinds of handlers already during training, and a familiar herd on trail rides gives them security.

Most of the tourism companies in Lapland keep their horses in herds. The relationships between the horses are known and their order in the trail-riding string is carefully considered in order to give each horse a position that fits its nature and to avoid conflict.



A familiar herd gives a horse security.



During breaks, horses get to eat next to their friends.

Division of work and leisure for horses

The work shifts of horses are tracked and the individuality of horses is taken into account in shift planning. According to the instructions, during longer rides in the field or with changing riders, horses can work continuously for no more than three hours and in total no more than four hours per day. On full-day trips and trail rides lasting several days or in very light tasks – such as walking – horses can work longer hours, assuming that they have been conditioned for it and the speed is proportioned to the distance (km) and duration (h). Rest needs are determined by, for example, the horse's age and condition.

Conditions

Frost limits are often necessary for the customer's sake. At a walk, when horses do not sweat or breathe hard, they are not bothered by frost during rides any more than they would be in their paddock.

The company must have a plan regarding whether to cancel or change activities in case of slippery ice, bad ice/snow ball weather, a thunder storm or very hot weather, for example. Similarly, instructions are needed for whether to blanket sweaty horses in cold weather and allow them to dry indoors.

In Lapland, the insect season with its biting midges is hard on both customers and horses. During biting midge season, the most difficult times of the day are morning, evening and night-time. On the other hand, in horsefly season, trail rides can be done at night when there are no horseflies. It helps if the trail goes through dry terrain with strong winds. Horses that suffer from the summer itch, in particular, can be helped with insect repellent or fly sheets. Summer itch is a medical condition in equines caused by hypersensitivity to the saliva of *Culicoides* midges, where the horrible itch leads horses to rub themselves and especially their mane and dock raw.



Lapland Material Bank, Markus Kiili

Frost may restrict riding.



Fly blankets are useful, especially for horses that suffer from summer itch



6.10 Safe and healthy customer-service horse

Guest Column

Anna Kilpeläinen, Riding Instructor and Animal Trainer, Finland

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A horse working with customers must be as safe as possible. The importance of steady and predictable behaviour is emphasised when customers change often. Even though one can never be completely sure of a horse's behaviour, safety can be promoted through many means.

A horse that works in a relaxed and happy manner and has been well-trained for its tasks rarely acts dangerously. It is important that the horse is mentally and physically balanced and experienced enough so that it can tolerate the inevitable clumsiness and conflicting signals of customers.

Behind mental endurance is a strong trust in humans and work situations created through sufficiently long and careful training and good experiences. Thanks to it, the horse does not need to be nervous of the things it encounters. Even in surprising situations, a relaxed and trustful horse will usually react calmly and predictably, which promotes the safety and well-being of customers and the horse itself. A horse that moves in a relaxed manner is also more likely to stay healthy physically than a tense horse.

The calmness of a horse is influenced by many things. One part is the horse's inborn temperament. Even with age and experience, a horse that reacts quickly and strongly may not become steady enough to be a suitable mount for inexperienced customers. A horse that reacts calmly is often also treated calmly and so has good chances of remaining trustful.

The physical well-being of a horse always shows in its behaviour. Pain or discomfort often makes horses either restless and wild or slow and apathetic. It is especially important to protect the horse's mouth from sudden or rough rein handling by inexperienced riders and ensure that the saddle fits the horse as well as possible. Even a single bad experience can sometimes cause long-term problems.

It is important to make customers to understand their responsibility for the horses. An inexperienced customer may not realise how their behaviour affects the horse's well-being. It is important to emphasise in advance that intoxicants have no place near horses. Horses must be spoken of as feeling individuals, and the importance of calm actions that take the horse into account must be emphasised.

It is vital to give particularly specific instructions on the handling of the bit and reins. It is also important to explain that, for reasons of safety and the horse's well-being, riders must sit steadily and calmly in the saddle.

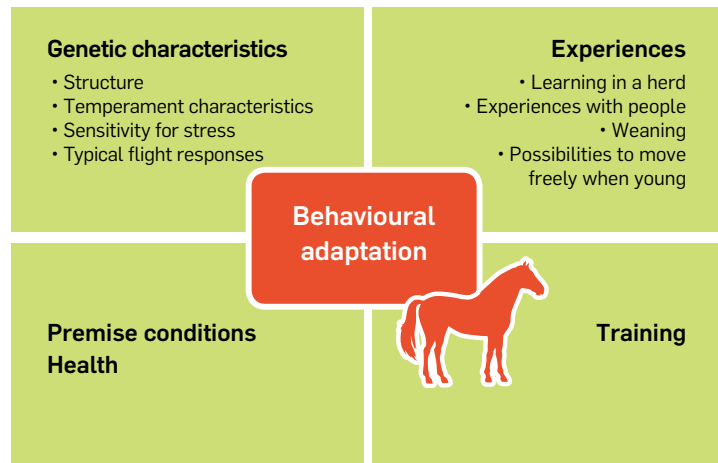
There may also be situations where a customer cannot be allowed to interact with horses. Intoxication is an obvious reason, but a total incomprehension of or indifference to the instructor's direction or actions that are detrimental to the horse may also qualify. Sometimes, a customer's large size or inadequate coordination may pose too much risk to the horse. Such customers could instead be taken on a horse-drawn carriage ride with a professional driver.

Horses should be familiarised with different kinds of people who act in different ways so that they are not surprised and startled by sudden movements or sounds. Familiarisation with traffic and, for example, grazing cows should be done gradually with an experienced trainer. Familiarisation is most successful and quickest if the horse never has a chance to be startled badly by the item in question. A single intense situation involving fear can make further training significantly harder. For this reason, it is advisable to plan the first encounters with new things in advance and familiarise the horse with them gradually and at such a distance that the horse is only slightly concerned and not yet afraid.

In the end, the biggest influence on the good life of horses is people. People's choices, behaviour, knowledge and skills give horses the opportunity to be well and work happily.



Horses have an extremely sensitive mouth.



Factors that influence horse behaviour.
(Anna Kilpeläinen)



6.11 Instructing guides and grooms

In encounters between tourists and animals, the company's employees play a very important role. The guide is responsible for ensuring the welfare and safety of both the animals and people. It is important to know horses, large prey animals, as individuals and as a species. Different nationalities and languages and modern people's alienation from nature bring additional challenges to tourism services. It is not enough that the guide is good with animals – they must also have good social skills with people of all ages and types as well as the ability to instruct and support them, solve problems and create a positive atmosphere. A good guide can recognise risks connected to activities and act to prevent them, for example by giving instructions to a rider when their horse gets nervous.

Grooms know horses individually

It is important to know what is normal horse behaviour to be able to recognise abnormal or undesirable behaviour. If a horse in a herd acts differently from the others, the issue needs attention. As a prey animal, the horse does not display pain in obvious ways.

There should be very detailed oral and written instructions for activities. The HevosAgro Tallikansio ("stable folder") can be used as a template. A new employee needs time to learn to read the animal and become familiar with each animal's individual habits. There are no self-evident truths, and it must always be possible to ask questions. Each stable has its own operating practices, which must be explained to new employees. Horses like routine and changes are stressful for them.

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NEW EMPLOYEES
Individual descriptions of the horses: Looks, special distinctive marks for identification Feeding, time outdoors, exercise Normal behaviour
Daily care Brushing, hoof cleaning, health monitoring Tack maintenance
Daily observation Foot condition, shoes, chafing, summer itch?
The horse at work Temperament, equine friends, position in the string Tack inspection Work journal
Stable Stall cleaning and bedding Putting things like cases of illness with care instructions and observations on horses on the notice board
Product descriptions Routes and scheduling in different situations Special features and stories of the area Safety, such as what customers are allowed to do with the horses Instructing customers

Example instructions:

In order to prevent the spreading of disease, it can be required to treat any gear used at another stable with Virkon S disinfectant or to keep it in a sauna at 60 °C for an hour.

Example of tacking up a horse:

You should be able to fit two fingers between a noseband and the bridge of the horse's nose. Horses only breathe through their nostrils. If a horse keeps opening its mouth during a ride, it is probably feeling uncomfortable.

"Not all horses can be used for tourism, no matter what you do. Some can't take the constantly changing customers and different types of riders. The situation must be considered based on the horse's well-being." (Horse entrepreneur)

"Anything can happen – man is a completely unpredictable creature." (Horse entrepreneur)

"Never believe what the customer tells you about their riding skills. Always see for yourself in a safe environment indoors or in a paddock. Check their balance and control. Switch horses, if needed." (Horse entrepreneur)

6.12 Customer and horse

A horse is not a machine. It is also not human. It is common for tourists to interpret animal behaviour based on human behaviour, or humanise the animal. There may be divergent views on horse welfare, such as the necessity of blankets or how fat horses should be. On the other hand, customers may get distracted by the scenery and forget that they are sitting on a living creature.

Advance information provided by the customer can be used for a preliminary distribution of horses, but that will probably change once the customer arrives at the stable.

A suitable horse is selected for the customer based on their skill level and size. A heavy beginner puts more strain on a horse's back than a competent rider. A beginner who is unable to sit calmly on the horse can strain a young horse, in particular, because its balance is not fully developed yet.

Plans are always carried out according to the least experienced customer. The inexperienced may need guidance with obvious things connected to equine behaviour and handling. It is also important to check that the customer has not been pressured to participate.

The challenge lies in ensuring that the customer truly understands – and believes – the instructions and knows how to handle the horse correctly. A good rule of thumb is that if there is no common language, you should not set out at all. Customers need to be instructed on many matters, such as the order in the string, whether they are allowed to pass other horses, safe following distance, the gait to be used, potential problem situations and how to handle them.

Stables have different policies on whether customers are allowed to feed the horses. If it is allowed, customers must be instructed on what they can give to the horses and what method to use. Horses can easily learn bad habits or get indigestion.

During breaks on trail rides, even customers should know how to tie a horse with a slip knot so that the horse can be freed easily, if necessary. You should explain why things are done a certain way. The customer may be used to doing things differently.



Using a mounting block saves the horse's back and the saddle.



The guide knows the best route and gait to use.

Tense rider

The stable staff can influence the interaction between the customer and horse and their experiences of it. When the customer encounters the animal for the first time, it is important to create a good first impression and connection. This helps prevent misunderstandings and conflicts between the horse and person. The horse is a large animal and the customer may be tense and fearful. In order to help the customer make a good connection with the horse, they should be allowed to make the horse's acquaintance before mounting. A good encounter and trust between the horse and person is important; human fear is easily transmitted to the animal, making it more tense and skittish.

The instructor's duties include tacking up the horse and providing the customer with gear or checking their gear. The customer's gear partly affects the safety and well-being of the horse. Proper riding gear includes a helmet, shoes with a small heel that are not too wide for the stirrup, preferably gloves, a high-visibility vest, flexible trousers that are not too tight or slippery and possibly a protective vest. The clothes should not have any strings, hoods or anything that flaps.



A horse's acquaintance can be made on the ground at first.



*Is that horse planning to kick?
A guide answers all manner of questions.*



A high-visibility vest helps make the horse and rider stand out.



*"This is perfect,
could not be better."*

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Today, promoting the well-being of animals is a significant and visible part of providing responsible tourism services. International tourists and travel agents arriving in Lapland require that the animal-based companies provide their services in a responsible manner, taking also care of the well-being of the animals. Lapland's tourism operators are well aware of the great significance of animals as a part of the tourism service selection.

In this guide we present information about the role of the three key animals used for tourism in Lapland: sled dog, reindeer and horse. We have compiled a comprehensive package of good practices supporting their well-being. Good practices are examples and practical tips from which each entrepreneur can pick the ones that are best suited to them.