Hot Weather Guidance
Welfare Considerations for People and Horses

Specific measures for competitions due to hot weather will always come down to the specific circumstances of the venue, facilities and the extremity of the weather in question. Event Organisers will need to ultimately make the decisions as to what protocols should be put into place for their event. This guidance is to provide the kind of issues Event Organisers should take into consideration, but it is not exhaustive. If Event Organisers wish further support, they should contact the BC Office.

General Considerations for Horse Welfare

Input should be sought from the Organising Committee, scorers, ground jury, medical personnel, stable managers and steward organisers. The following should be considered:

- Testing the humidity – don't rely on people's views of the humidity, test it and use the science to help decision making, see below. Ensure you keep a record of any testing and the decisions made and keep the information. This will help with any external questions and review and demonstrates a positive attitude to welfare
- Understand about horse cooling in and out of competition
- Discuss horses travelling in the heat – especially after a marathon
- Consider if there is enough water supplies pipes and bowsers and where they should be made available
- Exercising – encourage exercising very early or late
- Monitor temperature and horse welfare
- Ensure vet available with overview and being prepared
- Vet's views - need to check fluids available for horses in distress
- Communication is key make changes early and be prepared. Not good for competitors to make late changes with time distance etc, especially with novices.
- Education is key
- With regards to humans consider the use of body protectors / hats, the wearing of jackets, whether stewards need shelter from the sun e.g. temporary gazebos

Use the Science

The FEI have comprehensive information on hot weather conditions and at what levels mitigation measures have to be put in place. This information is available in their paper

PREPARATION FOR AND MANAGEMENT OF HORSES AND ATHLETES DURING EQUESTRIAN EVENTS HELD IN THERMALLY CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS found at the following link: *index.php*

They recommend the use of the device Extech HT30 Heat Stress Meter WBGT. This device was utlised at the Sandringham National 2026.

Regular readings can be taken of the air temperature, the black globe temperature (what it feels like without any breeze) and the relative humidity. The device then uses these figures to calculate the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature – the critical number provided determining if the event can proceed.

It is important to take readings throughout the event to confirm that the position has not changed. Readings and decisions taken as a result should be noted and kept for future reference.

Dressage

- Start as early as possible
- Moderate working in – sensible working
- Could the competition be run in the evening when it cools down?
- Find shade if possible
- Water can still be needed and should be available
- Work with officials and volunteers / stewards

Marathon

- Stewards and volunteers – need as much notice as possible regarding any changes to timing/format
- Look at the wind speed if any
- Maximum heat normally early afternoon until early evening, consider altering schedule e.g. start earlier than originally planned
- Make sure water is available – bowsers on marathon and in the stables
- Consider shortening Section A. While shortening Section A having a section is important to ensure proper warm up for equines
- Remove the F gate in some obstacles
- Move the entry gates in 5- 10mts toward the obstacle
- Put water break on the marathon – have timed stop between obstacles 3 or 4 depending on how many obstacles. Needs to be 2/3 mins so the horse can cool down but not tighten up
- Try to avoid hilly areas
- Remove an obstacle – can be done on the day / communication - simply go to but go past obstacle chosen so no need to change the times. Changing times / distance causes panic
- Changes may not be required for all classes as the temperature changes during the day
- Run at shorter breaks earlier to get more through. 3 min intervals allows for 20 per hour.

- Communication is essential make changes first – review the conditions
- Vet available after marathon in case fluids needed
- Have someone nominated to speak with any media if there is a problem

Cones

- Review on Saturday, if cones to be held on a Sunday
- Same issues should be considered as those for the dressage
- Make sure water is available
- Course can be 500mts not 800mts
- Run presentations when horses out of the vehicle and cooled down
- Try to provide an area with shaded area