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The Equine Behavior Assessment and Research Questionnaire (E-BARQ) Press Release

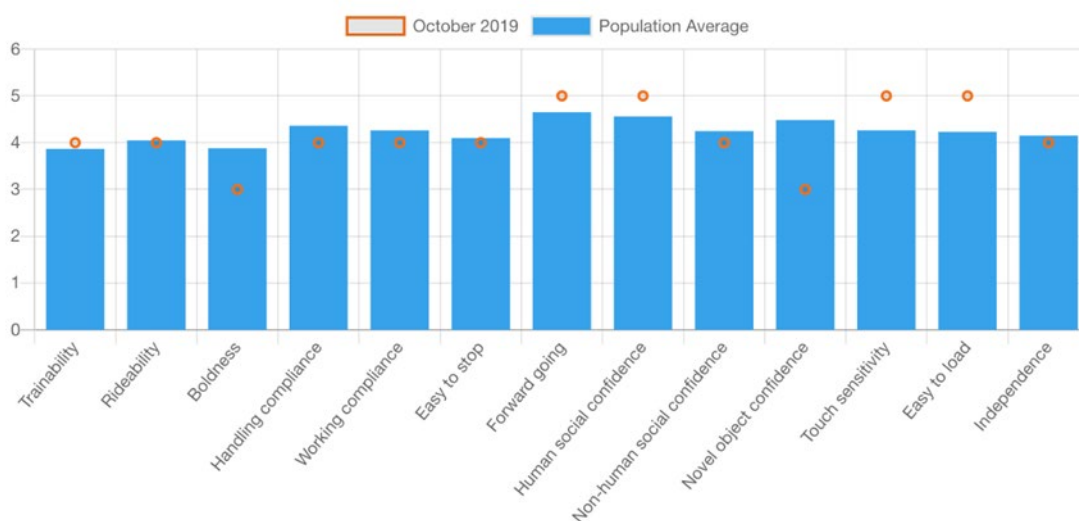
Since ancient times, horse behaviour and the bond between horses and humans, have been a source of intrigue and fascination.

The horse-lore that has accumulated over the centuries is a rich mix of both useful practice (approaching horses from their left side, making them slightly less reactive) and unsubstantiated myth, such as the one that chestnut horses are especially difficult to deal with.

This is why the University of Sydney has launched the [Equine Behavior Assessment and Research Questionnaire \(E-BARQ\)](#), an ongoing global database of horse behaviour. The study that explores how horse training and management interact with behaviour. It will reveal invaluable information on how our training and management affect behaviour and how, in turn, behaviour affects horse welfare. Beyond the immediate and direct research outcomes, E-BARQ also has great benefits to horse owners, riders and trainers.

On completion of the questionnaire, contributors receive a graph that compares their horse with 1000's of other horses across various different categories. They also receive a private dashboard where they can log each of their horses and view their E-BARQ results. This innovative tool is completely free of charge.

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Horse owners can upload photographs to a custom-built online dashboard, recording their horse's progress in training over time. For the first time, they'll also be able to compare their horse's behaviour

with that of other horses. The “share-&-compare” graphs will reveal attributes such as trainability, rideability, handling, compliance, boldness, and human social confidence.

E-BARQ’s main benefits are:

- 1) E-BARQ is open to all owners/handlers, regardless of their horse or pony’s breed, height or age and provides users with a free dashboard to store their horses’ results and track their progress.
- 2) Owners can compare their horses’ behaviour to others around the world, giving them a useful benchmark.
- 3) Riders and handlers can monitor their horse’s progress over time as they can return to their E-BARQ dashboard every 6 months and re-take the questionnaire, updating their scores.
- 4) Owners and riders will get a new insight into which areas their horses are performing well in and where they may require help.
- 5) As E-BARQ can monitor the longitudinal consequences of different training methods, it can be a powerful tool for advancing horse welfare. It will also inform evidence-based judgements on the ethics and sustainability of horse sports.
- 6) E-BARQ will reveal the true impact of ancient traditions and modern trends. This can be used by everyone, from the general riding public to equine scientists and veterinarians.

This project builds on a similar project for dogs (C-BARQ), which has collected information on over 85,000 dogs and been used in more than 70 research studies that have revealed behavioural differences, for example, that relate to head and body shape and the astonishing effect of desexing on behaviour. Without doubt, C-BARQ has revolutionised our understanding of dog behaviour.

After 8 years of planning, we are very excited about E-BARQ. It is a not-for-profit project that allows the global horse-folk community to offer their observational data to the University of Sydney and gain useful benefits in return.

You can access E-BARQ here: <https://e-barq.com/>

You can access an E-BARQ how-to video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBKry6Wz2gc>

The questionnaire and app will expose how training and management influences horse behaviour, and *vice versa*. They will reveal how breeds differ in responses and illuminate breed-typical personality types, how male and female horses differ, how horses used in different disciplines (such as show-jumping versus dressage) differ in their behaviour and how horse behaviour changes with maturation and training.

A horse’s behaviour has a direct impact on its usefulness and that, in turn, affects its value and – sadly – the care it receives. There is evidence from Europe that over 65% of horses outside the racing industry are slaughtered before the age of seven, very often for behavioural reasons.

Information provided by E-BARQ could potentially help buyers identify warning signs of dangerous behaviours and make more informed choices when purchasing. E-BARQ also holds great promise in tracking, welfare monitoring, promoting early intervention and the education of new owners in the area of horse rescue and re-homing.

By providing researchers with an unprecedented wealth of information, E-BARQ has the potential to revolutionise the way we train and manage our horses and, as a result, make real and lasting positive changes in horse welfare and the sustainability of horse sports.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the E-BARQ research team at info@e-barq.com and be sure to complete an E-BARQ for your horse at www.e-barq.com.

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