

Hauser Exkursionen's animal welfare policy for pack animals (Jan 2024)

Hauser Exkursionen supports the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines as well as the Adventure Travel and Trade Association's Guide Standard regarding pack animals. Animal welfare focusses on the physical and mental condition of the animal. The guideline refers to all animals managed by human beings for the transport of people and goods, for example mules, horses, yaks, lamas, camels and dogs. Hauser Exkursionen expects its agents to be familiar with these standards and to ensure they are implemented and respected. The selected animal welfare representatives need support and special training for their tasks in order to fulfil the policy described.

We place particular emphasis on the following:

1. Good relations between the animal and animal handler are fundamental to good welfare.

- a. The physical and mental state of the animals is regularly monitored.
- b. The training and handling of the animals should never be accompanied by punishment, coercion, pressure, physical influence, frightening, food deprivation or other methods relevant to animal welfare.
- c. The Animal owner / handler and the surrounding team receive the necessary training, equipment and support to help them develop their skills, knowledge and ability. This should be part of a regular staff training programme.

2. Feeding and watering is essential for healthy animals and good welfare.

- a. All animals have unrestricted daily access to sufficient and clean drinking water according to their species-specific needs.
- b. All animals have access to food that is appropriate in quality, quantity and variety for the species, the captive environment and the needs of the individual animals. Feeding routines should be species-specific, mentally stimulating and encourage natural behaviours.
- c. Do not feed animals (mules, horses, camels, yaks / dzos) with bit in. The animals must be allowed to chew freely.
- d. Do not work the animals immediately after feeding. This can lead to health problems (e.g. stomach turning).
- e. Provide sufficient water stops for animals on trek days.

3. Using adequate equipment when handling animals for riding, carrying and pulling is crucial for animal welfare.

3.1 Nose bags and Muzzles

- a. Nosebag and muzzle should have adequate ventilation to allow breathing.
- b. When feeding nosebag / muzzle should be removed to enable the animals to continue drinking and eating.
- c. Nosebags and muzzles should not be hung around the animals' neck with a string. A wide, comfortable strap is needed.

3.2 Tethers and tethering

- a. When tethered, only leather padded, humane tethers are to be used.
- b. Nylon rope, plastic, chain, string or wire tethers should never be used.
- c. Always tether in such way that they can lie, walk, stand up, reach food, water and shade without tensioning the tether.

3.3 Pack saddle / saddle blanket (Ahalass / Burdâa)

- a. The pack saddle should be removed and the back examined and groomed at the start and end of the day. This helps to identify injuries and to build the relation between the handler and the animal.
- b. The pack saddle should be taken off at night.
- c. The pack saddle should be well maintained and not cause any injury.

3.4 Other handling items

- a. Harnesses, bridles, ropes and other items attached to the body must be made of skin and fur-friendly materials. They should be well maintained and not cause any injury to the animals.
- b. Head collars should be used instead of traditional bit ins.
- c. Modern stainless-steel bit ins can be used.
- d. Handling items should be removed at the end of the day.

4. Species-appropriate husbandry is essential for animal welfare.

- a. Working animals should be provided with effective protection in both the resting and working environment to avoid heat or cold stress.
- b. All animals should have access to clean shelter and a climatic environment that meets their species-specific needs and protects them from prying eyes.
- c. Enclosures or methods by which animals are kept temporarily are sufficiently large (according to the necessary requirements of the species), allow the animals to move and exercise freely and to maintain sufficient distance from other animals in case of conflict.
- d. Animals should have the opportunity to interact regularly with other conspecifics according to species-specific and seasonal needs.

5. Carrying the appropriate load is very important for animal welfare.

- a. Loaded animals must never be ridden.
- b. Animals should be worked within their physical capabilities. Loads should be appropriate to the animal's size and ability, body condition and fitness level.
- c. For healthy and trained animals, the following load values apply:
 - Mules: 150 kg for 30 – 40 kilometres
 - Yaks / Dzos: 60 – 80 kg for 20 – 30 kilometres
 - Lamas: 30 kg
 - Camels: 150 kg
 - Horses: 15-20 percent of their body weight
 - Donkeys: 20 percent of its body weight
 - Sled dogs: four times their body weight (calculation depending on size of sled team)
- d. Observing and calculating loads when hiking in stages is essential to ensure the animals are not overloaded.



6. Freedom from pain, injury and disease is necessary for good welfare.

- a. The animal handler and guides will need ongoing training in the assessment of the animal's health and welfare. They must be able to identify thin, weak, sick and lame animals.
- b. The animals must be examined at the start and end of the day regarding injuries.
- c. Sick or injured animals, young, pregnant, lactating, distressed or elderly animals should not be ridden or required to carry/pull loads.
- d. Animals should not be prematurely separated from their young.
- e. If an animal gets injured during the trek an alternative solution must be provided on the same day to enable the trek to proceed. Contact should be made with local veterinary services to ensure the ill or injured animal is examined and receives the necessary care.
- f. A specific first aid kit must be carried on all treks and guides trained to help provide first aid. In particular, they should be able to deal with sores, cuts, wounds and other injuries.

Travel guides shall report any observed abusive activity to their employers and/or to relevant national authorities.

The agency in the destination ensures that the animal owners and handlers are informed about this policy. It must be ensured that the load corresponds to the size and capabilities of the animals, that the riding behaviour is not abusive, that the equipment is appropriate and that the animals have regular rest periods.

SIGNATURE

THE AGENCY hereby confirms to have read and understood the animal welfare policy in version "Hauser Exkursionen's animal welfare policy for pack animals (Jan 2024)" and to accept and enforce the guideline to the best of its knowledge. If there are any problems that affect animal welfare, we encourage the partners to enter into dialogue with Hauser Excursions in order to find a solution together.

Date

Agency

On behalf of THE AGENCY (Name and Surname in print letters)

Signature and company stamp

