

Equestrian Attitudes regarding the Involvement of Horses in Sport:

Pulse Survey Report

(September 2023)



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All reasonable measures have been taken to ensure the survey has been carried out ethically, any analysis of the available information is robust and accurate, and the interpretation of results objective and without bias. The information contained in the report does not replace or alter any FEI policy or regulations, nor other official guidelines or requirements.

Members of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission (FEI):

- Natalie (Nat) Waran (Chairperson)
- Kathalijne Visser
- Camie Heleski
- Madeleine Campbell
- Jessica Stark
- Cayetano Martínez de Irujo
- Ken Lalo
- Theo Ploegmakers
- Cesar Hirsch
- Sabrina Ibáñez

For more information, please visit the Commission's website: equinewellbeing.fei.org

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1. Introduction and methods

This report outlines the findings of the EWB pulse survey which was conducted 10 months after the initial EEWB equestrian survey, to assess the opinion, and any changes over time, of equestrian stakeholders concerning the welfare of horses in sports.

The survey was designed by the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission (an independent Commission established in June 2022 by the FEI Board). The pulse survey was developed and prepared after the presentation of the EEWB Recommendations to the FEI Board provided at the Sports Forum in April 2023. The pulse survey consisted of 10 questions (see Appendix).

As with the 2022 Equestrian and Public surveys, this Pulse survey was provided in English, Spanish and French. It was distributed by the FEI and the National Federations in various countries as well as being shared opportunistically through equestrian social media channels. Respondents were all anonymous, although some demographic information was collected to help with analysis. Data were collected using Survey Monkey and analysed using descriptive analysis.



2. Results

2.1 Respondents

A total of 5,718 people from 79 different countries returned the survey.

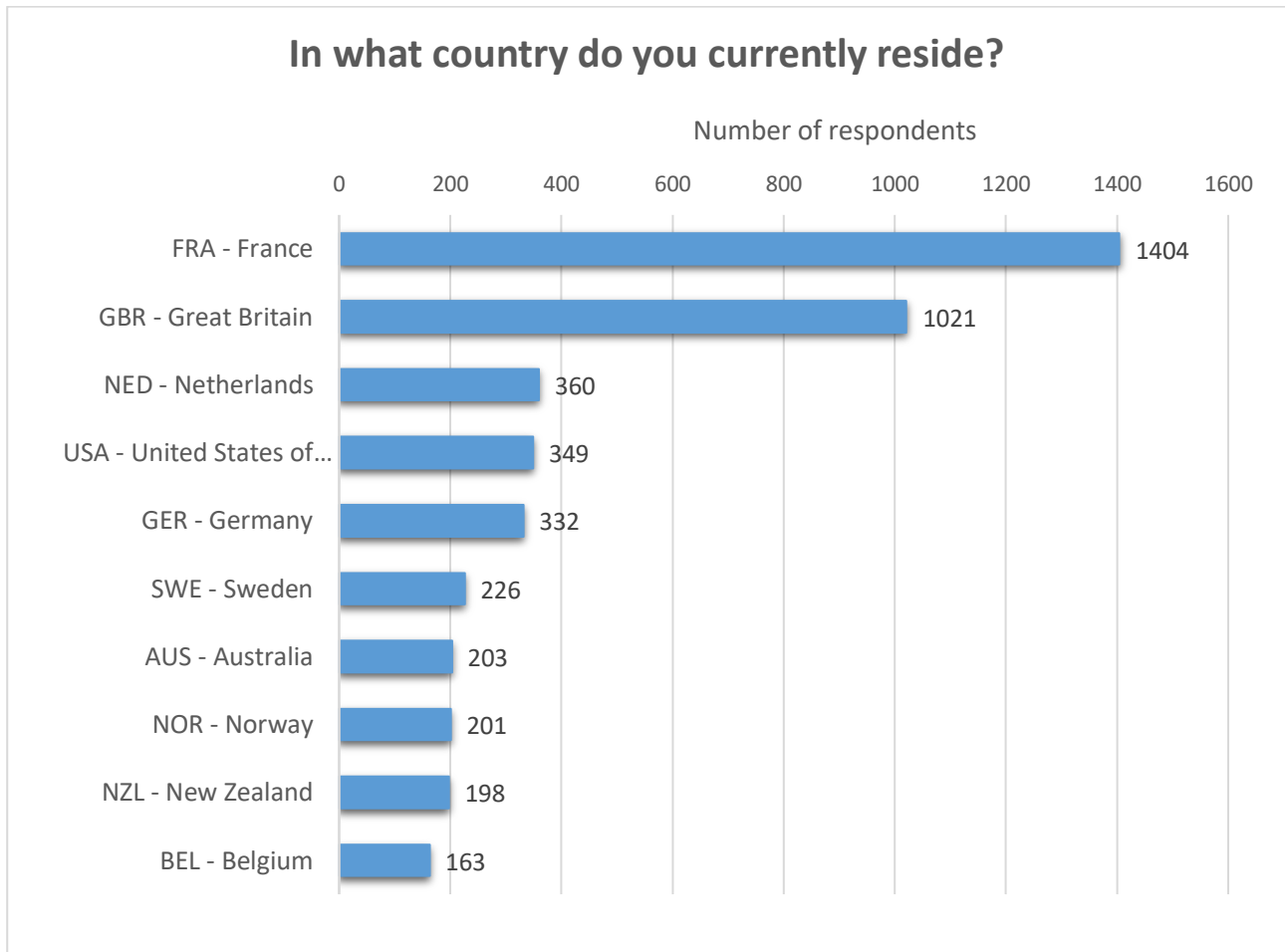


Figure 1. Top 10 of the number of respondents to the Pulse Survey per country.

Similar to the initial survey among equestrians carried out in 2022 (Figure 2), the Pulse Survey reached the highest number of respondents for the countries France, Great Britain, and the USA.

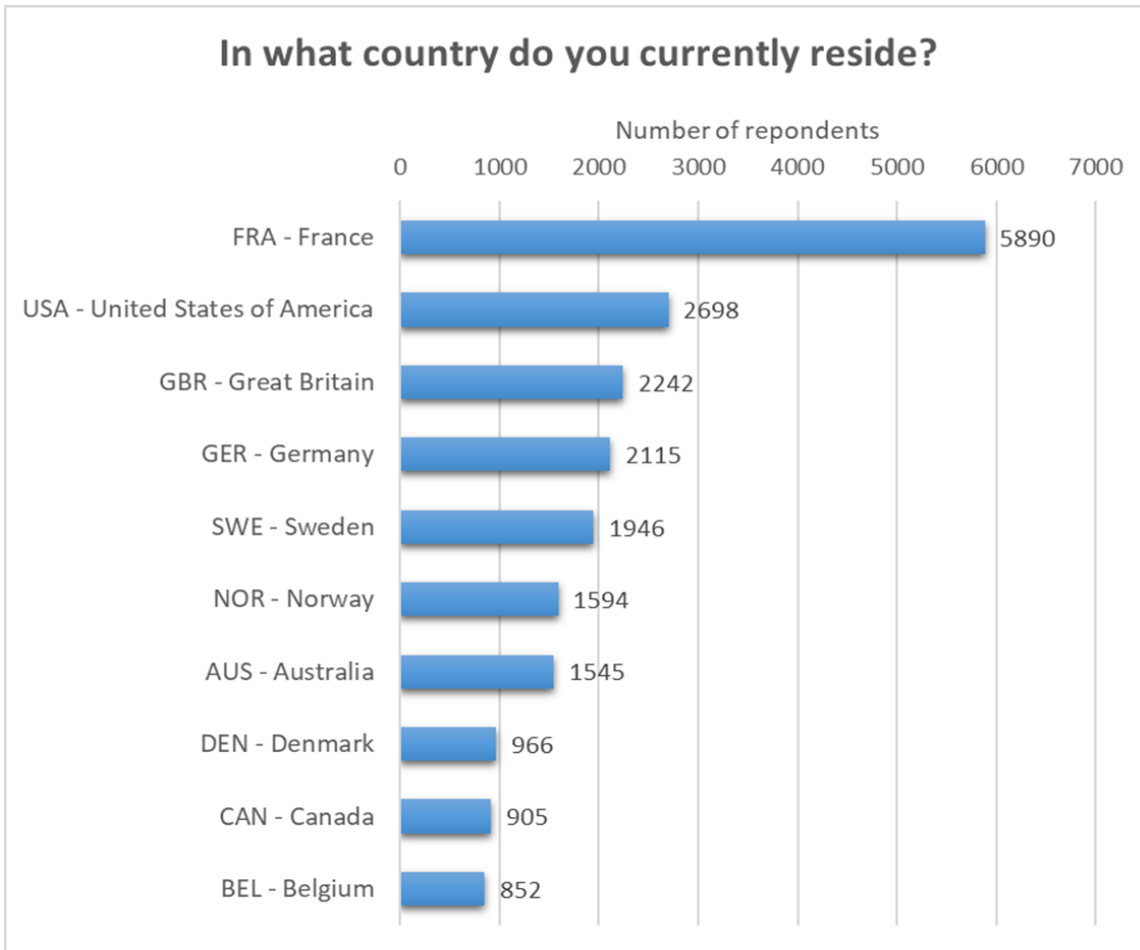


Figure 2. Top 10 of the number of respondents to the Equestrian Survey in 2022 per country.

In response to feedback provided by delegates at the 2023 Sports Forum, a question regarding the age of respondents was added. The results showed that respondents to the Pulse Survey varied in age with the largest two age groups being; 26 to 45 and 46 to 67 years of age, these two groups representing 77% of the respondents to the Pulse Survey respondents (Figure 3).

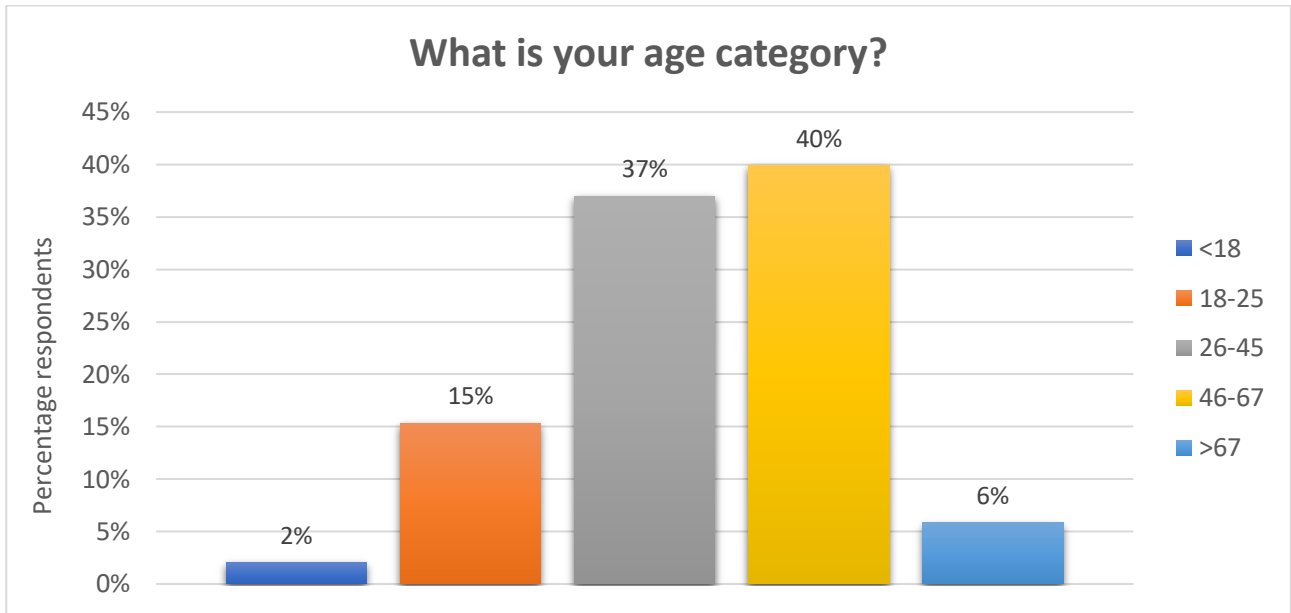


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents in different age groups.

As in the initial Equestrian Survey, in the Pulse Survey the largest group of stakeholders were FEI related (2463 respondents), local competition stakeholders (2108 respondents) and leisure riders/drivers (1415 respondents) (see Figure 4). In the 2022 Equestrian Survey the group of 'Local competition' stakeholders was the largest, and for 2023 it is the FEI related stakeholders.

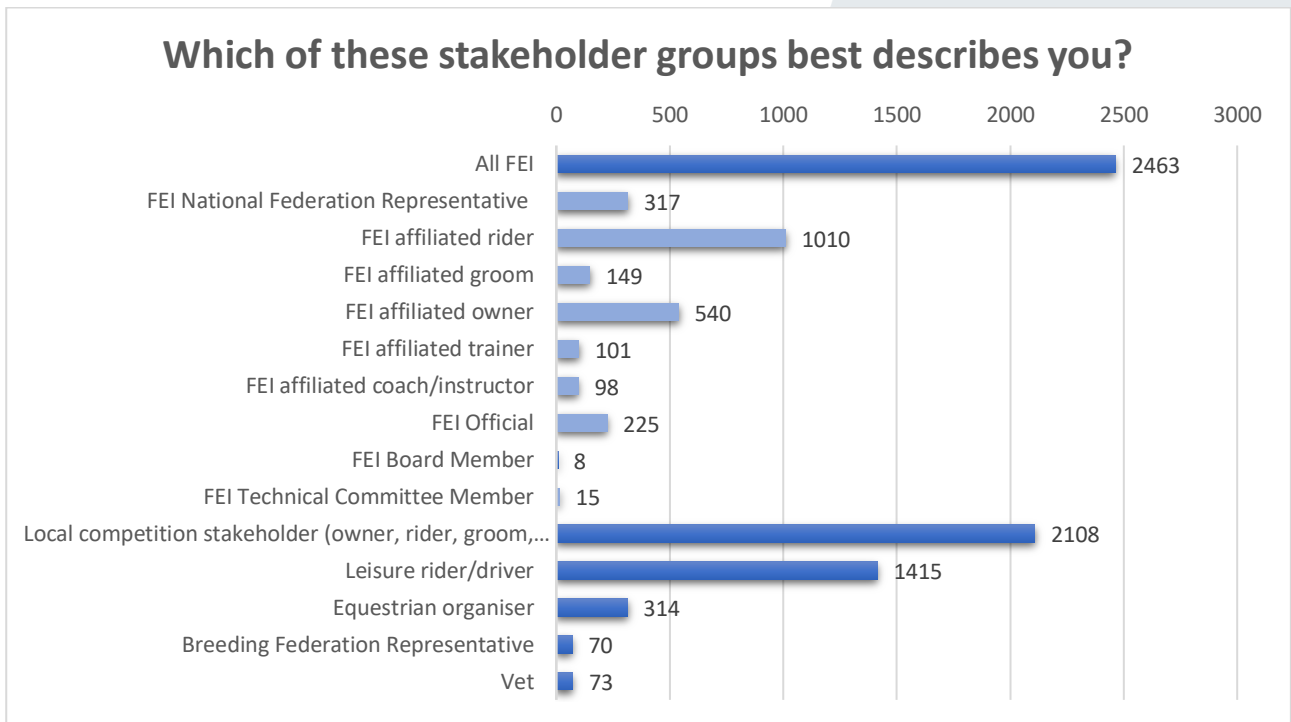


Figure 4. Percentage of respondents that described themselves as a particular stakeholder group. The darker blue top bar ('All FEI') is the sum of the light blue bars underneath it (labelled with FEI).

The most popular disciplines the stakeholders participated in were Jumping (33%), Dressage (37%) and Eventing (15%). See Figure 5.

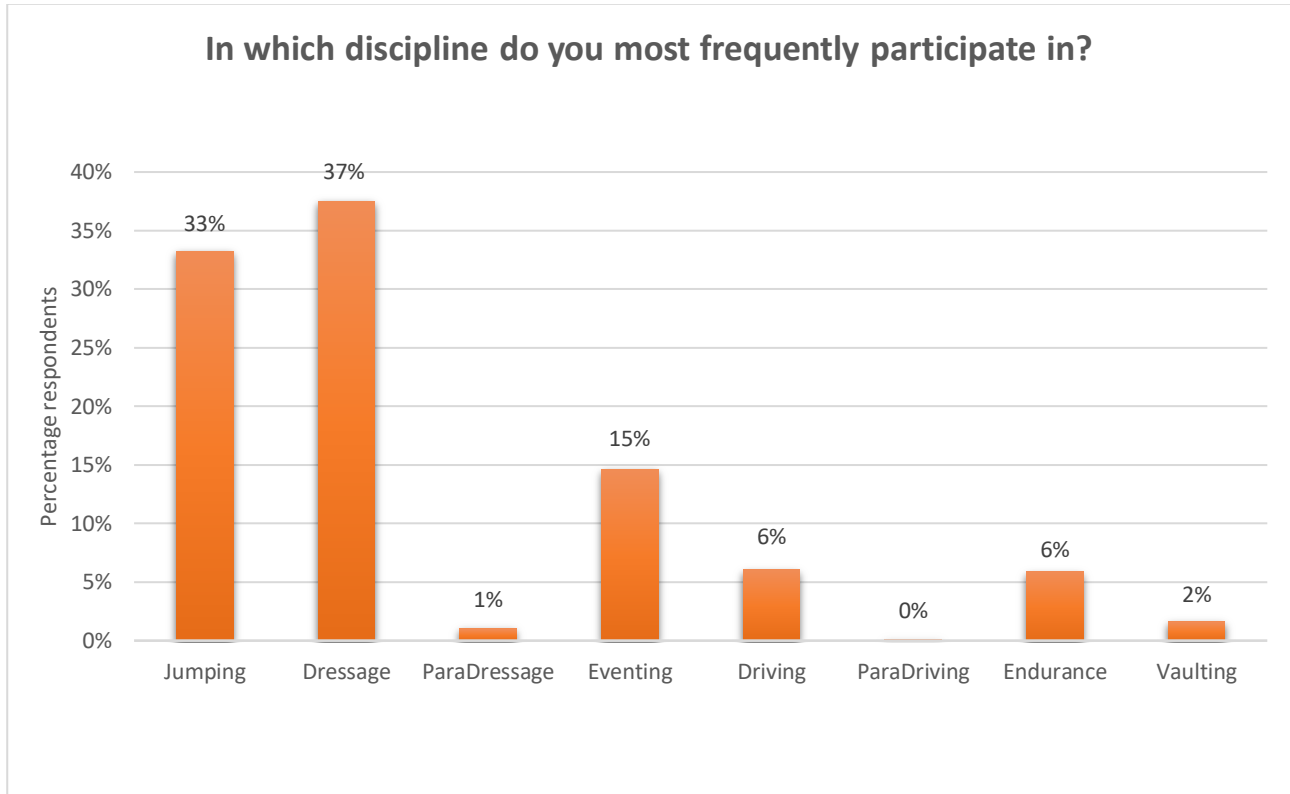


Figure 5. Percentage of respondents to the Pulse Survey participating in different disciplines.

When asked if they had participated in the 2022 Equestrian Survey, 63% of respondents to the Pulse Survey answered 'No'. Nineteen percent of respondents did fill in last year's survey and 18 percent were not sure. There were small differences between FEI and non-FEI related respondents. Whereas the percentage that filled in last year's survey was 24% for FEI related respondents, this was 16% for non-FEI related respondents.

2.2 Areas of concern

Analysis of the initial survey carried out in 2022 resulted in what have been described as 'six priority areas' of concern. These 6 broad areas were included in the Pulse Survey for respondents to comment on. As illustrated in Figure 6, the majority of respondents to the Pulse Survey were most concerned about the category *'Training and Riding practices and Tack and Equipment'*. Followed by the concern that horses were viewed as *'an object or equipment' instead of a sentient being*, and in third place concern was expressed regarding the *'Emotional and Physical stress' experienced by horses in sport*.

When compared with the results of the initial Equestrian survey (August 2022) the ordering of the priority areas of concern seemed to have changed slightly (see Figure 6). In the 2022 survey the

order of the six concerns was as follows with ‘*Enforcement, Accountability and Horsemanship*’ and The ‘*Other 23 hours..*’ being considered of more concern than “*Horses being treated as an object..*”:

1. Training and Riding practices, Tack and Equipment
2. Emotional and Physical stress (including injuries) of the sport horse
3. Enforcement, Accountability, Horsemanship
4. The other 23 hours (outside of competition)
5. Horses treated as an object or “equipment” and not as an emotional creature (competitive drive)
6. Horses being not fit to compete or masking health problems

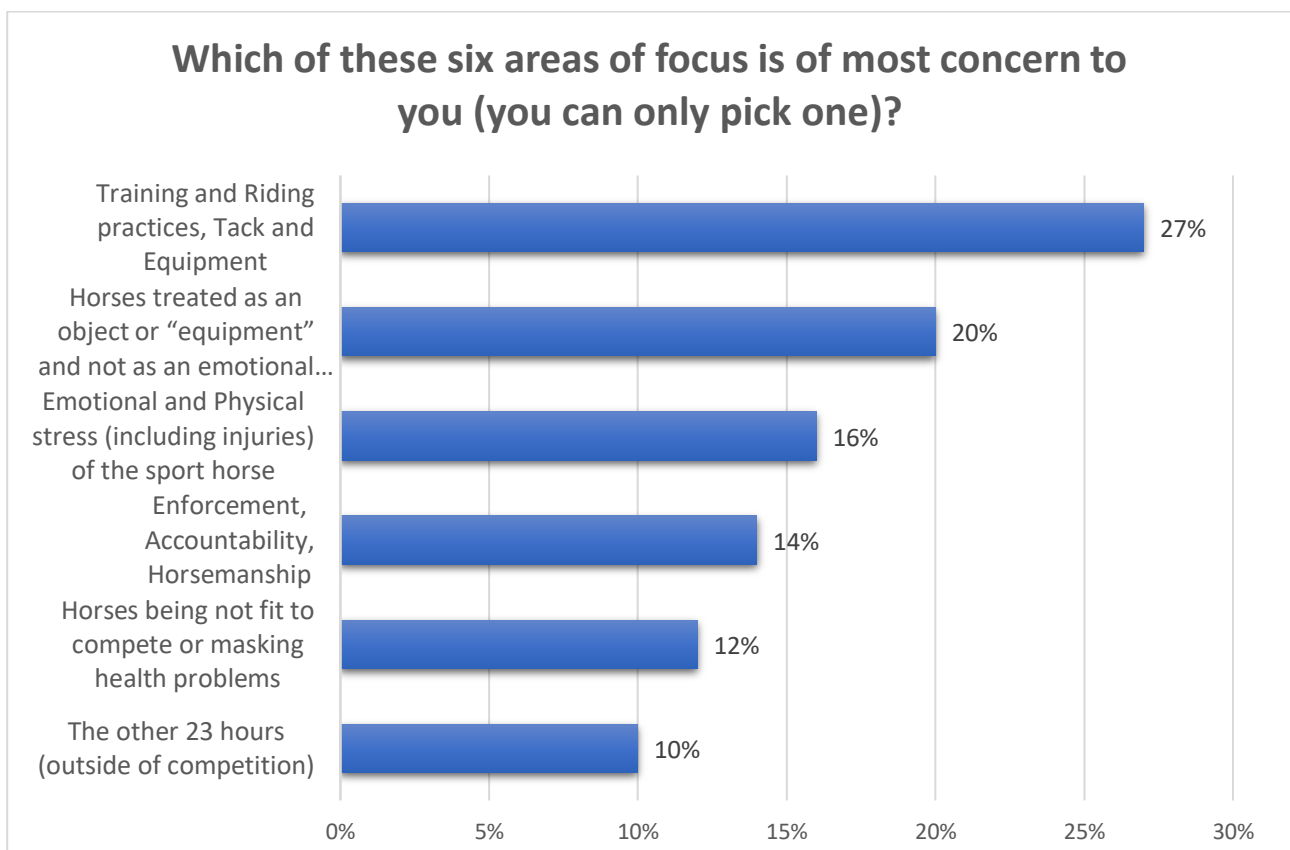


Figure 6. Percentage of respondents to the Pulse Survey which had concerns about the selected six priority areas. Respondents could only pick one category.

Furthermore, the results were also analysed for the FEI and non-FEI respondents. Figure 7 shows that percentages are similar for most categories, but it appeared that FEI related respondents were more concerned about the category ‘*Enforcement, Accountability, Horsemanship*’ as compared to non-FEI respondents. On the other hand, the non-FEI respondents were more concerned with the categories ‘*the other 23 hours*’ and that ‘*horses were treated as object or equipment*’.

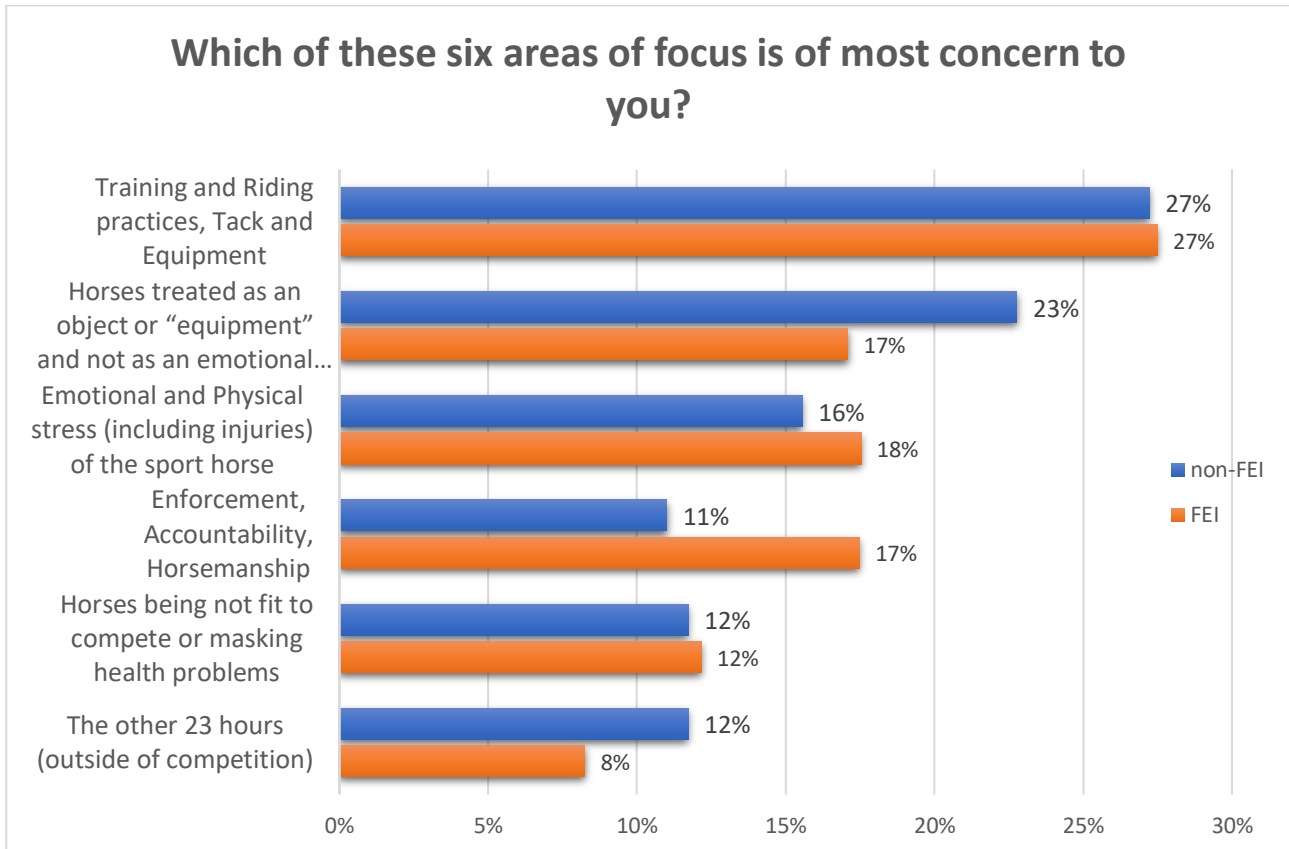


Figure 7. Percentage of respondents (FEI and non-FEI) to the Pulse Survey which had concerns about the selected six priority areas. Respondents could only pick one category.

The Pulse Survey results were analysed by the age and equestrian discipline of the respondents. Figure 8 shows that there are no substantial differences in the order of the priority of the areas of focus between the different age categories.

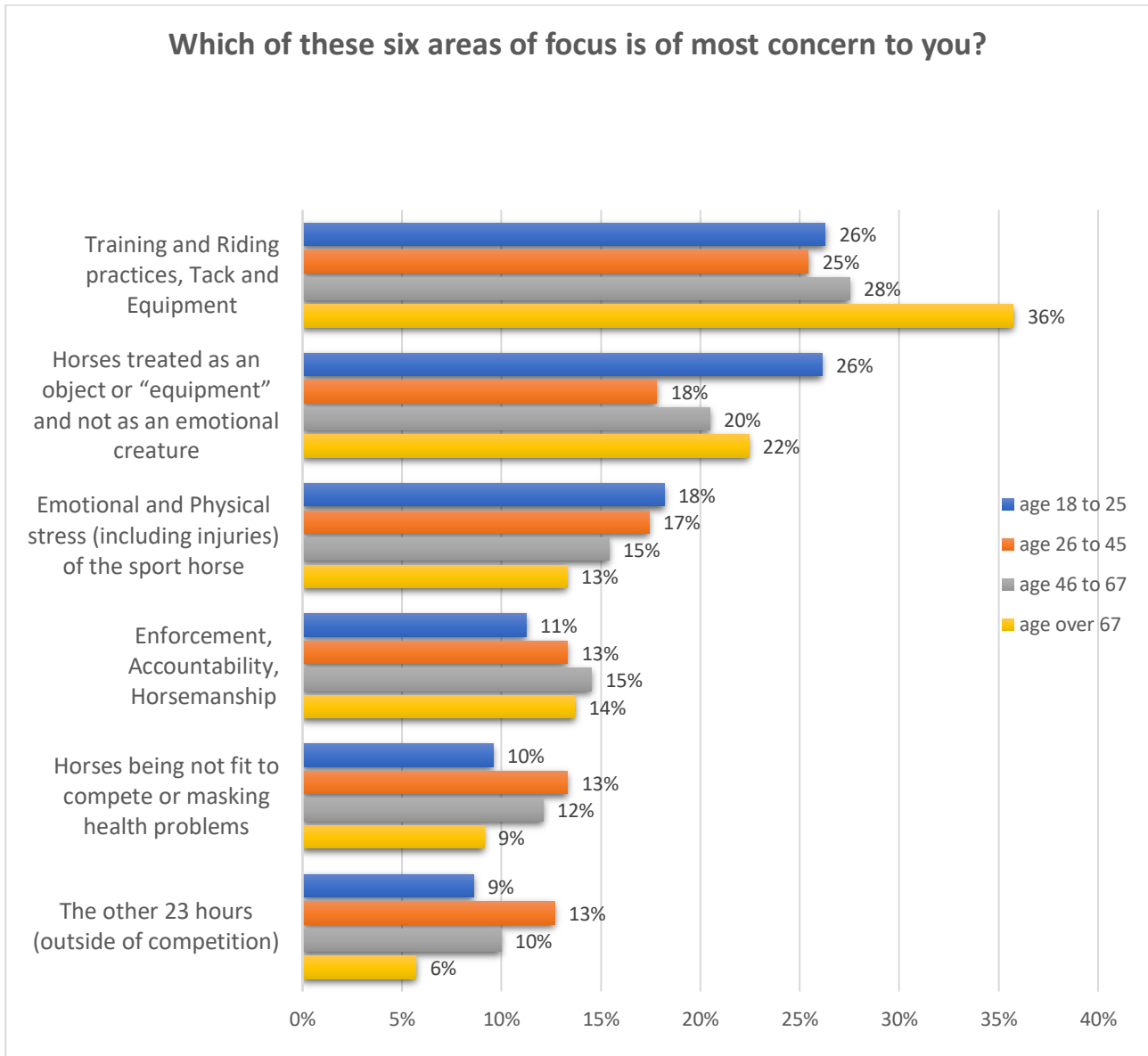


Figure 8. Percentage of respondents (in different age categories) to the Pulse Survey with concerns about the selected six priority areas. Respondents could only pick one category.

When the pulse survey results were analysed according to the equestrian discipline (Figure 9 for the disciplines jumping, dressage, eventing), these were the three most prominent disciplines represented by respondents to the Pulse Survey.

As is shown in Figure 9, there are some differences between the order of the six priority areas depending on discipline. While the order of level of concern for dressage and jumping is more or less similar, eventing appears to be different. There were fewer respondents identifying as involved with Eventing that picked the category 'Horses treated as an object or equipment' as the area of most concern compared to respondents who participate in dressage or jumping. Instead, in Eventing, there were more respondents with concerns about the categories 'Emotional and Physical stress (including injuries)' and 'Enforcement, Accountability, Horsemanship' and 'Horses

not being fit to compete, masking health problems’. There was a greater proportion of respondents identifying as involved with dressage with concerns regarding the focus area of *‘Training and Riding practices, Tack and Equipment’* than there were within those respondents participating in jumping. In contrast the categories *‘Enforcement, Accountability, Horsemanship’* and the category *‘Horses not being fit to compete, masking health problems’* there were more respondents participating in show-jumping that had concerns, as compared with respondents participating in dressage.



Figure 9. Percentage of respondents (for the disciplines Jumping, Dressage, Eventing) to the Pulse Survey which had concerns about the selected six priority areas. Respondents could only pick one category.

2.3 A Good Life for sport horses

The pulse survey asked respondents to consider the lifespan of a sport horse from birth to death when considering the question about A Good Life. A substantial proportion of the respondents (79%) agreed that horses could have a Good Life when involved in sports (see Figure 10). Only a very small proportion thought ‘probably not’ (4%) or ‘definitely not’ (1%). There were noticeable

differences between the FEI related and non-FEI related respondents in the way they answered this question. The FEI respondents were more certain ('definitely agree' 65%) compared to the non-FEI related respondents (42% 'definitely agree').

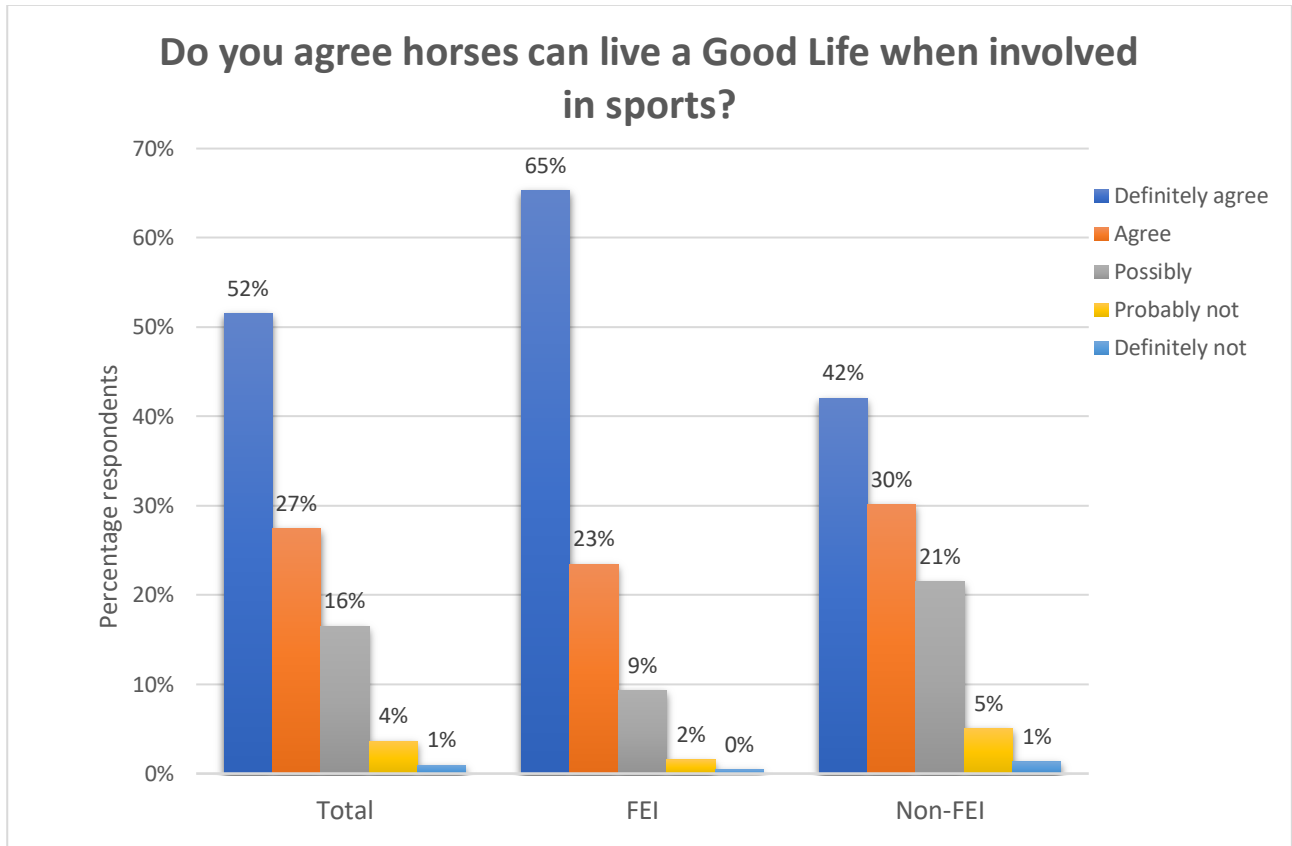


Figure 10. Percentage of respondents to the Pulse Survey that agreed or disagreed about the whether or not horses can live a Good Life when involved in sports.

There were no significant differences between the disciplines (see Figure 11) nor for age categories.

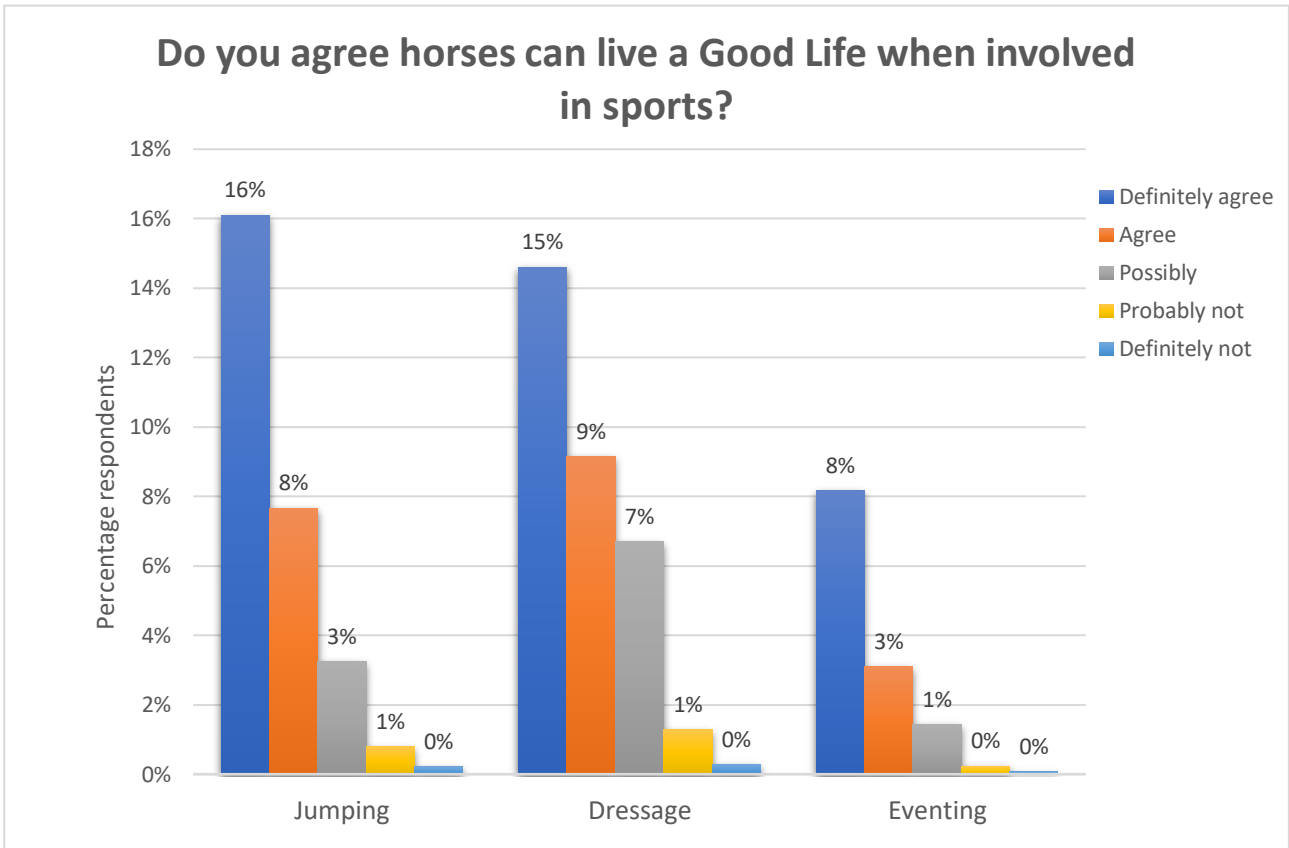


Figure 11. Percentage of respondents to the Pulse Survey (different disciplines) that agreed or disagreed about the whether or not horses can live a Good Life when involved in sports. Percentages are based on absolute numbers of respondents participating in a discipline.

Further, the pulse survey respondents were asked to comment about what they had noticed over the past year regarding initiatives aimed towards improving the welfare of sport horses.

Interestingly, 70% of Pulse survey respondents reported that they had noticed ‘more’ or ‘some’ new initiatives (see Figure 12), with only 30% of the respondents stating that they had ‘not noticed’ any initiatives.

Considering the past year what have you noticed about sport horse welfare?

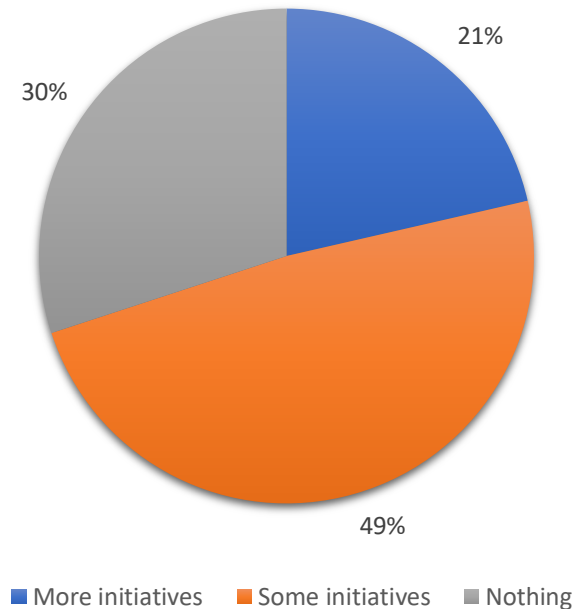


Figure 12. Percentage of respondents that noticed initiatives about improving horse welfare over the last year.

2.4 The 30 EEWB Recommendations

Based on results of the two initial surveys, scientific evidence, external reports, working groups and consultations the EEWB provided the FEI Board with **30 Recommendations considered** to be key to maintaining and strengthening Social Licence to Operate for horse sports (see Commission website <https://equinewellbeing.fei.org/key-documents.html>).

In the 2023 Pulse Survey, respondents were asked to address a question asking them about to what extent they believed these Recommendations would make a real difference for SLO and horse wellbeing. It was positive to learn that the majority of survey respondents (71%) believed that the 30 Recommendations ‘will absolutely’ or ‘will’ make a positive difference regarding the future involvement of horses in sport. There were very slight differences between FEI related respondents and non-FEI related respondents (see Figure 13), with the FEI respondents appearing more definite in their view.

One of the 30 Recommendations was that all equestrians should pledge their commitment to equine wellbeing through a new Equestrian Charter. In the Pulse Survey respondents were asked if they were prepared to do so. Figure 14 shows that 67% of the respondents agreed they would

pledge to such a charter and 30% of respondents answered 'maybe'. There were small differences between FEI related respondents and non-FEI related respondents.

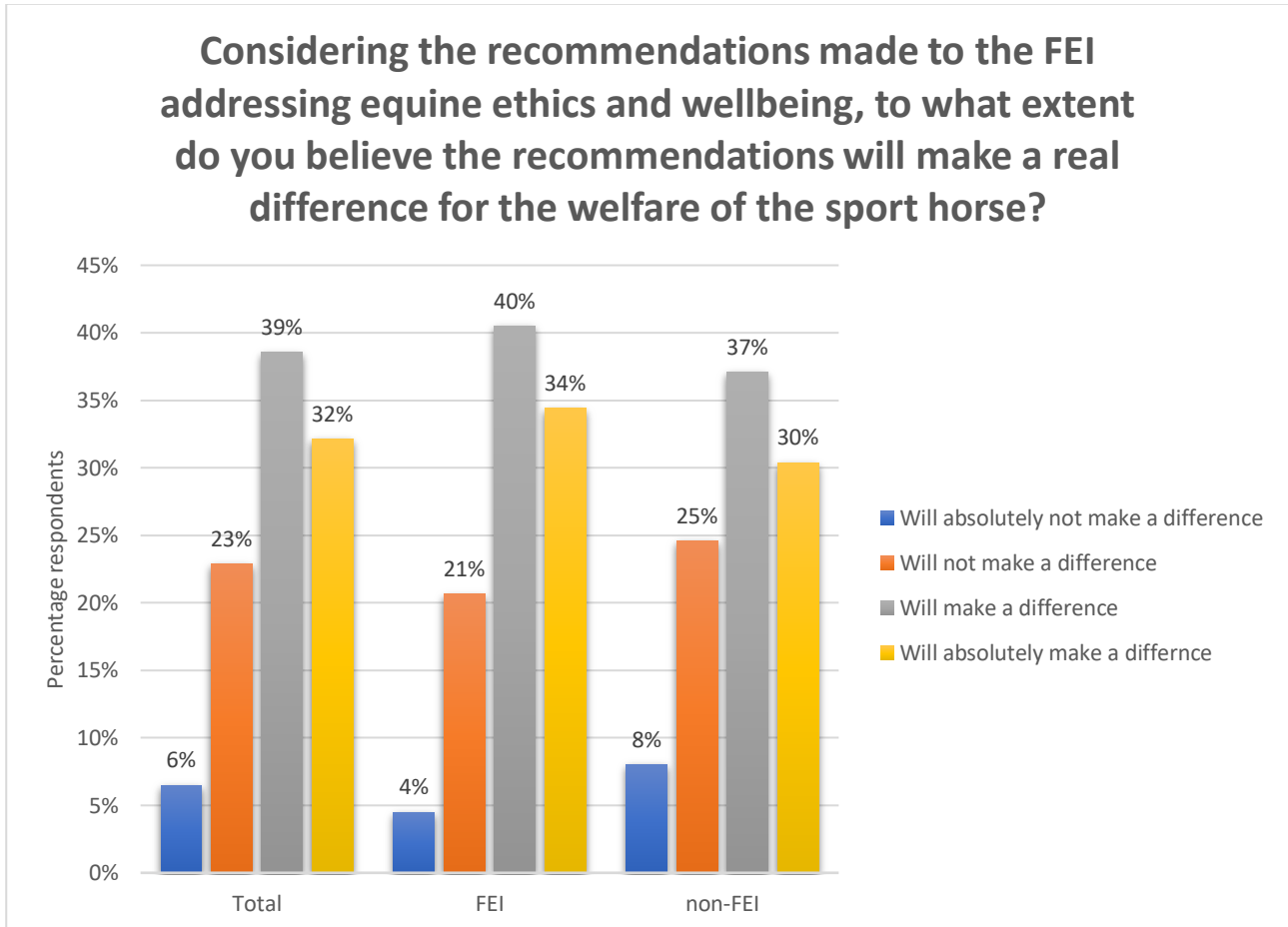


Figure 13. Percentage of respondents that believe that the recommendations made by the EEWB to the FEI addressing equine ethics and wellbeing. Respondents were asked to give a score between 1 and 10 with 1 being absolutely not believe the recommendations will make a difference and 10 meaning that they believe the recommendations will absolutely make a difference. Scores 1, 2, 3 were categorized as 'will absolutely not make a difference', scores 4 and 5 were categorized as 'will not make a difference', scores 6 and 7 were categorised as 'will make a difference' and scores 8, 9, 10 were categorised as 'will absolutely make a difference'.

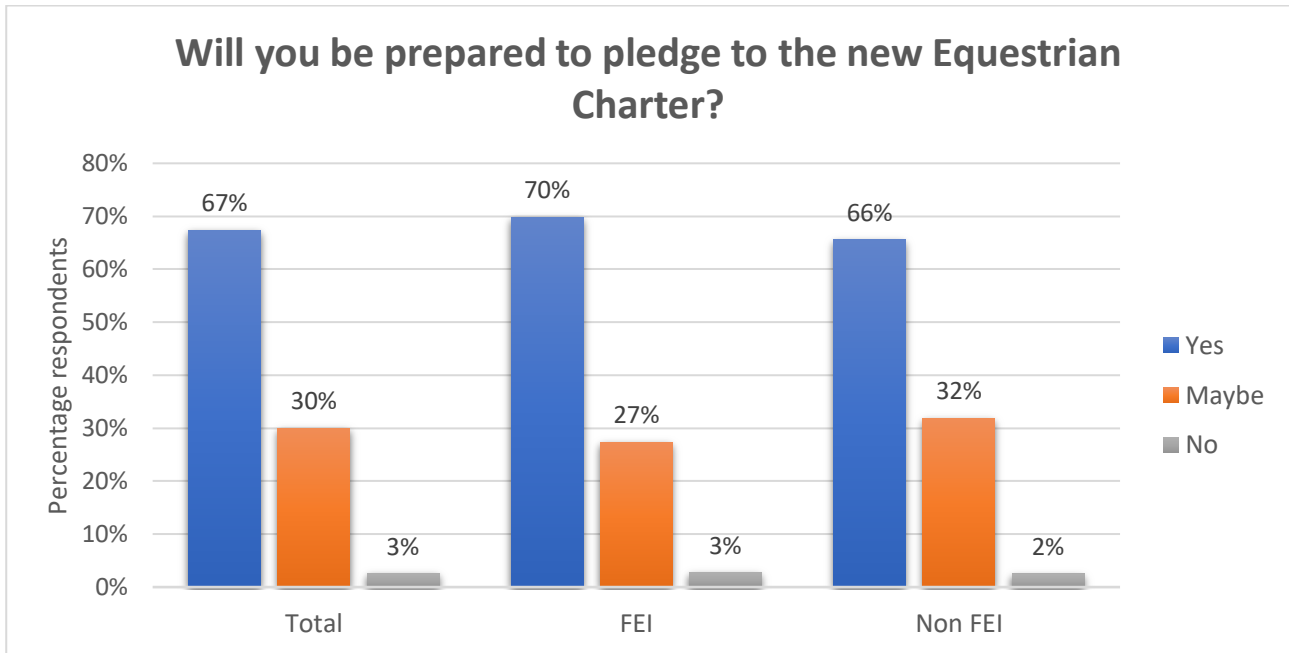


Figure 14. Percentage of respondents of the Pulse Survey that were prepared to pledge to a new Equestrian Charter.

2.5 Conclusions

The Pulse Survey provided an opportunity to gauge response to, and general acceptability of the EEWB Recommendations, especially the concept of A Good Life for Horses, as well as level of agreement regarding the proposed Equestrian Charter.

It also enabled some ‘socialisation’ of the EEWB Recommendations across the FEI family and the wider equestrian community.

In summary, the 2023 Pulse Survey results suggest that:

- ✚ The 30 EEWB Recommendations were generally supported by all equestrian stakeholders
- ✚ The ‘Priority areas of Focus’ differed in order of concern depending on equestrian discipline.
- ✚ Majority support for the Equestrian Charter and willingness to engage with it.
- ✚ The majority of equestrian stakeholders believe horses in sport can live a Good Life.
- ✚ More than two thirds (70 % of pulse survey respondents) believed that there were ‘some’ or ‘many’ initiatives noticeable over the past year that were of benefit for safeguarding equine wellbeing and for improving equestrian sports’ SLO.

Appendix: Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission Pulse Survey June 2023

Thank you for completing this survey. This is the second survey carried out by the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission to understand equestrian stakeholder's views about the involvement of horses in sport.

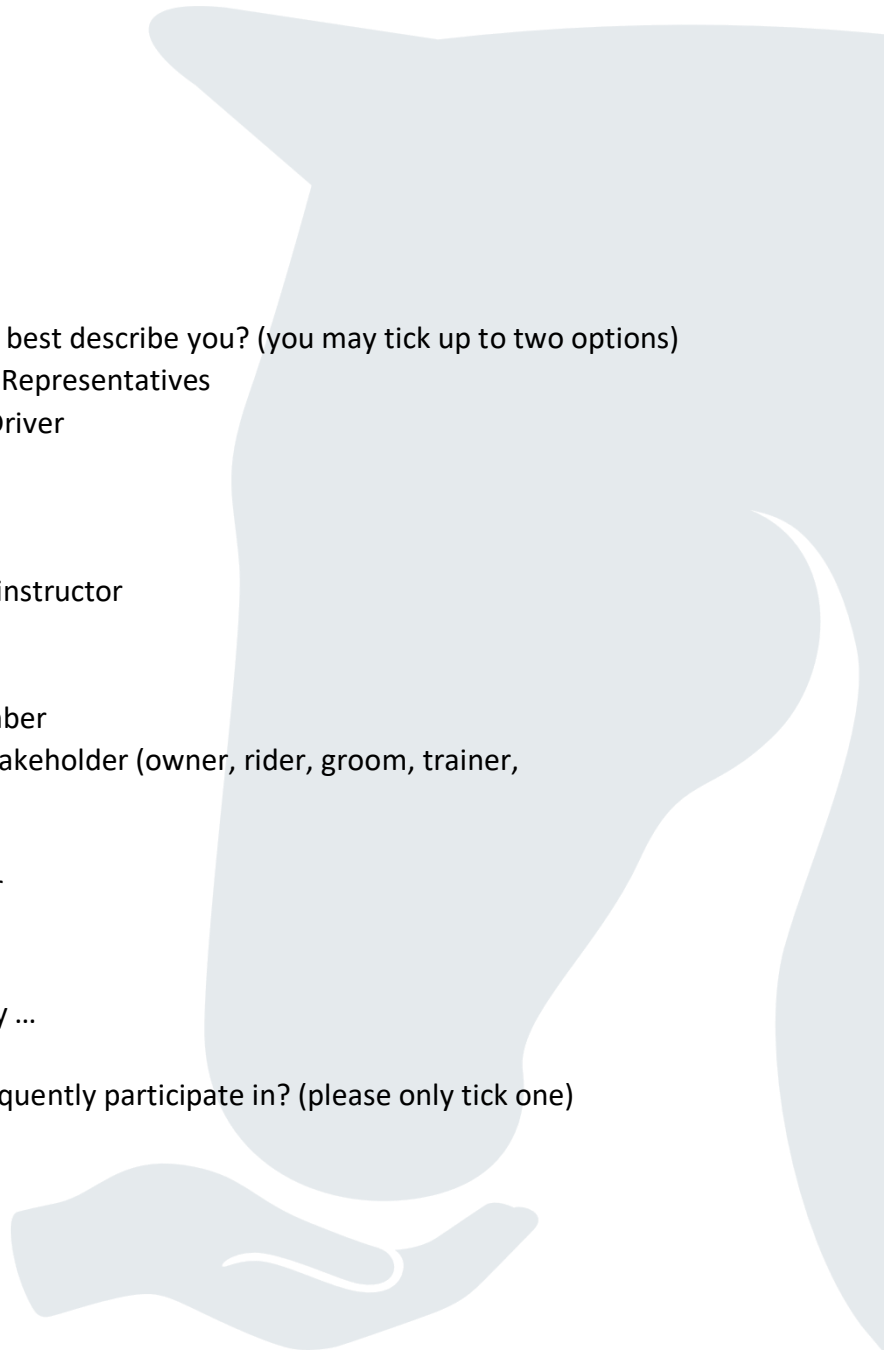
The results of this survey will be used to inform the work of the independent FEI Commission. There are 10 questions addressing topics related to the recommendations made by the Commission to guide the FEI in safeguarding equine welfare and maintaining social license to operate. It should take 10-15 minutes to complete this survey, and your responses will be confidential with the data only being used to inform the work of the Commission.

1. In what country do you reside in?

2. What is your age category?
 - 18-25 years
 - 26-45 years
 - 46-67 years
 - Over 67 years
 - Other

3. Which of these stakeholder groups best describe you? (you may tick up to two options)
 - National Federation Representatives
 - FEI affiliated Rider/Driver
 - FEI affiliated Groom
 - FEI affiliated Owner
 - FEI affiliated Trainer
 - FEI affiliated Coach/instructor
 - FEI Official
 - FEI Board Member
 - FEI Committee Member
 - Local competition stakeholder (owner, rider, groom, trainer, coach/instructor)
 - Leisure rider/driver
 - Equestrian organizer
 - Veterinarian
 - Breeding Federation
 - Other, please specify ...

4. In which discipline do you most frequently participate in? (please only tick one)
 - Jumping



- (Para)Dressage
- Eventing
- (Para)Driving
- Endurance
- Vaulting
- Other, please specify

5. Given your discipline which of [these six areas of focus](#) is of most concern for your discipline? (please only tick one)

- Training and Riding practices, Tack and Equipment
- Emotional and Physical stress (including injuries) of the sport horse
- Enforcement, Accountability, Horsemanship
- The other 23 hours (outside of competition)
- Horses treated as an object or “equipment” and not as an emotional creature
- Horses being not fit to compete or masking health problems

6. Considering the past year what have you noticed about sport horse welfare? (please only tick one)

- I have noticed some initiatives for improving sport horse welfare
- I have not noticed any initiatives to improve in sport horse welfare
- I have noticed more initiatives for improving sport horse welfare
- I don't know

7. The FEI's Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission has proposed a new [vision to ensure a 'Good Life for Horses in Sport'](#). Do you agree that horses can live a Good Life when involved in sport?

- Definitely agree
- Agree
- Possibly
- Probably not
- Definitely not

8. Considering the [recommendations made to the FEI](#) addressing equine ethics and wellbeing, to what extent do you believe the [recommendations](#) will make a real difference for the welfare of the sport horse? (sliding bar 1-10 with 1 'not at all' and 10 'to a great extent')

9. Will you be prepared to pledge to the [new Equestrian Charter](#)?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

10. Have you filled in last years' survey of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission about the welfare of the sport horse which was distributed in July and August 2022? (please only tick one)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Thank you for your valuable contribution to the Commission's work. If you would like to learn more about the work of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission please visit the Commission's website: <https://equinewellbeing.fei.org/>



