

# Assessment of the welfare of racehorses in Central Java, Indonesia



Muhammad Danang Eko Yulianto<sup>1\*</sup>, Tri Satya Mastuti Widi<sup>1</sup>, Eshan Kusumawicitra<sup>1</sup> and Amien Fahrianto Adi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Animal Production, Faculty of Animal Science, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Jl. Fauna No 3, Yogyakarta, Indonesia 55281  
danangyulianto@ugm.ac.id



Fig. 1. Horse in the stalls

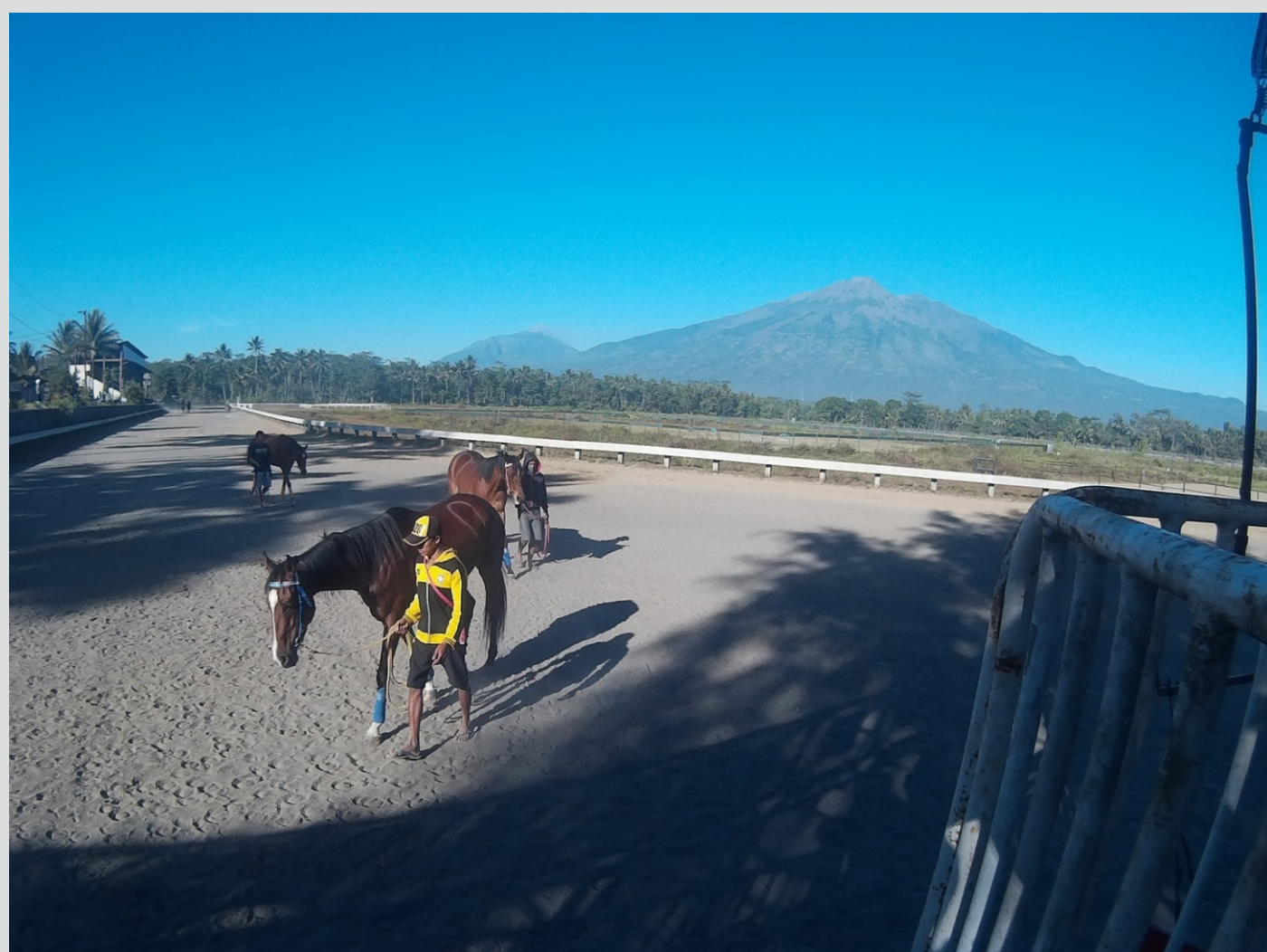


Fig. 2. Morning Training Session

## Introduction

Horses are one of important livestock in Indonesia, and there is no significant attention by the government for the development. The existence of the horses have a strategic value for utilization as working animals, one of them as transport horses. On the other hand, horses development was encouraging as its utilization as a means of sport facilities such as horse racing and equestrian that has positive effects for the development as an industrial commodity which is able to increase the economic value of the horses. Traditional welfare standards have focused on the absence of negative affective (mental) experiences e.g. pain, fear, distress. The ability to identify situations that elicit negative emotional responses would allow animal caretakers to prevent or minimise them, to reduce poor welfare, and improve human and animal safety (Stratton et al, 2014). Fleming et al, (2013 Athletic competition can be stressful for horses (Cayado et al., 2006), and subsequently there is a need to evaluate the effect of various types of events and common equestrian practices on horses. It is argued that if an animal is experiencing pleasure or happiness, or is in a happy emotional state, then its needs are being met, and its welfare is good (Boissy et al. 2007). This approach may render the assessment of other factors such as the Five Freedoms, domains or needs welfare frameworks unnecessary. This study is expected to obtain information for the development of scientific study of the horses, and to understand the general conditions of Indonesian equine farming systems. This study aimed to looking for the welfare level of the race horses in Central Java Indonesia.

## Result and discussion

Table 1.Welfare Level of Racehorses in Central Java, Indonesia

| Daily Management           | Welfare level(%) |              |              |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                            | Good             | Moderate     | Poor         |
| Eating and Drinking Aspect | 58.93            | 38.39        | 2.68         |
| Health aspect              | 51.02            | 30.61        | 18.37        |
| Comfortable aspect         | 100.00           | 0.00         | 0.00         |
| Fear aspect                | 60.71            | 35.71        | 3.57         |
| Normal Activity aspect     | 47.62            | 16.67        | 35.71        |
| <b>Average</b>             | <b>63.66</b>     | <b>24.28</b> | <b>12.07</b> |

From the result we can see that in general, racehorses in Central Java, Indonesia were in good welfare (63.66%), including eating and drinking aspect (58.93%); health aspect (51.02%); comfortable aspect (100% respectively); fear aspect (60.71%); and normal activity aspect (47.62%), moreover, there are 24.48% in moderate welfare, including eating and drinking aspect (38.39%); health aspect (30.61%); comfortable aspect (0%); fear aspect (35.71%); and normal activity aspect (16.67%), on the other hand, there are 12.07% in poor welfare condition including eating and drinking aspect (2.68%); health aspect (18.37%); comfortable aspect (0%); fear aspect (3.57%); and normal activity aspect (35.71%).



Fig. 3. Horse during in a race



Fig. 4. Horse winning in a race

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## Methods

- May to October 2016 in racehorses training center in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia.
- As many as 200 racehorses belong to 14 owners were assesed.
- Conducting direct interviews by a questionnaire with the owners or stable managers and also observing the real condition in the stables.
- Data taken include the identity of the breeders or owners and farm managers, stable management.
- The study also took environmental data to analyse the influence of the environment to the horse performances.
- 25 five indicators were selected to describe the five freedoms of animal attributes.
- The assessment was complemented with information on farm level such as feeding, housing and health care management, exercise, training methods, and human-animal interactions
- The data were analyzed descriptively

## Conclusion

In conclusion, most of horse used for sport activity especially racing are well handled. Welfare assessment based on objective parameters can be used as first step to improve horse welfare in Indonesia, but need continuous improvement to make better quality of those horse's life and the racing and equestrian riding itself.

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