



**International Equine Science Meeting 2008
University of Regensburg, Germany**



Contributed Presentation

**Automatic feeding systems versus feeding stalls for horses
kept in groups: visiting frequency, stress situations and risk of
injury**

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Summary

The threatening and avoiding behaviour, the visiting frequency, the stress situations, the situations with risk of injury and the displacement activities of 260 horses living in run-out sheds were observed at 10 stables with feeding stalls and at 11 stables with automatic feeding systems for hay and concentrates. Every group of horses was observed on five succeeding days visually and immediately for 6 sessions, each of 4 hours. These 6 slices form together 24 hours, a complete day. Altogether, 1540 threatening and submissive behaviour patterns were registered in the feeding area (in front of, inside and behind the feeding equipments) of feeding stalls and 3928 in that of automatic feeding systems. Feeding stalls were visited 45.5 times per horse and day, automatic feeding systems 93.1 times per horse and day. 3.7 stress situations per stable and day, 1.3 situations with risk of injury per stable and day and 0.3 displacement activities per stable and day were observed in the feeding area of feeding stalls. Automatic feeding systems caused 17.0 stress situations per stable and day, 8.6 situations with risk of injury per stable and day and 12.9 displacement activities per stable in the feeding area.

The individual farm and the individual horse showed significant influence on the modes of agonistic behaviour in the feeding area. All together the number of negative interactions in the feeding area at both feeding systems was relatively low.

Because of the management of the individual stable exercises the most substantial influence on the behaviour of the horses, it can be said, that, correct group keeping with professional management provided, both feeding systems are suitable for horses in run-in sheds.

.....Fulltext available in :

Proceedings of the International Equine Science Meeting 2008

Language: English

ISBN-10: 3980813401

ISBN-13: 978-3980813402