

Behavioural assessment of horses used in private equestrian centres

S u m m a r y

The studies concerned the quality of mental traits in horses used in private riding clubs. The estimation was based on „self-assessment test” personally conducted, as well as on the results of surveys sent to the clubs. The direct assay of behaviour was performed in two clubs that maintained 20 horses in total. The „self-assessment test” used in the study was a broadened version of „Brzeski's test”. The surveys were sent to 300 centres. The answers for all questions were received and concerned the total number of 572 horses. The answers for all questions were received from 40 centres. The information about the animals was given by club owners. The aim of the study was to assess mental traits' qualities and stereotypes of the commonly displayed reactions of horses during the daily work in clubs. The other issue was to estimate unfavourable behaviour frequency such as stereotypes etc. Furthermore, breed structure of horses working in private riding clubs, as well as types of their work were determined. The results of „self-assessment test” point out the great value of behavioural traits in the horses. Gentleness and obedience with lack of malicious or aggressive acts characterized most of them. Similar result was obtained in the surveys. However, in 70% of 40 centres taken into consideration, some individuals showed unfavourable behaviours (mainly: excessive shyness, „stick-in to a group”, weaving, crib biting). It was stated that not all the horses had appropriate mental and physical predispositions to be used by an inexperienced rider.