

## **Hot Weather Policies**

Ride organisers often ask when should the scheduled ride be cancelled or changed to the cooler hours of the day.

We all agree it is easier for us and for horses to be in and 'work' in conditions of low humidity.

Even when the temperature is high and there is a breeze, we feel more at ease than we do in lower temperatures with high humidity. This is basically because the body is cooled down by the evaporation of surface water otherwise known as "sweat".

This evaporation is slowed down as humidity rises and the air circulation reduces thus the body finds it harder to sustain a satisfactory temperature.

An overheating body can suffer heat stress and even death without some intervention. The impact on humans and horses varies depending on many factors including acclimatisation, fitness and 'fatness', measures taken to re-hydrate and/or cool down.

The potential risk to humans and horse can also be influenced by the facilities being used i.e. have shade areas been provided or made available, do indoor venues have sufficient air flow available, do you have access to sufficient water.

The most important thing organisers need to keep in mind is that the knowledge of how best to manage horses before and after competition may vary greatly between horse owners. Some may not realise the effect of the heat may have on their horse and may fail to take adequate measures.

**Ride organisers should consider the welfare of the horse as well as the rider when determining cancellation of a scheduled ride.**