

“It’s more emotionally based”: owner perspectives of horse weight management

Appendix B: Codebook

Objectives:

1. explore the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of owners with overweight horses regarding their horses’ weight and
2. to understand the motivators and barriers for horse owners to implement, improve, or maintain weight management-related strategies

Theme	Parent Code Parent code description	Child code Child code description
Horse weight management is important but complex	Top priority for horse care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses that discuss the importance of weight management (e.g., body condition, fitness, nutrition) 	
	Nutrition is integral to weight management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any context when nutrition is discussed in relation to managing their horses’ overall well-being 	
	Relationship between fitness, horse shape, and weight management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses related to fitness as a management technique or barrier to weight management • Statements of how fitness relates to the shape of the horse (e.g., topline) and/or how it plays a role in the way in which owners assess their horses’ body condition 	
	Horse-human interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses related to the relationship owners have with their horses daily, allowing them to understand their horse’s unique behaviour to monitor their weight and overall health 	
	Patience is key <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners emphasize that weight management “takes time” 	
	Horse-specific weight management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners consider their horses’ individual differences (e.g. age, discipline, breed, personality, and lifestyle) when making decisions related to their horse’s weight 	
	Seasonal-specific weight management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses related to how their management strategies may be altered based on the season and the weather 	
	Recognition that underweight is better from a physical health perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners discuss any negative consequence of overweight horses 	Owner perceptions of thin or ‘underweight’ horses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners describe thin or underweight horses
		Owner perception of overweight horses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners describe overweight horses

Conflicts between believing ‘obesity’ is a health issue and outwardly appearing well cared for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses that directly state that being underweight has fewer health consequences 	
	Food is love <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses indicating that feeding horses indicates good standard of care for horses 	Emotionally based to keep horses slightly overweight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owners’ indication that their emotions play a role in their preference for slightly overweight horses
		Horses that eat are healthy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses related to horses eating as a measure of their overall health
		External perceptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When owners discuss feeling distressed about others’ perception of their horse and its quality of care if their horse is underweight.
Implementing and improving weight management strategies: a matter of effectiveness, practicality, and belief systems	Balancing life and horse care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner responses that discuss how they have to consider aspects of their life outside of horse care when making decisions about managing weight 	Weight management requires more intense management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses related to overweight horses requiring more management
	Horses’ quality of life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When owners discuss that they make decisions based on their perception of their horses having a good quality of life 	Balancing horses’ emotional and physical needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses related to owners considering trade-offs between different aspects of their horses’ health
		Simulating a natural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owners discussing weight management in relation to horses “living naturally”
	Mirroring the horses’ emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When owners discuss mirroring the emotional states of their horses and/or how that plays a role in their decisions regarding their horses’ weight 	
	Beliefs about horse weight management strategies influence horse owner decision making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses related to owners’ beliefs about best horse care practices and their perceived effectiveness of weight management strategies, determines whether they choose to implement or maintain a weight management strategy 	
	Knowledge shapes beliefs and decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When owners discuss that the knowledge they have affects the beliefs they have about weight management strategies 	Adapting management with the evolution of knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When owners express how their management strategies have changed over time and/or their willingness to learn more and appreciation for alternative perspectives

The role of knowledge and responsibility in horse weight management	Growing knowledge: evidence to practice gap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses that suggest it is difficult to add knowledge to the horse industry and that there is a lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to grow owners' knowledge base in the Canadian horse industry 	Inherent knowledge dominates the industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses pertaining to how most horse knowledge is gained through experience and tradition and/or that there is minimal external motivation to adapt knowledge base
	Knowledge is empowering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners discuss or suggest that having knowledge allows for ease of decision making 	Support network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners discuss the relationship between having a network of assistance from experienced horse individuals and their confidence in making decisions
	Synthesis of information to form knowledge and make decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners discuss utilizing resources and aspects that they take into consideration when deciding what to do with the information 	Boarding facilities: help or hindrance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How boarding facilities affected owners' opinions, experiences, and knowledge
		Veterinary role in weight management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners discuss their perceptions of the veterinarian's role in horse weight management
		Owners take responsibility for their horses' weight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When owners discuss their own role in managing their horses' weight
		Confusion and distrust in nutrition companies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses related to owners' confusion around what to feed their horses and/or that they do not trust nutritionists who are affiliated with large feed companies