



Shameful rise in whip abuse amongst Britain's jockeys

2017 saw a shocking 11.5% rise in breaches of the whip rules compared with 2016. In addition, 7% more jockeys broke the rules at least once, and there was a 54% increase in the number of jockeys breaching the rules five times or more during the year.

The figures released by national campaign group, Animal Aid, demonstrate that the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) is failing to curb jockeys from breaking its regulations on the whip and that, as a consequence, it is failing in its duty to protect the welfare of race horses.

In 2017, the BHA's whip regulations were breached 524 times by 264 jockeys, against 470 breaches by 246 jockeys in the previous year. Jockeys who broke the rules five times or more in the year also rose from 13 in 2016 to 20 in 2017, with one offending eight times during the year.

Most worryingly, twenty horses were on the receiving end of excessive whip use on more than one occasion. It is important to bear in mind, says Animal Aid, that hitting horses during a race (seven times in a flat race or eight times in a jumps race) is legitimised under the BHA's Rules of Racing.

Even so, the majority of the breaches recorded are for jockeys who have hit their horses more than the permitted number of times (other offences include excessive force or hitting a horse who is clearly winning). Yet, when jockeys were allowed to hit their horses 16 times under the (pre-2012) old rules, jockeys *still* exceeded those totals. This demonstrates, says Animal Aid, that Britain's jockeys cannot abide by the regulations and that the whip should be banned for everything other than safety reasons. This has been the case in Norway for many years and there is no reason that such a situation could not exist in Britain.

Says Animal Aid Campaign Manager, Fiona Pereira: *'Jockeys seem incapable of sticking to the whipping limits imposed by the BHA. This means that the whip regulations simply aren't enough and this is borne out by the fact that not only are jockeys still offending but that there has been an increase in the number of breaches. This shows that they should not be allowed to use the whip for so-called encouragement. The whip is unpopular amongst the public, and the racing industry knows this. A ban on the whip is long overdue.'*