

International Conference



Discussing Equine Ethics: Taking Stock from Theory and Practice

FRIBOURG, SWITZERLAND, 1-2 SEPTEMBER 2022

Deadline for submission:
May 15th, 2022

Keynote speakers:
Prof. Kendra Coulter (Brock University)
Dr. Vet. Stéphane Montavon (presenting for COFICHEV)

Equines and humans share a long history in which diverse relationships have developed. Horses today are companions, (co-)athletes and working animals. They are used in research and entertainment or serve as status symbols.

Discussing Equine Ethics emerges from the current social context in which the issue of equine welfare has never been more central. In recent years, there has been a boom in critical attention toward equine cultures, driving theoretical research and bringing ethical concerns to the forefront of practitioners' minds.

But what exactly is *equine ethics*? Some philosophers believe that animal ethics is something we do rather than a set of theories and literatures alone. Bob Fischer (2021) reflects on doing animal ethics as navigating our relationships with nonhuman animals. This conference takes this view as its starting point and encompasses two key perspectives: (1) *Theoretical perspectives*: theoretically driven inquiries into building good horse-human relationships; and (2) *Practical perspectives*: reflections and studies on good horse-human relationships anchored in particular practices.

With the aim of joining forces, we invite scholars and practitioners involved with equine welfare and ethics to participate in this two-day international conference. Our goal is to engage in interdisciplinary thinking about shared concerns. How can we best understand and meet the species-specific and individual needs of horses? Can riding and use in sport be reconciled with the physiological and psychological wellbeing of the animals? What does a good (work) life look like for a horse, for example in the context of equine assisted therapy?

Possible topics and questions include but are not limited to:

Theoretical perspectives

- Which **theoretical models** can help us better understand and advance current concerns and changes in human-horse relationships? (e.g. ethological, psychological, social, political or historical models and theories)
- Which **ethical theories** can help us move forward? (e.g. ethics of Care, feminist theories, Principlism, rights theory)
- What are **good equine-human relationships**? (e.g. good work lives, friendship, good asymmetrical relations)
- **Transition from equine welfare to equine wellbeing** and happiness: What motivates this transition, what do we gain, and in what direction should we continue?
- **Equine agency**: What are the ethical and practical implications of recognizing horses as (social) actors?
- **Equine representation**: What role do artistic and cultural representations of horses play in the context of ethical questions? (e.g. in visual culture or marketing)

Practical perspectives

- How do ethical concerns translate into **educational programs and social institutions**? (e.g. in training for professions with horses)
- How does equine ethics develop as a branch of **applied ethics**?
- Contributions to various **practical areas** (e.g. ethics in equine assisted therapy, horses in the military, horses in equestrian sports, horses as leisure companions)
- Conceptualizing **alternative lives** with horses (e.g. egalitarian equine-human societies, alternatives to riding)
- **Legal initiatives** (e.g. reformulating codices, rethinking the legal status of equines, questioning ownership).
- Ethical challenges in **healthcare practices** (e.g. challenges faced by veterinary practitioners, ethics of aging horses, empathy fatigue for equines and equine professionals)
- How to conceptualize just forms of **horsekeeping and co-habitation with horses** (e.g. good forms of horsekeeping, stable architecture, how to secure free movement on the pasture, herd associations, nutrition, protection of wild horses)

Application

To participate as a speaker, please submit your abstract (max. 300 words) for a presentation of 15 minutes (plus 15 minutes discussion) before May 15th, 2022 to friederike.zenker@unibas.ch.

In a single PDF file, the application should include your abstract, a short CV, and a statement about whether your contribution relates to the theoretical or practical perspectives. The program committee will notify all those selected by June 17th, 2022. If you would like to submit an abstract, but find yourself limited because of travel funding options, please write to us.

Organizing committee:

Maude Ouellette-Dubé (University of Fribourg)

Dr. des. Friederike Zenker (University of Basel)