

HORSE RACING



© GEORGE SHETON

Many people have been conned into believing that betting on a horse is harmless fun. But hundreds of horses are raced to death every year on British courses or in training. They are shot following falls, suffer fatal heart attacks, or sustain some other injury that means that they can't race, or they are killed simply because they are no longer profitable.

Horse racing provides huge rewards for the leading owners, trainers and jockeys – people who race the most successful horses can become rich and famous. Yet it is also an industry that ruthlessly exploits the very animals on which it depends, and disposes of those who don't make the grade.

Racing for their lives

Around 12,000 horses are bred every year for the closely connected British and Irish racing industry, but only around 50 per cent actually go on to race. Those who are not good enough racers may be killed or sold from owner to owner in a downward spiral of neglect.

Pushed to the limits

Horses are selectively bred for speed, at the expense of their health, strength and stamina, and their light, weak bones can break if they fall after hitting a hurdle or fence.

Racing is a stressful experience for horses, and can lead to serious racing-related illnesses. 82 per cent of horses (over three years old) who race on flat courses suffer from bleeding lungs, and 93 per cent of horses in training suffer from gastric ulcers. When not racing, horses

spend long hours inside stables. Horses can be stabled for up to 20 hours per day even though they are social animals who are meant to be continually grazing and moving. The confinement leads to frustration and stress. Like humans, weight-bearing exercise helps increase bone density and strength, so this lack of exercise also puts horses at increased risk of bone fracture. **Around 420 horses are raced to death every year.**

When racing is over...

Horses start racing at around two years old and, depending on how many races they win and if they remain injury-free, can be racing until the age of 13. Horses can live to be 30 years old.

7,500 horses leave racing every year, but only a token number are given proper care by the industry. After a life of fast-paced racing, retired racehorses are nervous and jittery. They make difficult 'pets' and tend to be sold from owner to owner, never getting a permanent home. Many are killed when their racing days are over. Horse racing generates more than £5 billion per year, yet it seems that the industry lacks the will to provide for a retirement fund for the very animals who help generate these funds.

Horses enjoy racing, don't they?

Horses naturally run in herds for enjoyment. But the racing industry is a horrible distortion of these natural activities. Horses carry the burden of a jockey and are whipped in an attempt to make them run faster. It is wrong to exploit animals for entertainment and money. They are living beings with their own feelings and desires, and should be allowed to lead natural lives. Instead, the industry treats them like racing machines, to be exploited for the sake of profits and glory.



A rescued 'retired' race horse with her foal

GET ACTIVE!

- Visit the Animal Aid website to find out what you can do to help.
- Order a free Horse Racing Awareness Pack and display a poster on a school or library notice board.
- Order free Horse Racing leaflets from Animal Aid to give to friends and family.
- Ask your teacher to invite an Animal Aid school speaker to give a talk on horse racing to your class.

GREYHOUND RACING



Most of the abuse of greyhounds by the racing industry takes place behind the scenes, leaving people, in general, blissfully ignorant of the suffering this 'sport' causes. Racing greyhounds are not

beloved companion animals, they are money-makers for their owners, and after a relatively short life out on the tracks, when they stop earning their keep, the vast majority are simply discarded.

Racing for their lives

About 25,000 greyhound puppies are registered every year in the British Isles. The number bred is much higher, but thousands of young dogs are killed because they fail to make the grade as racers. The Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW) suggested that the number of culled pups may be as high as 12,000 every year.

The industry is believed to be very corrupt. Dogs can be fed huge meals or given drugs to make them lose a race, so that if they win the next race the betting odds are greater and more money can be made. Greyhounds can be owned by a syndicate (a group of people), who all contribute to the training, feeding and vet care – hoping to share in the glory of winning. When the greyhound stops doing well, these syndicate owners may not want to spend the money to take care of them for the rest of their lives, and may ask their trainers to dispose of them in the cheapest way.

Pushed to the limits

Greyhound racing results in frequent injuries to the dogs, many of which lead to the dogs being put to sleep. It is thought that more than 4,000 dogs per year injure themselves while racing. They are forced into early retirement by racing at badly designed tracks with tight corners that are difficult to negotiate and by owners forcing dogs to run when injured, or in bad weather.

When racing is over...

The average retirement age for a greyhound is 3-4 years old and they can live for 16 years. Every year, 10,000 dogs leave registered racing, but the Retired Greyhound Trust only organises homes for just over 3,000. Some of the remaining 7,000 dogs may find good homes, but others may be drowned, poisoned or shot.

RACING

Registered racing greyhounds have identifying tattoos on their ears, so abandoned or killed dogs sometimes have their ears cut off to hide who registered them. Rejected greyhounds may also be exported to Spain for hare coursing (where hares are chased and killed) and for hunting, where they are typically kept for only one season and then cruelly abandoned or killed. Greyhound racing is a £2.5 billion per year industry, but those involved do not seem to want to provide for a retirement fund for the very animals that bring them all this cash.

© LACS



But greyhounds love running, don't they?

While dogs do enjoy a good run around the park, and greyhounds have a strong chase instinct, the racing industry has exploited these traits to the detriment of the dogs themselves.

It is wrong to force greyhounds to race for entertainment and money. They have their own feelings and desires, and should be allowed to lead natural lives, in loving homes.

GET ACTIVE!

- **If you know someone who is considering taking on a dog, ask him or her to think about giving a home to a retired greyhound.**
- **Discourage your friends and family from going to watch dog racing. Tell them to read this factsheet and visit the Greyhound Action website www.greyhoundaction.org.uk for more information.**
- **Write a letter to your local paper or favourite magazine and tell people what happens to the animals involved in racing.**