

# Recent public opinion research on horses in sport

Jessica Stark

Director of Communications and Public Affairs

World Horse Welfare



# Four pieces of research

## Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission for the FEI

### 1) Savanta Comres - 2022

*Public: 14,000 respondents from 14 countries*

*Data weighted to be representative of each country by age, region and gender*

### 2) Equestrian stakeholders: 27,710 respondents from 116 countries

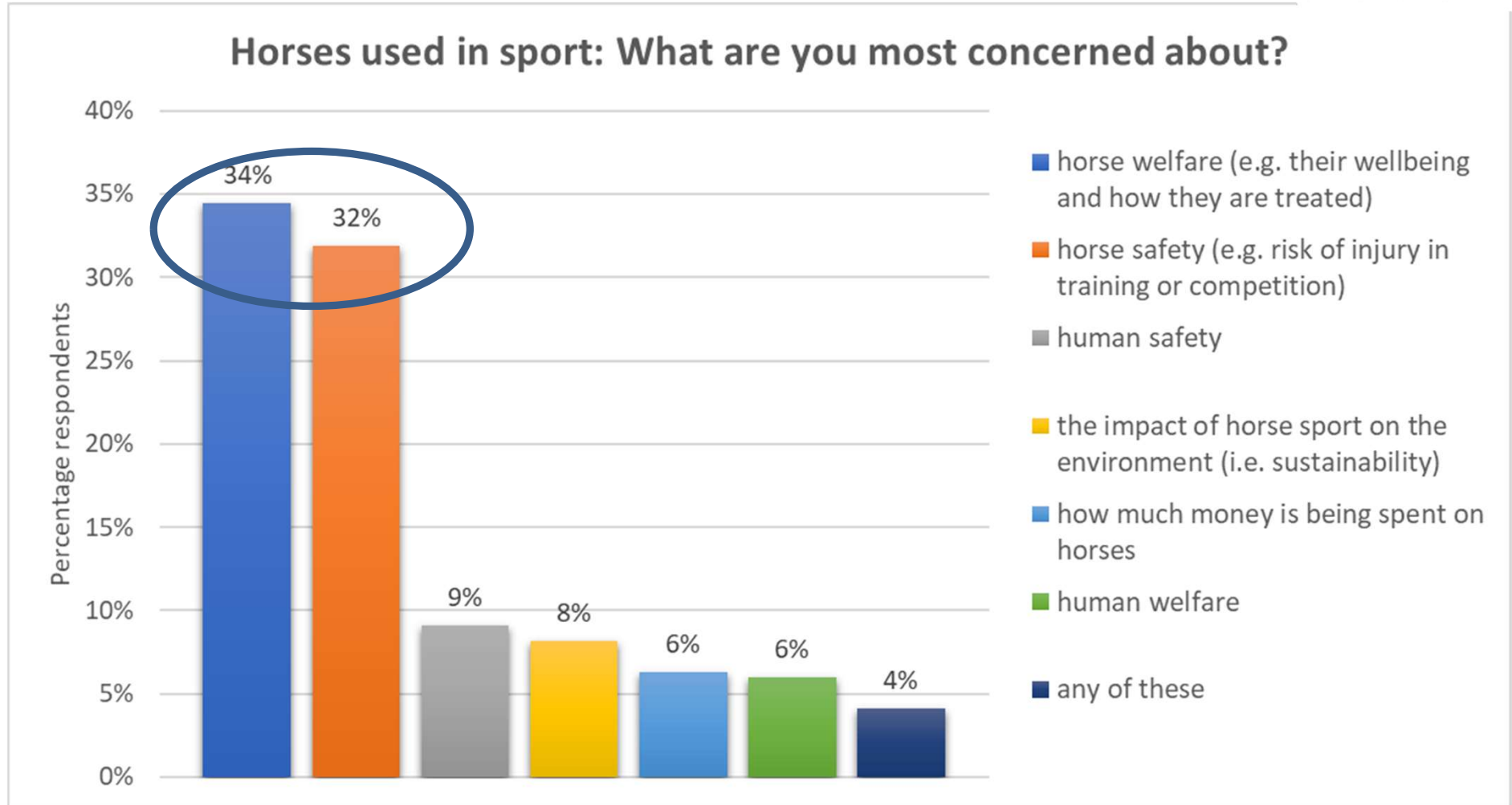
## World Horse Welfare

### 3) YouGov research conducted in UK 12-16 May 2023 N=4,368

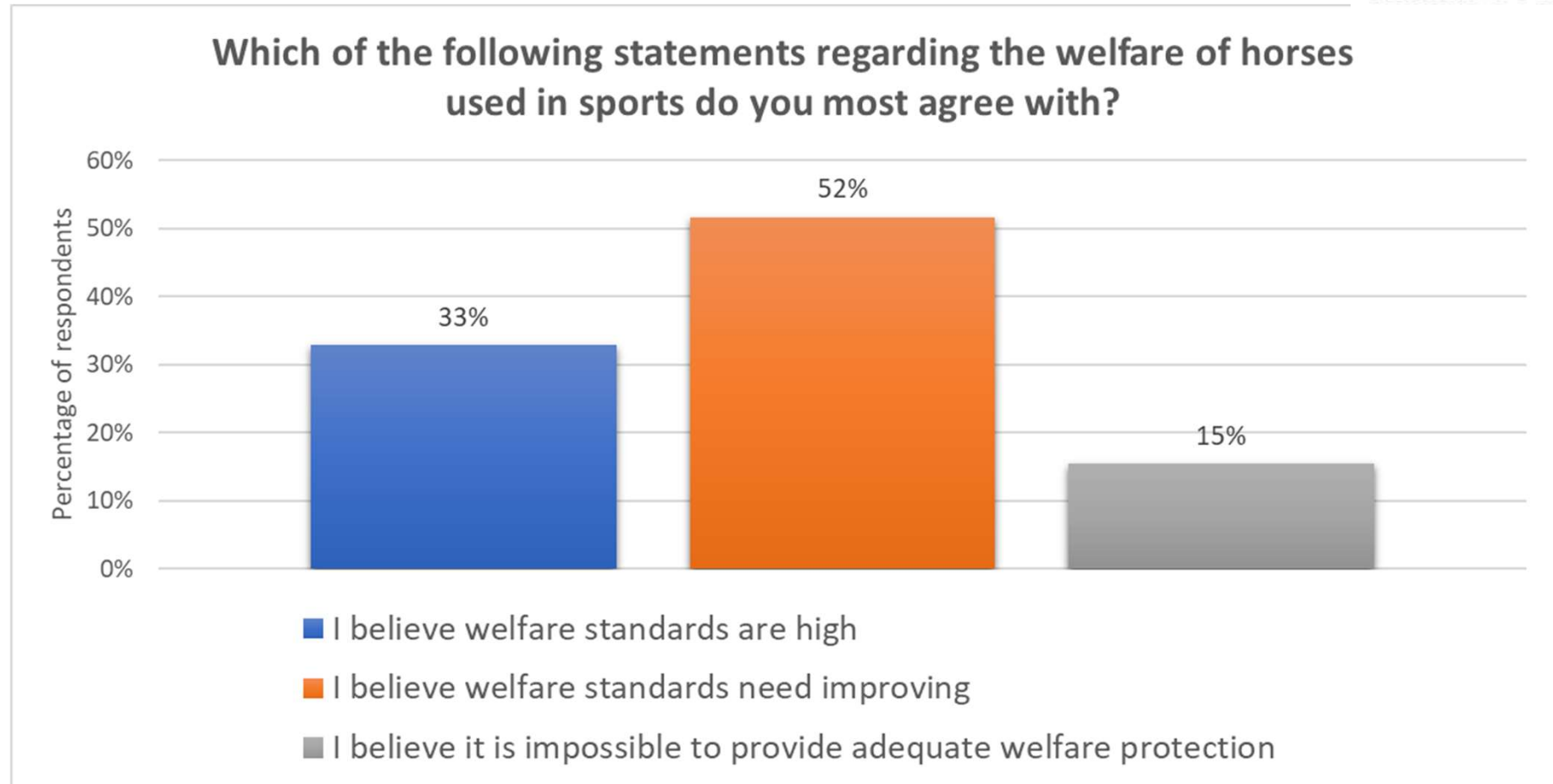
### 4) What can horse sport learn from other industries?



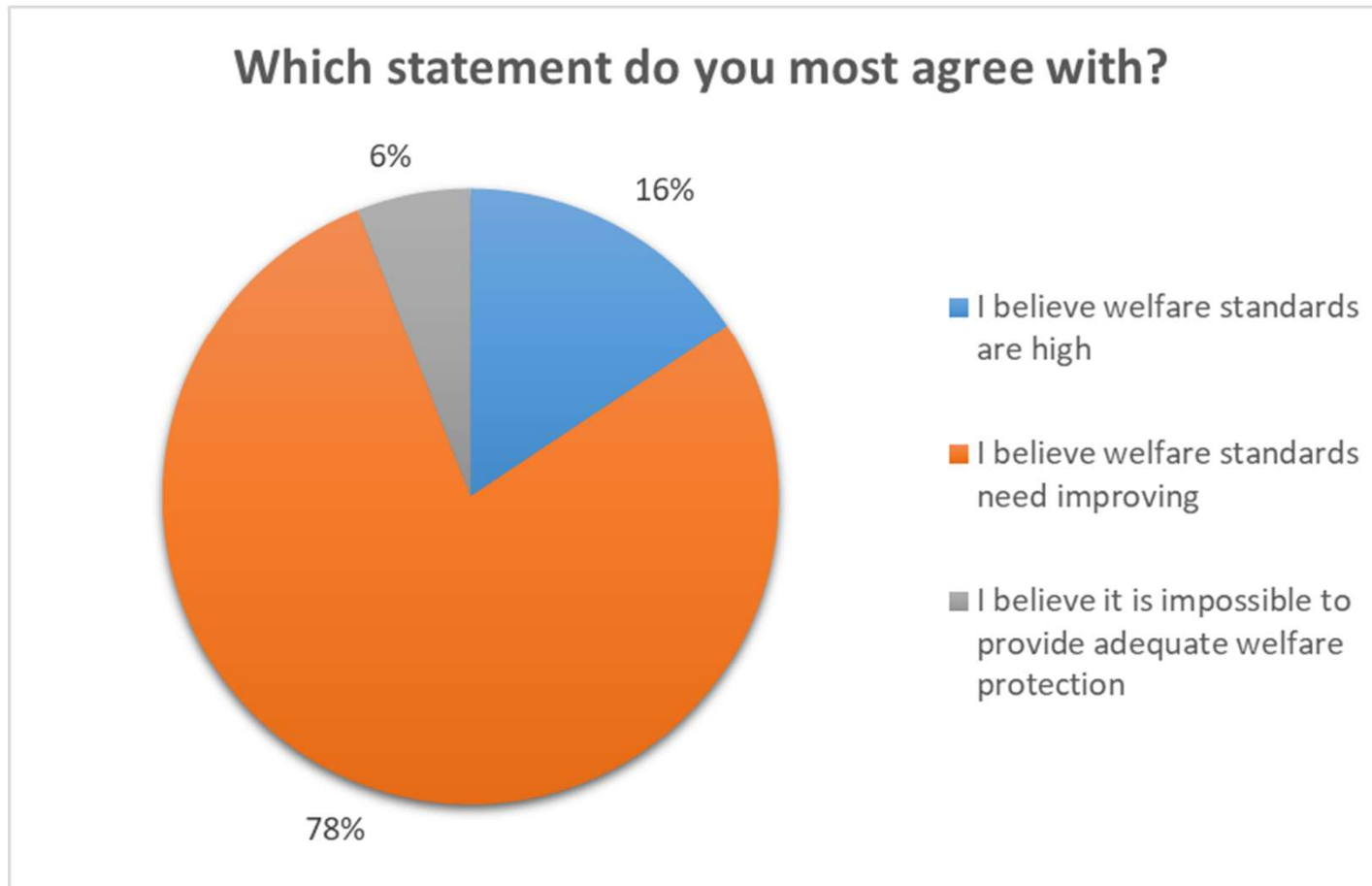
# 1. The main concerns of the public?



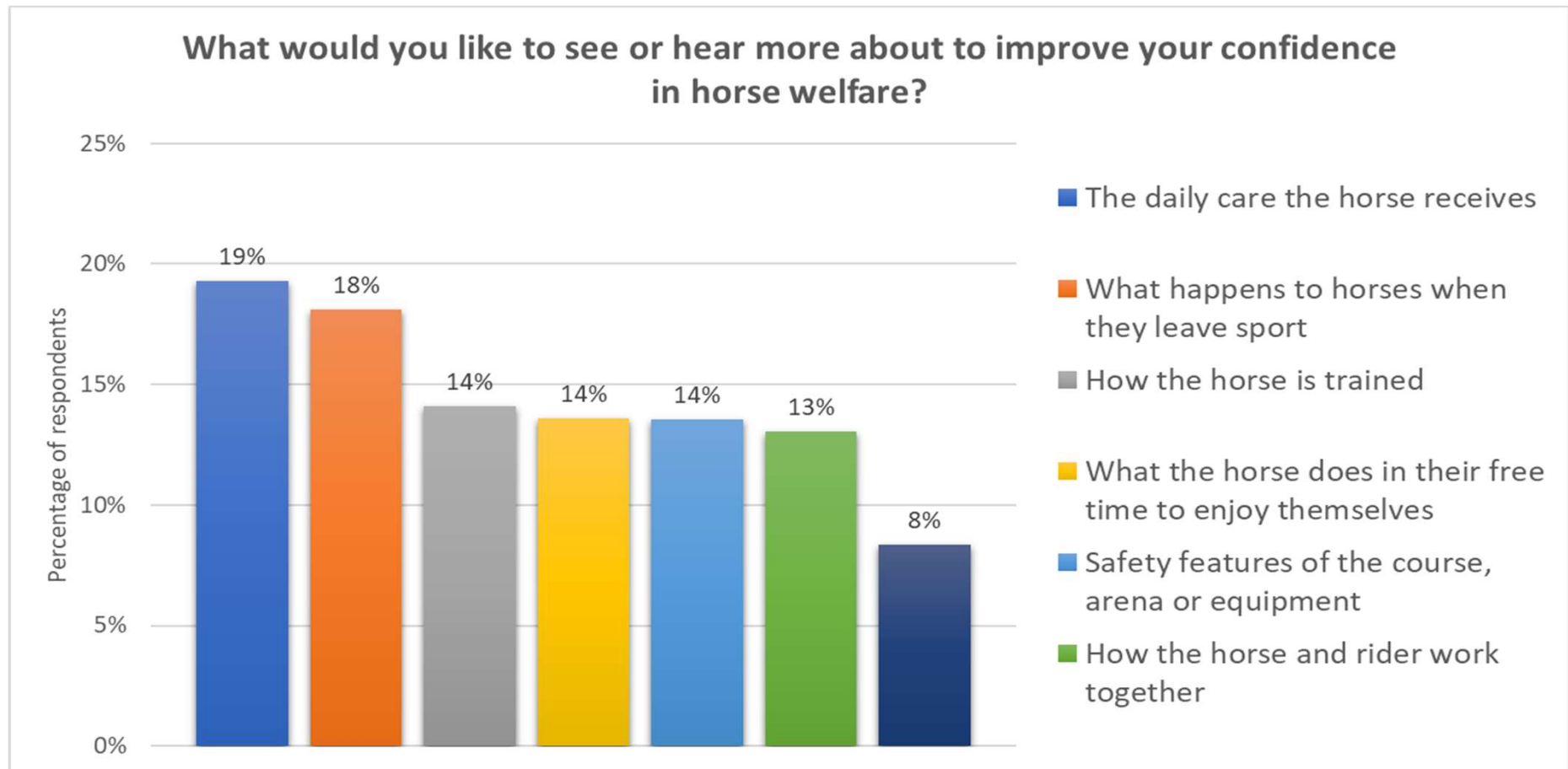
## Public opinion 14 countries



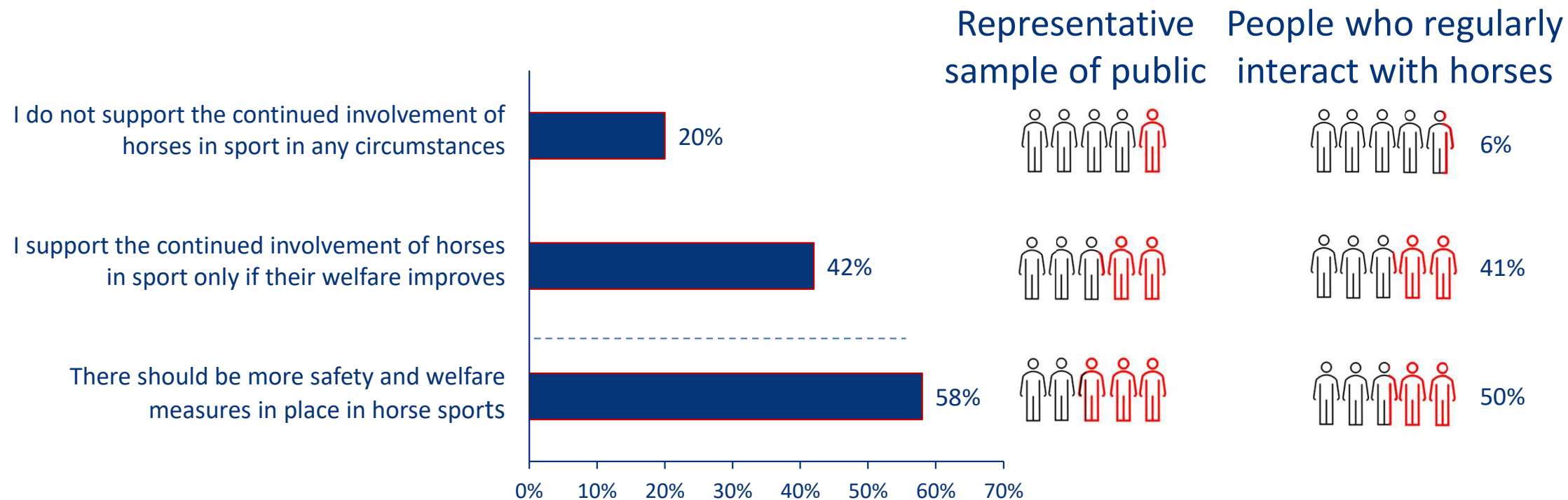
## 2. Equestrian stakeholder opinion 116 countries



# What can help improve social licence?



# 3. Perceptions of UK public and 'horse people' re the use of horses in sport



YouGov research conducted in UK 12–16 May, 2023; N=4,368

# 'Horse' people - differences

Those who regularly interact with horses are more likely to:

- Support the continued involvement of horses in sport (50% vs 24%)
- Think that current safety & welfare measures are enough (33% vs 21%) & that there are too many safety & welfare measures in place (9% vs 3%)
- Think that horse welfare is currently prioritised enough (30% vs 16%)/should be prioritised less (8% vs 2%) in communications
- Think that media coverage over the past 2–3 years has made them feel more confident that horse welfare is protected in sports
- Think that horse sport is responsive to public concerns re welfare (very responsive, 19% vs 8%; somewhat responsive, 42% vs 20%)





# Beware the bubble

While 'horse' people differ in views in some ways, the majority:

- Still want more welfare & safety measures
- Want welfare to be prioritised more in communications

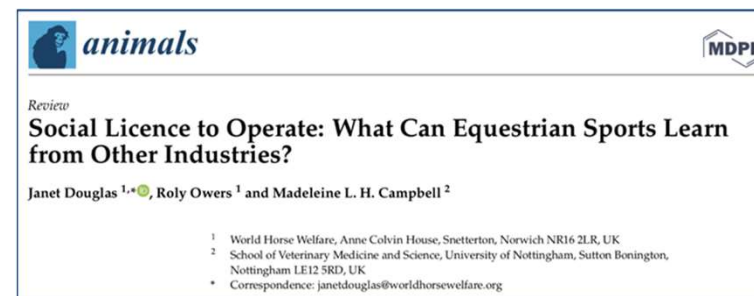
So there will be voices in horse community supporting status quo, but these do not represent majority of 'horse' people – nor general public



## 4. Learn from others

### Other animal-use industries found:

- ‘Quick wins’ may be tempting – but sustained change at all levels is necessary
- Walk the talk – welfare washing won’t work - “Don’t tell me, Show me”
- Use strategies that change public opinion – view our online event at [worldhorsewelfare.org](http://worldhorsewelfare.org)

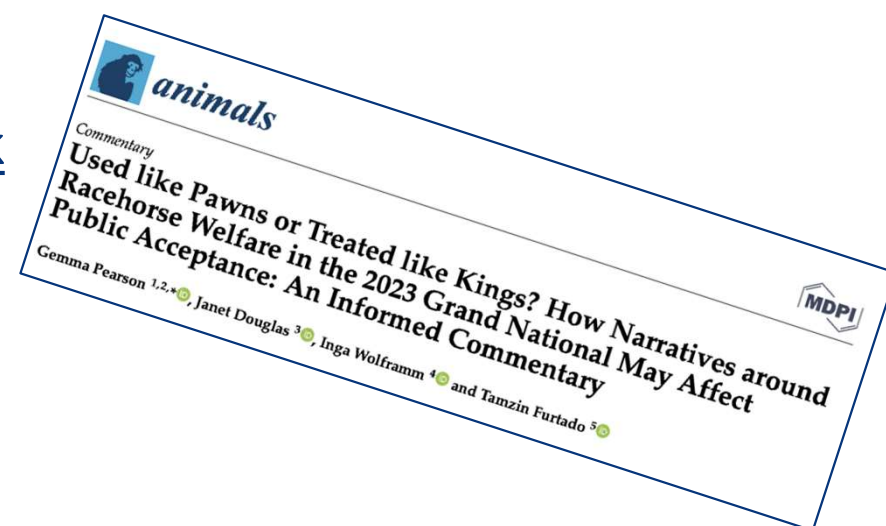


<https://www.worldhorsewelfare.org/social-licence-learning-from-other-industries>

# Understand the power of good communications

- ***DON'T***: Try to persuade, correct, or win the argument
- **DO**: Listen – Ask – Listen – Ask – Listen – Ask
  - Only then can you Share
- Be transparent, balanced, open-minded, humble, engaged, and non-confrontational
- Address public concerns directly
- Don't just 'communicate' - **ACT**

JD2



Pearson et al. Animals 2023;13:3137

## Diapositive 11

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**JD0**

FYI, first bullet from 'Suggested actions' section is direct quote from GN paper.

Janet Douglas; 2024-02-15T17:08:20.064

**JD1**

I am aware that I keep mentioning the SLO conference but I think it is a good resource for them. Am wondering if a screenshot of Charlie Arnot wouldn't be illustration here, because he was good on the comms - but also not sure if I have mentioned the conference too much. Thoughts?

Janet Douglas; 2024-02-15T17:13:54.755

**JD1 0**

And am not sure if the GN paper is the right thing to use here anyway?

Janet Douglas; 2024-02-15T17:14:32.265

**JS1 1**

I like the use of the GN paper here - have tweaked the notes to include reference to addressing concerns directly

Jessica Stark; 2024-02-16T18:09:35.989

**JD2**

Slide changed since JD saw it - Arnot points added & notes changed to match.

Janet Douglas; 2024-02-18T20:28:32.938

**JD2 0**

Point about GN paper also added to notes since JS saw this deck, as I realised I hadn't made reference to it.

Janet Douglas; 2024-02-18T20:30:56.519

# Summary

- The public – and equestrians – are concerned about sport horse welfare and safety
- Some in horse world are likely to oppose change – but most want improvements
- There are proven strategies that can change public opinion
- We must change the way we communicate with critics





**THANK YOU**

**[jessicastark@worldhorsewelfare.org](mailto:jessicastark@worldhorsewelfare.org)**

**[@horsecharity](#)**

## Diapositive 13

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**JD0**

Can you fix the text on this slide? Is it just '@jessicastark'?

Janet Douglas; 2023-05-05T12:53:24.411