THE EQUINE **PAIN SCALE**

Boehringer Ingelheim

For the specific definitions of each grade for each of the categories, please refer to the "Equine Pain Scale".

To obtain a pain score of any given horse, start observing the horse from a distance to score the first seven categories of the Equine Pain Scale then approach the horse in the box stall, open the door and evaluate the horse's response to this followed by the horse's response to the approaching observer. Finally, offer the horse some hay or other feed that it would normally eat and observe the horse's response to this. After scoring all nine categories, sum up the result to yield a final pain score for the specific time point.

Interpretation of the result: A horse scoring 4 on any parameter and/or having a total pain score of 8-10 or above should be considered in pain and therefore in need for further diagnostic work up, immobilisation and/or additional analgesic treatment.

Behaviour category	Patient name:			Date:	
	Time:	Time:	Time:	Time:	Time:
Pain face					
Gross pain behaviour*					
Activity					
Location in the stall					
Posture/ weight bearing					
Head position					
Attention towards the painful area					
Interactive behaviour					
Response to food					
TOTAL					

*Gross pain behaviour includes all readily visible behaviours like, excessive head movements (vert/lat), flehmen, kicking, pawing, rolling, tail swishing, mouth playing, repeated stretching etc.

Ref. From Bech Gleerup and Lindegaard 2015. Recognition and quantification of pain in horses – a tutorial review, Equine Veterinary Education, In press. Gleerup et al., An equine pain face, Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia, 2015, 42, 103-114. Illustrator: Andrea Klintbjer.

Behaviour category	Score				
	0	1	2	3	4
Pain face	No pain face		Pain face present	Intense pain face	
Gross pain behaviour*	None		Occasional		Continuous
Activity	Exploring, attention towards surroundings or resting	No movement		Restless	Depressed
Location in the stall	At the door watching the environment	Standing in the middle, facing the door	Standing in the middle facing the sides	Standing in the middle facing back or standing in the back	
Posture/ weight bearing	Normal posture and normal weight bearing	Foot intermittent off the ground/ occasional weight shift	Pinched (groove between abdominal muscles visible)	Continuously taking foot off the ground and trying to replace it	No weight bearing. Abnormal weight distribution
Head position	Foraging, below withers or high	Level of withers	Below withers		
Attention towards the painful area	Does not pay attention to painful area		Brief attention to painful area (e.g. flank watching)		Biting, nudging or looking at painful area (e.g. flank watching)
Interactive behaviour	Looks at observer or moves to observer when approached	Looks at observer does not move	Does not look at observer or moves away, avoids contact	Does not move, not reacting/introverted	
Response to food	Takes food with no hesitation	Looks at food		No response to food	

*Gross pain behaviour includes all readily visible behaviours like, excessive head movements (vert/lat), flehmen, kicking, pawing, rolling, tail swishing, mouth playing, repeated stretching etc.
Ref. From Bech Gleerup and Lindegaard 2015. Recognition and quantification of pain in horses – a tutorial review, Equine Veterinary Education, In press. Gleerup et al., An equine pain face, Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia, 2015, 42, 103-114. Illustrator: Andrea Klintbjer.

THE EQUINE **PAIN FACE**

Evaluating the facial expression of the horse should be done while the horse is undisturbed. Look at the horse systematically, start with the ears, then the eyes, the lower head and finally evaluate the facial expression as a whole. In most cases more than one feature of the pain face is present when a horse is in pain.

Lowered ears (base)

Contraction of m. levator anguli oculi medialis

Nostril, dilated in the medio-lateral direction

Tension of the facial muscles

Edge shape of the muzzle with lips pressed together and flattened chin

Normal elongated comma-shaped nostril

Rounded shape of the muzzle - relaxed