

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Veterinary Medicine

Office of Academic and Student Affairs
2271G Veterinary Medicine Basic Sciences Building
2001 South Lincoln Avenue
Urbana, IL 61802



November 17, 2017

Dr. Robert Ebbesmeyer
ISVMA President
1121 Chatham Road
Springfield, Illinois 62704

Dear Dr. Ebbesmeyer:

I write to you today to render an opinion regarding the proposed ordinance change regarding the ambient temperature range within which carriage horses would be allowed to work in Chicago. I am a board-certified Professor of Equine Internal Medicine at the University of Illinois. I have been a veterinarian for 37 years and am considered an expert in equine exercise physiology and sports medicine. I have served USA Reining as a veterinary evaluator for horses under consideration for USA teams for the last two World Equestrian Games. I have served as an emergency triage veterinarian for horses competing at high levels including the 1996 Olympic Summer Games, the 1978 World Three-Day Eventing Championships (as a student), and the World Equestrian Games in 2010 for the disciplines of Eventing and Driving. In competitive Driving, horses compete in single, paired, or four-in-hand harness around obstacles in the show ring and in cross country conditions much more strenuous than those of city carriage horses pulling at a walk.

Regarding the proposed changes in the Chicago carriage horse ordinance, it is my expert opinion that the proposed change is unwarranted. Today's Chicago carriage horses operate only at a walk, not at faster gaits like a trot or canter. That walking gait is critical to emphasize because it means that they are working at a submaximal velocity that requires minimal effort. One recent peer-reviewed publication in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (in Schaumburg) documented that carriage horses working at a walk in New York City were no more stressed than were their stablemates who were not at work on those same three sampling days (JAVMA 250(3):316-321, 2017).

Horses are well adapted to exercise in cold weather. Sweating is the horse's primary means of heat loss; they do not pant like dogs. In cooler weather, sweating can cause suboptimal heat loss through excessive evaporation. However, because these carriage horses are working only at a walk, they do not sweat much in cold weather, and therefore have a decreased tendency for heat loss. It could even be argued fairly that walking exercise in cold weather helps these carriage horses to stay warmer than if they were standing still in their stables not doing any work.

In very hot weather, any horse exercising strenuously has a chance to overheat. However, it must be emphasized again that these carriage horses are only walking, and thus are operating at a profoundly submaximal velocity. In warm weather, horses normally sweat to shed heat appropriately. These Chicago carriage horses' chances for excessive fatigue and overheating are minimized by their constant submaximal velocity and the normal thermoregulatory function of sweating. Furthermore, the current Chicago ordinance includes an appropriate upper temperature limit. Posting of those temperature limits on the sides of the carriages is required. The current upper limit of 90 degrees Fahrenheit is commensurate with the same or higher limits in New York City (90 degrees) and Philadelphia (91 degrees). A reduction of the upper limit to 80 degrees is not indicated by any scientific literature nor is it in keeping with common practice in other large cities with similar carriage industries.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan H. Foreman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Jonathan H. Foreman, DVM, MS
Diplomate ACVIM (Large Animal Internal Medicine)
Professor, Equine Internal Medicine
Associate Dean, Academic and Student Affairs

