



For immediate release: 26 April 2018

Poll reveals strong public opposition to the use of the whip in racing

Just a fortnight after a jockey was suspended for 17 days for hitting his horse excessively at the Grand National meeting, a new poll reveals that the majority of the public want to see an end to the use of the whip in racing.

ITV reported that jockey Jamie Codd hit his horse, Getaway Katie Mai, 17 times (nine more strikes than permitted) in the final race of the first day of the Grand National. He was also fined £400, but, as the rules permit, kept his placement as the winner of the race.

The new YouGov poll, which was commissioned by national campaign group, Animal Aid, has shown that the majority of the public want to see an end to the whip in racing.

- **68% of respondents either oppose (30%) or strongly oppose (38%) the use of the whip in racing**
- **When excluding those who did not express an opinion on the issue, those who oppose the use of the whip in racing rose to 83%**
- **Just 14% of respondents either tend to support (12%) or strongly support (2%) the use of the whip**

Animal Aid's research into breaches of the whip regulations* showed that there was an increase of 11.5% in the number of offences in 2017 compared with 2016. There was also a rise in the number of jockeys who broke the rules five or more times during the year.

Our ongoing efforts to highlight breaches of the whip rules by jockeys have been followed by a recent announcement by the British Horseracing Authority that it would hold a review into the penalties awarded for whip misuse. This will consider whether they present a deterrent to jockeys. It is Animal Aid's view that, as long as commercial racing is allowed to continue, jockeys should only be allowed to carry a whip for reasons of safety.

Says Dene Stansall, Animal Aid's Horse Racing Consultant:

'The racing industry needs to start paying attention to public sentiment over this issue. People are deeply concerned by the sight of jockeys beating their horses for "so called" encouragement, and we have even witnessed elements of the racing press, commentators and industry insiders starting to echo those views. It is doubly unjust that jockeys are permitted to keep their placement for breaking the rules. At the heart of the matter is this: beating animals is uncivilised and cruel. The whip has no place in modern society, especially in a sport that claims to care about its animals.'

Note to editors:

- *the current whip rules permit jockeys to hit their horses 7 times in a flat race and 8 times in a jumps race
- The YouGov poll sample size was 2106 GB adults, with the fieldwork undertaken between 29th March - 2nd April 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).
Respondents were asked for their reaction to the following statement: 'The racing industry says that whips are used on horses for safety and encouragement. Those against the use of whips on horses say they cause pain to horses and are used most often in the final stages of a race to bully horses to run to their physical limit. To what extent do you support or oppose the use of the whip in horse racing?' Total opposition was 68%. Of those who expressed a view, this figure rose to 83%
- Information on breaches of the whip regulations in 2017 can be seen at:
<https://www.animalaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Animal-Aid-Whip-Abuse-Infographic-2017-final.pdf>
- One horse, Lilbitluso, was killed at this year's three-day Grand National meeting. Many other horses would have undoubtedly been left sore, bruised and shaken from falls.