

Facial expressions of the Caspian pony to its own picture, mirror and a combination of these two

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Abnormal behaviors in horses are among the most important problems in the riding clubs. Digestive and somatic abnormal behaviors are the two most important abnormal behaviors in the horses, with the loneliness and boredom as the two most important causes of these abnormal behaviors. Many studies showed that spending time (increasing the exercise and training time) would stop such abnormal behaviors. The man power scarcity is the important reason many riding clubs face and this is the reason why the abnormal behavior are mostly observed in such clubs.

Current study is the first report regarding facial expressions of the Caspian Pony to different objects. Totally 10 Caspian ponies were used in this study. The pictures were taken both in the calm and in the furious (nervous) situation. The pony's pictures were the alternatives we used in this research to combat the man power scarcity. We also used a mirror to compare the expressions of the ponies to the pictures and the mirror. The results of this study showed that the ponies showed more attention to the picture in calm position when compared with the picture in nervous position. In the box with the mirror and the picture (in calm position) in it, the ponies paid much more attention to the mirror than to the picture.

We conclude that despite of resistant of ponies for leaving outdoor and entering to indoor (paddock to box), installing mirror can prevent (almost completely) the horse's boredom and loneliness, a very cheap (but not wise) alternative for manpower). The results of this research were applicable and were suggested to many riding clubs with horses with stereotypic behaviors, receiving almost completely positive results.

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