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I am an equine practitioner with 33 years of experience treating horses. I currently operate an all equine sport horse practice in Canton, Georgia. I moved to Georgia in 1995 to be involved with preparation for the equine events for the Atlanta Olympic Games. These games were the first time that equestrian events were going to be held outside of Europe and in a hot, humid environment at a potentially difficult time of the year for competition. Because of these concerns, research efforts were made prior to the games to evaluate the effects of heat and humidity on horses and to identify methods and innovations to help keep these equine athletes safe. Part of that research identified the wet bulb globe temperature index (WBGT), first developed for use with U.S. Marines recruits at Parris Island, to be a useful tool for mitigating potential heat impact on competitive equine events. The WBGT index is now the gold standard and is used for a majority of equine events.

I have been an FEI (Federation Equestrian International) veterinarian for over 25 years and am involved with the United States Endurance Team as a veterinary selector. I currently hold a 4* rating (FEI veterinarians are rated from 1* to 4* based on ability and experience) for endurance and a 3* rating for jumping and have worked both nationally and internationally with equine athletes and their riders at the highest levels of their sports. From that experience, I feel that the WBGT index could be extremely useful if applied to carriage horses, though it would probably have to be adapted to account for physiological variations and other differences between conditions for competition horses and those for working carriage and cart horses. While some basic information is available dealing with carriage horses, I have found there to be a lack of recent, good quality scientific information regarding the physiology and stress levels of these animals and specifically the care, monitoring and maintenance of working horses. I wrote an article in 2009 for the online publication DVM360 titled "Veterinary Care of Carriage Horses" <http://veterinarynews.dvm360.com/veterinary-care-carriage-horses>. I interviewed Charleston area equine veterinarian, the late Dr. John Malark for my article. In the article I stated that, "there is a distinct lack of specific information on how carriage horses handle humidity and other issues", and quoted Dr. Malark as saying, "studies need to be focused on these horses. If you want answers then you have to fund the research". In the seven years since publication of that article there has been little to no additional research done. I endorse a focused, peer-reviewed prospective study on these animals in their working environment. I believe the results of such research could be invaluable in guiding the City of Charleston's efforts to properly regulate the industry. I would encourage the City of Charleston to become a leader in this effort for the benefit of low country carriage horses and for working horses everywhere. I would be happy to assist in any way that I can.

Respectfully,



Kenneth L. Marcella DVM, AAT