



HOW DOES **HOT WEATHER** AFFECT RACEHORSES?

When the temperature rises, so do the efforts of everyone to ensure that every equine athlete is still able to perform safely.

Q: Is it safe for racehorses to race in hot weather?

The Thoroughbred is an adaptable, versatile breed that performs in many climates. Racing regularly takes place in hot regions such as the Middle East, Australia and South Africa. With time to acclimatise — as during this extended warm spell — horses can safely perform in very warm weather.

Q: What is heat stress?

A: Thoroughbreds generate great power, which can raise body temperature by about 1°C per minute. They cool mainly by sweating. Heat stress occurs when core temperature rises too far; if untreated, it can be serious. Cold water helps replicate natural cooling, so water provision is always our priority. More than 100 boxes of ice will be used to help chill water, whilst a mobile bowser will cover the track. As well as the vets, trainers, jockeys, and racecourse staff all know the early signs of overheating and will act quickly to cool any horse.

Q: Is it ever too hot to race?

A: Yes. If the Met Office issues a red heat warning for an area including a racecourse, the British Racing Authority makes the decision that racing should be cancelled while it is in force. York has not been under even an official amber warning this week.

Q: What is the quickest way to cool a horse down?

A: The most effective method is applying cold water across the horse's body while walking them to create airflow. You may see iced water poured repeatedly over the horses, as fresh cold water replaces water warmed by the skin. Thousands of litres of cold water will be available at multiple points, alongside three misting fans under a canopy to create a cooler micro-climate and aid that airflow so evaporation. There are also fifteen temperature-controlled equine showers in the wash-down area.

Q: Who checks on the horses?

Four racecourse vets monitor horses throughout the day for early signs of overheating. Today they will be especially vigilant, supported by a dozen equine-trained racecourse team members and all the stable staff.

Q: What else is done off the track?

A: Everyone involved in racing takes this responsibility seriously. Rules cover safe travel and the racecourse environment in hot weather, whilst trainers and stable staff ensure horses remain comfortable at home or when travelling.



**SEE THE
COOLDOWN AT
YORK IN ACTION**

