

**Western Counties Equine Hospital**  
**Environmental Sustainability Policy**

**Purpose**

At Western Counties Equine Hospital, we are committed to providing exceptional veterinary care for horses while minimizing our impact on the environment. We acknowledge that our operations have an effect on the environment in terms of the use of raw materials, emissions to air and water, and waste generation. We recognise that the health of animals, humans and the environment are inextricably linked. Environmental degradation affects the health and wellbeing of our employees and members, animal health and welfare, and public health. Our work is therefore strengthened by protecting the safety, health and environment of our employees, our members, and the people and animals of the communities in which we and our members work.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, students, and visitors at Western Counties Equine Hospital. It covers daily operations, medical procedures, facility management, purchasing, and waste disposal.

**Policy Commitments**

**1. Energy and Resource Efficiency**

- Reduce energy consumption through efficient lighting, heating, ventilation, and equipment use.
- Use renewable energy sources where feasible.
- Implement water-saving practices, including efficient cleaning protocols and responsible use in stables, treatment, and surgical areas.
- Ensure doors and windows are closed during winter months to prevent heat energy wastage. Ensure all lights are turned off at the end of day.

**2. Waste Reduction and Management**

- Segregate and responsibly dispose of clinical, pharmaceutical, and general waste in compliance with regulations.
- Minimize single-use plastics and encourage reusable or biodegradable alternatives where safe and practical.

- Commit to the recycling program for paper, cardboard, plastics, metals, and electronic waste.
- Reduce paper usage by prioritizing digital record-keeping and communication.

### **3. Sustainable Procurement**

- Source veterinary supplies, medicines, feed, and equipment from environmentally responsible suppliers where possible.
- Prioritize products with minimal packaging, lower environmental impact, and verified sustainability certifications.
- Support local suppliers to reduce transportation emissions and strengthen the community.

### **4. Transportation and Field Services**

- Encourage efficient route planning to minimize travel distances and fuel use for ambulatory veterinary services. Adhere to zone visit days as much as possible and plan ambulatory visits to reduce mileage.
- Maintain hospital and ambulatory vehicles for optimal fuel efficiency.
- Continued use of hybrid or electric vehicles wherever possible.

### **5. Pollution Prevention**

- Prevent contamination of soil, air, and water by safely handling pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and medical waste.
- Ensure proper storage and disposal of sharps, disinfectants, anaesthetic gases, and other hazardous materials.
- Minimize the use of anaesthetic gases by employing balanced anaesthesia protocols and performing standing surgery where possible. Perform regular anaesthesia machine servicing to ensure optimal use and lack of leakage of anaesthetic gases.

### **6. Biodiversity and Land Stewardship**

- Manage hospital grounds and surrounding land to support biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.
- Maintain grazing pastures and prevent over usage where possible.
- Reduce light and noise pollution where possible to protect local wildlife.

### **7. Education and Engagement**

- Provide staff training on sustainable practices and encourage environmental awareness in daily tasks.
- Engage clients in sustainability efforts (e.g., medicine disposal programs, eco-conscious horse care tips).

- Collaborate with professional associations to promote sustainability in equine veterinary medicine.

## 8. Continuous Improvement

- Set measurable sustainability goals and review progress annually.
- Seek innovative ways to improve environmental performance through new technology and best practices.
- Regularly update this policy to reflect evolving standards and environmental needs.

## Responsibilities

- The Hospital Management Team will oversee implementation of this policy and monitor compliance. They will review this policy every 12 months and make updates as needed to ensure continued alignment with best practices in veterinary medicine and environmental stewardship.
- The Hospital Management Team will appoint an Environmental Sustainability Champion who will oversee implementation of sustainability commitments.
- All staff are responsible for integrating sustainable practices into their work.
- Clients and visitors are encouraged to support hospital initiatives to reduce environmental impact.

Approved by: Heidi Toll



Date: 30/1/26

Next review date: 30/1/27