

CONSULTATION ON THE HOT BRANDING OF EQUINES IN SCOTLAND RESPONSE BY ADVOCATES FOR ANIMALS

Advocates for Animals is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the hot branding of equines in Scotland.

We agree with the statement in the consultation letter that the case for hot branding has been considerably weakened by the requirement under Commission Regulation (EC) No. 504/2008 for all horses and ponies to be microchipped since July 2009.

We are pleased that the Scottish Government is following the advice of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), that hot branding is undoubtedly a painful process, is unacceptable as a means of identifying certain breeds, and should be banned on welfare grounds.

As long ago as 1987, a working party of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons described hot branding as causing pain and discomfort, both operatively and post-operatively¹. In our 2006 report *Painful Reality*², we recommended that “With modern techniques of electronic identification available, these practices should be prohibited.”

In our response to the consultation on the proposed Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2007³, we sought increased restrictions on the procedures that were to be permitted for the identification of animals, citing hot branding in particular. We commented:

“The restrictions provided by the legislation cited in the preamble to question 3 are not sufficient. This legislation currently permits, for example, the hot branding of horses by an unqualified person, without administering pain relief. This is unnecessary and inhumane. Hot branding of horses should not be exempted. It is very little used nowadays and is a primitive means of identification which has been superseded.”

This remains our position: hot branding of horses and other equines is an outmoded means of identification which causes unnecessary suffering and ought to be prohibited. We support deletion of Regulation 4.

Advocates for Animals
Edinburgh
January 2010

¹ *Report of Working Party Established by RCVS Council to Consider the Mutilation of Animals* Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, 1987

² *Painful Reality: Why painful mutilations of animals must be reviewed* Advocates for Animals, Edinburgh, 2006

³ *Consultation on the proposed Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2007: Response by Advocates for Animals*, December 2006