

## Use horses for agricultural work

### Overview

This standard is about using horses for agricultural work to cultivate land and plant, cultivate and harvest crops.

You will be responsible for preparing agricultural and land-based horse-drawn implements and equipment for use, and maintaining and storing these after use.

You will be responsible for preparing horses for use, managing their welfare during work, and caring for them after use. The standard includes knowing how to maintain and operate horse-drawn agricultural and land-based implements and equipment correctly and safely. It involves being able to supervise others who are assisting with the use of horses to cultivate and harvest crops.

The standard includes being able to manoeuvre horse-drawn agricultural and land-based implements and equipment into position for use, and to remove and store after use.

You will need to be fully aware of the importance of health, safety and animal welfare in connection with this activity.

You will need to ensure the safety of yourself and others, and the welfare of the horses, at all times.

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**Performance criteria**

You must be able to:

1. ensure appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment is worn for the activity
2. select appropriate horse-drawn agricultural implements and equipment for the intended agricultural work and the horses
3. select suitable harness and horses for the intended task
4. carry out routine pre-use checks of horses to ensure they are fit for work and trained for the intended task
5. seek specialist advice and guidance where required
6. carry out routine pre-use checks of harness and implements/equipment to check their fitness for purpose
7. hitch the horses to the implement/equipment
8. use the horses, implement/equipment correctly for the intended agricultural work
9. monitor the wellbeing of the horses during and after work, and take action to promote their wellbeing
10. monitor the operation of the implement/equipment during work, and take action to maintain it in working order
11. ensure the horse and equipment/implements are cared for after work
12. evaluate the effectiveness of the work
13. follow codes of practice and other legislation relating to the activities
14. ensure appropriate records are maintained and stored as required by relevant legislation and the organisation
15. assess hazards and control the risks to horses, yourself and others in connection with this activity

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**Knowledge and understanding**

You need to know and understand:

1. your role and responsibilities in using horses to cultivate and harvest crops and manage land
2. the clothing and personal protective equipment that should be worn for the activity
3. how to identify a range of horse-drawn agricultural and land-based implements and equipment, which is suitable for the range of tasks
4. the effects of weather, seasons, soil condition, gradients and type of crops on the horses, implements and equipment
5. how to select implements/equipment that are suitable for the task
6. how to select horses that are suitable for the task and the implements/equipment
7. how to select harness that is suitable for the horses, implements/equipment and task
8. how to operate the horse-drawn implement/equipment correctly and safely
9. how to recognise signs of poor health and stress in the horse while preparing for work, working and following work
10. how to monitor the horse while working
11. the measures to eliminate or minimise stress or poor health in the horse
12. where to seek appropriate advice and guidance with regard to the health and wellbeing of the horse
13. how to recognise signs of wear, tear or damage to the harness, implements and equipment
14. how to carry out routine maintenance before, during and after use
15. how to supervise assistants while working
16. how to prepare the land, remove unwanted vegetation, plant, cultivate and harvest crops
17. the implications of using horses to manage land and cultivate crops in terms of the environment, its sustainability, specialist crop production and the heritage and culture of the countryside
18. how to dispose of waste responsibly
19. the importance of establishing and maintaining records
20. the risks to horses, yourself and others and how these are controlled
21. your responsibilities under relevant animal health and welfare and health and safety legislation and codes of practice.

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### Glossary

Checking horses for:

- signs of poor health (e.g. lameness, disease, parasites, infestation, injury) or stress
- condition of feet and shoes (if worn)
- physical fitness for the intended task
- suitable temperament for the intended task.

Cultivating land in preparation for crops:

- removing unwanted vegetation
- planting crops
- managing crops while growing
- harvesting crops
- managing land.

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