

# RACING HORSE SCENARIO

Animal Welfare  
Judging and  
Assessment  
Competition,  
2011

# OVERVIEW: STABLE 1

- Thoroughbred racing stable in central California
- ~16 horses in training at a time
- Horses are run in handicap and stakes-level races



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# OVERVIEW: STABLE 2

- Thoroughbred racing stable in southern California
- ~22 horses in training at a time
- Horses are raced in claiming to stakes-level races



# PERSONNEL

## Stable 1

- Trainer has been training for >30 years
  - Considered a top trainer in California
  - At the barn everyday, watches all horses train, often walks to the track with the horses
- Barn-dedicated exercise rider (16 yrs experience)
  - Also has jockey license
- Other riders and jockeys have been the same for many years

## Stable 2

- Trainer has been training for ~10 years
  - Recently won top-level races in U.S. and abroad
  - Has extensive exercise-rider experience (still rides own racehorses)
  - Has own stable pony, accompanies racehorses to the track for training
- Various riders and jockeys used

# HOUSING: STABLE 1

- **Box stalls**
  - 3 m x 3 m (10' x 10')
  - Solid partitions between horses
- **Bedded with shavings**
  - 10 cm (4")
- **All shavings removed and replaced in AM**
- **Manure and wet shavings removed in PM**



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# HOUSING: STABLE 2

- **Box stalls**
  - 3.7 m x 3.7 m (12' x 12')
  - Grill partitions between stalls
- **Bedded with straw**
  - 20 cm (8")
- **All straw removed and replaced in AM**
- **Manure and wet straw removed 2x/day**



# ROUTINE HUSBANDRY: STABLE 1

- 4 horses/groom
  - Same grooms past 20 years
  - New employees are rare
- Groomed 5 days/week, 30 min/day
- After training horses are:
  - Walked until cool by a walking machine
  - Bathed
  - Ice boots for 30 min
  - Stable bandages on all legs before stalling



# ROUTINE HUSBANDRY: STABLE 2

- 3-4 horses per groom
  - Grooms of various experience and capabilities
- Groomed daily, 35 min/day
- All horses taken out of stalls in PM
  - 20 min in sandy round pen (18 m (60'))
- After training horses are:
  - Walked by hand until cool
  - Bathed (unless too cold/inclement weather)
  - Provided with therapeutic leg care if needed
  - Stable bandages wrapped on all legs before stalling





# FEEDING PROGRAMS

## Stable 1

- Timothy hay available *ad libitum* in hay nets
- Alfalfa hay in AM
- Concentrated pellet fed in PM
- Water provided in buckets
  - Fresh water in AM, buckets washed 3x/week
  - Checked 2x/day
- Salt lick always available in stall

## Stable 2

- Timothy/oat hay available *ad libitum* in hay nets
- Grain mix + alfalfa hay fed in AM + PM
- Water provided in buckets
  - Buckets washed in AM when fresh water is given
  - Checked 3x/day
- Trace mineral salt lick always available in stall



# SUPPLEMENTS

## Stable 1

- Vet gives new horses flaxseed<sup>+</sup> oil to cleanse GI tract
- All horses are fed calcium and joint supplements
- Horses in training receive weekly injections of vitamins and Adequan®\*

*<sup>+</sup>a.k.a. linseed oil*

*\*Polysulfated Glycosaminoglycan*

## Stable 2

- Platinum Performance® feed supplement given to all horses
- Adequan®\* and other joint therapies utilized as indicated for horses in training
  - ~65% of horses in stable receive these therapies



# VETERINARY PRACTICES

## Stable 1

- Same regular track veterinarian >20 years
- Equine-specialty hospital is also used for state-of-art diagnostics, therapeutics, & surgeries

## Stable 2

- Regular track veterinarians are a group practice (5 DVMs)
  - Provide all modern diagnostics, treatments, and surgeries at the barn and/or racetrack facilities



# VETERINARY CARE

## Stable 1

- Dewormed 4x/year
  - Uses pyrantel
- Vaccinated against:
  - Influenza and Rhino<sup>+</sup> (quarterly)
  - West Nile, EEE/WEE\*, rabies, and tetanus (biannually)
- Dental exams 2x/year

+Rhinopneumonitis (Equine Herpesvirus)

\*Eastern/Western Equine Encephalomyelitis

## Stable 2

- Dewormed 2x/year
  - Fecal floats 2x/year, horses with high counts wormed more often
- Acupuncture and shockwave therapies
- No vaccines
  - Immunomodulators are used to boost immune system
- Dental exams 1x/year

# ROUTINE MEDICATIONS



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## Stable 1

- All horses receive an injection of Bute\* from vet >24 h pre-race
  - 50% horses receive Banamine®<sup>§</sup>/Robaxin®<sup>+</sup> injections from vet ~48 h pre-race for muscle stiffness
- Bleeder medication is given to 60% of horses racing and doing speed work
- No medications violations in past 3 years

## Stable 2

- All horses receive an oral dose of Bute\* from trainer/groom ~24 h pre-race
  - Horses with muscle stiffness receive an additional dose of Bute\* ~48 h pre-race
- Bleeder medication is given to all horses racing and doing speed work
- One medications violation incurred in past 3 years

\*NSAID (Phenylbutazone)

§NSAID (Flunixin)

+Muscle relaxant (Methocarbamol)

# LAMENESS MANAGEMENT

## Stable 1

- Trainer observes each horse with the rider up before training
- If groom detects a problem, trainer also checks legs after training
- The day after speed work or a race, the trainer and regular vet observe horses for lameness
- Trainer calls vet to examine horses with gait scores  $\geq 2^*$



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Medical & Surgical Center,  
PLLC

## Stable 2

- Grooms check legs as they prepare horses for training
- Trainer observes gait on the way to training
- Trainer calls vet for horses with gait scores  $>3^*$
- Trainer calls vet to examine horse if unable to resolve lameness ( $\leq 3^*$ ) within 2 days

# HOOF CARE

## Stable 1

- Horses are shod every 5 weeks
  - Aluminum racing plates with rims
  - Farrier uses calipers, angle gauges, and levels
- The trainer is present for shoeing of horses



Shoes w/Rims



Calipers



Angle Gauge

## Stable 2

- Horses are shod every 3 weeks
  - Aluminum racing plates with toe grabs
  - Hooves are trimmed to slightly elongate the toe
- Grooms communicate with farrier



Shoes w/Toe Grabs



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# HEALTH OUTCOMES

## Stable 1

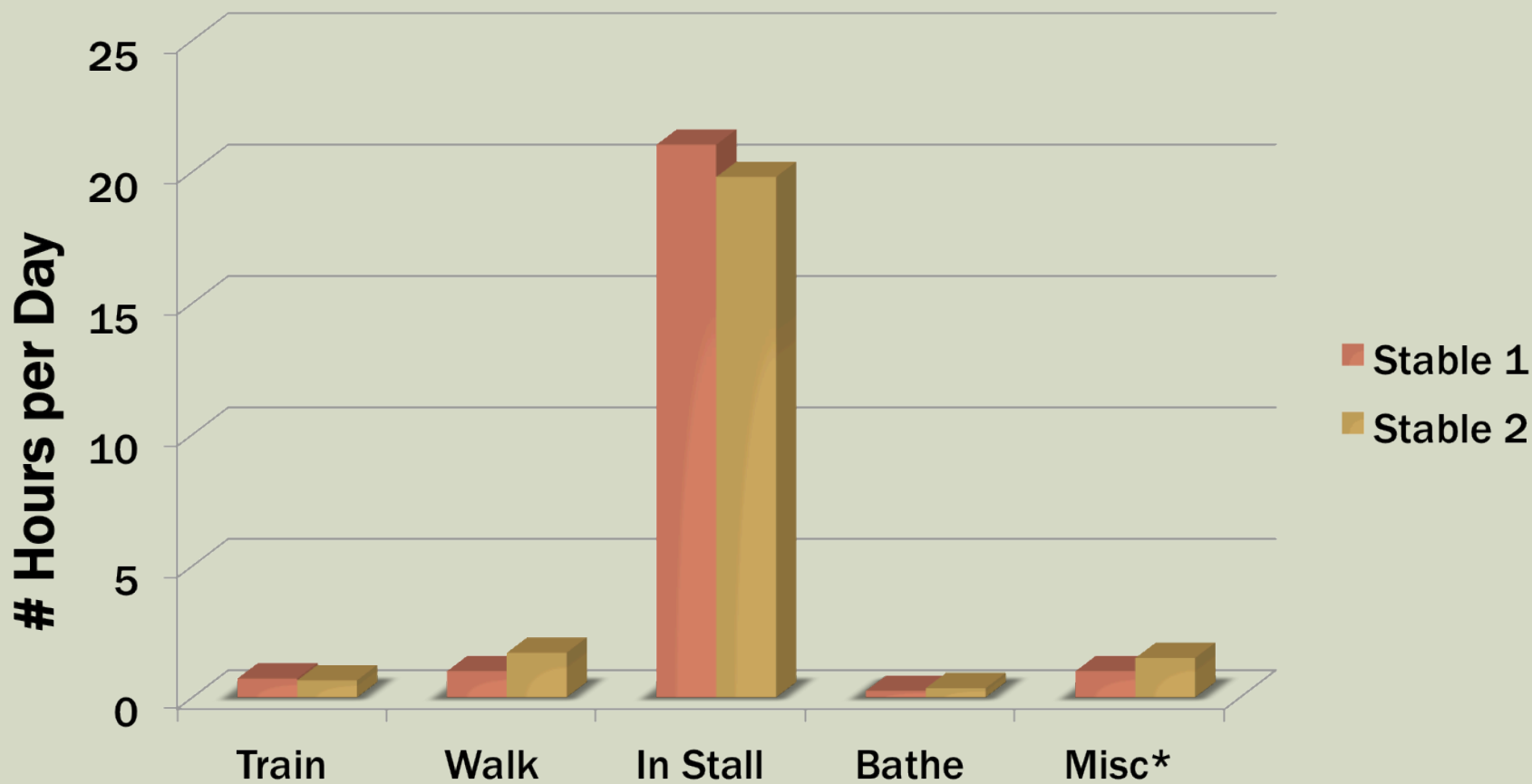
- BCS range 4-5
  - 80% have a BCS of 4.5
- ~2 horses/year experience colic
- ~1 horse/year with respiratory problems
- ~2 horses/year have gait scores  $\geq 2$

## Stable 2

- BCS range 3-5
  - 70% have a BCS of 5
- ~3 horses/year are pulled from training due to bowed tendons
- ~1 horse/year with respiratory problems
- ~5 horses/year have gait scores  $\geq 3$

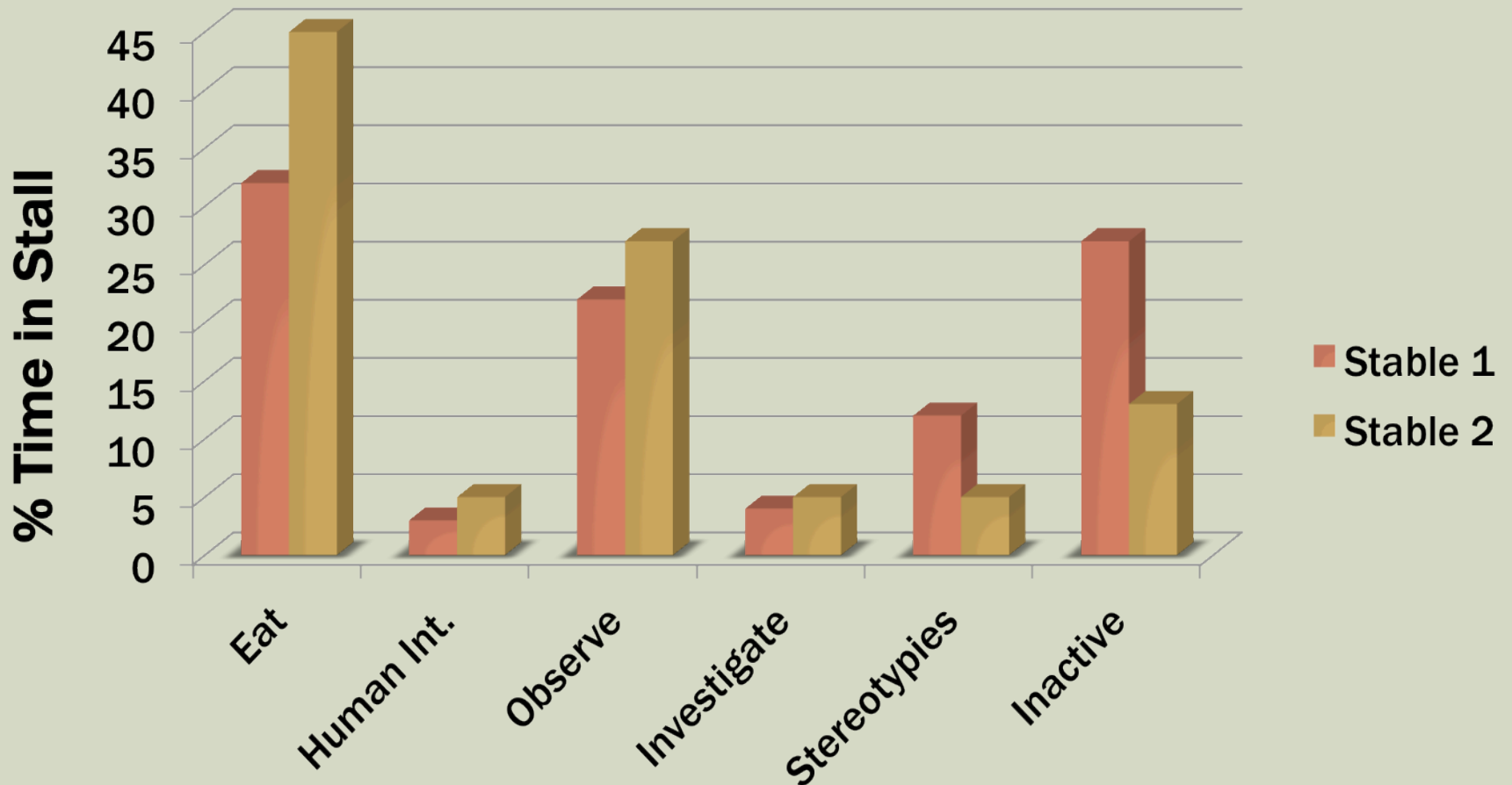


# DAILY TIME BUDGETS (DURING TRAINING)



*\*Shoeing, therapies, diagnostics, etc.*

# TIME BUDGETS (IN STALL)



# TRAINING: STABLE 1

- Train for ~5 months before racing starts
- Horses exercise on the track for 25 min/day, 5 days/week
- Horses do timed speed work 1 day/week
  - On the day of speed work, regular exercise is shortened to a warm up
  - After speed work, horses are walked for 1 h
  - The day after speed work, horses are walked 1 h (no other exercise)



# TRAINING: STABLE 2

- Train for ~3 months before racing starts
  - Horses are turned out on pasture at a local farm when not in training
- Horses exercise on the track for 40 min/day, 6 days/week
- Horses do timed speed work 2x/week
  - Speed work immediately follows regular exercise
  - After speed work, horses are walked for 1 h
- Horses rest 1 day/week



# TRANSPORT TO RACE

## Stable 1

- Horses are trailered to the race 2 days before
  - Horses are always transported w/stablemate
  - If the race is >6 h away, horses are rested and given water 1x during trip
- Upon arrival, horses are given water from home barn (w/electrolytes)
  - Water offered frequently (6 L (1.5 gal)/30 min))
  - Intake is monitored

## Stable 2

- Horses are trailered to the race 1 day before
  - Barn goat accompanies horse to races
- Upon arrival, the horse is given water from racetrack barn to drink *ad libitum*



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# RACING

## Stable 1

- Horses race 2x/mo, 6 months/year
  - After a race, horses are walked for 1 hour/day for 4 days



## Stable 2

- Horses race 1x/week for 6 months/year
  - After a race, horses are walked 1 hour/day for 2 days



# PRE-RACE PHYSIOLOGY\* & BEHAVIOR

## Stable 1

- Salivary cortisol = 1.8 ng/ml
- Heart rate is 48 bpm
- ~2 horses regularly are lathered and prancing entering the gate

## Stable 2

- Salivary cortisol = 4.1 ng/ml
- Heart rate is 67 bpm
- ~4 horses regularly are lathered, prancing, and hopping entering the gate

*\*Measures taken 10 min before race*

AWJAC 2011 ©MSU ABWG

# CAREER LONGEVITY

## Stable 1

- Average competitive racing career ~3 years
- Primary reason for retiring = lacks athletic ability to be competitive at stakes-level

## Stable 2

- Average competitive racing career ~4 years
- Primary reason for retiring = no longer racing-sound