



# Equine passports and end of life decisions: Have we produced a welfare crisis?

S Schofield and C Brigden

Abstract 24101



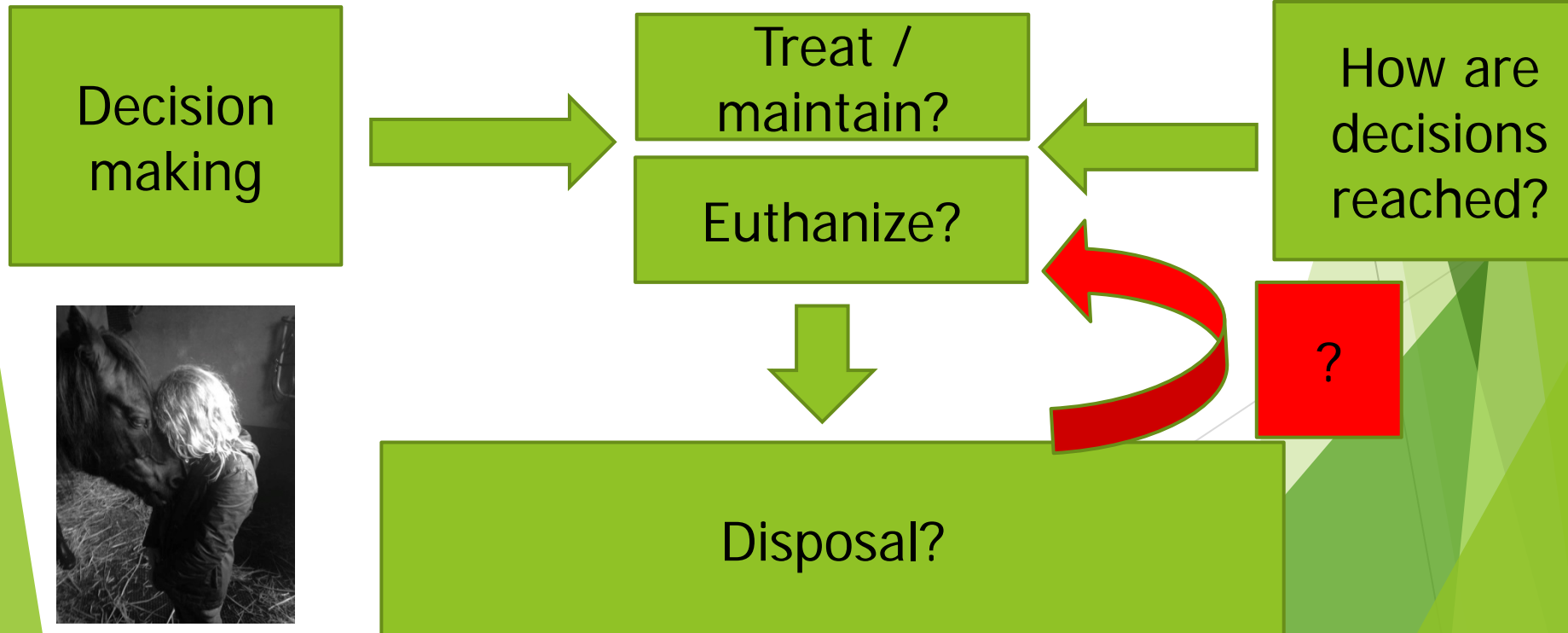
Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

Many horse owners will be faced with emotional decisions relating to potential equine end of life situations



Introduction

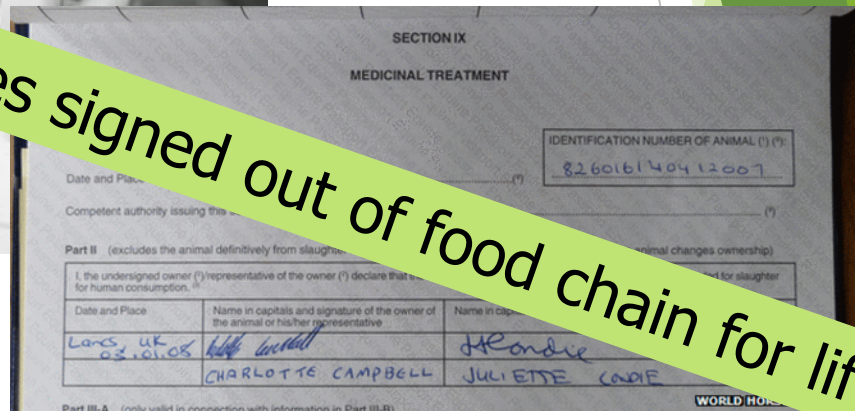
Methods

Results

Discussion

## Horse Passports (England) Regulations 2004 (/2009):

Clear evidence of the lack of effectiveness  
(Eg: Boden *et al.*, 2012; Robin *et al.*, 2011)



Horsemeat scandal 2013

Horses signed out of food chain for life

Aim: to explore horse owners' perceptions of the horse passport to identify recommended future amendments to protect equine welfare

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

Self-administered, online survey

25 questions (open and closed)



Horse owners' experiences of passport regulations

Horse owners' feelings regarding passports regulations and their potential links to welfare issues

Results analysed using  $\chi^2$  test of association and content analysis

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

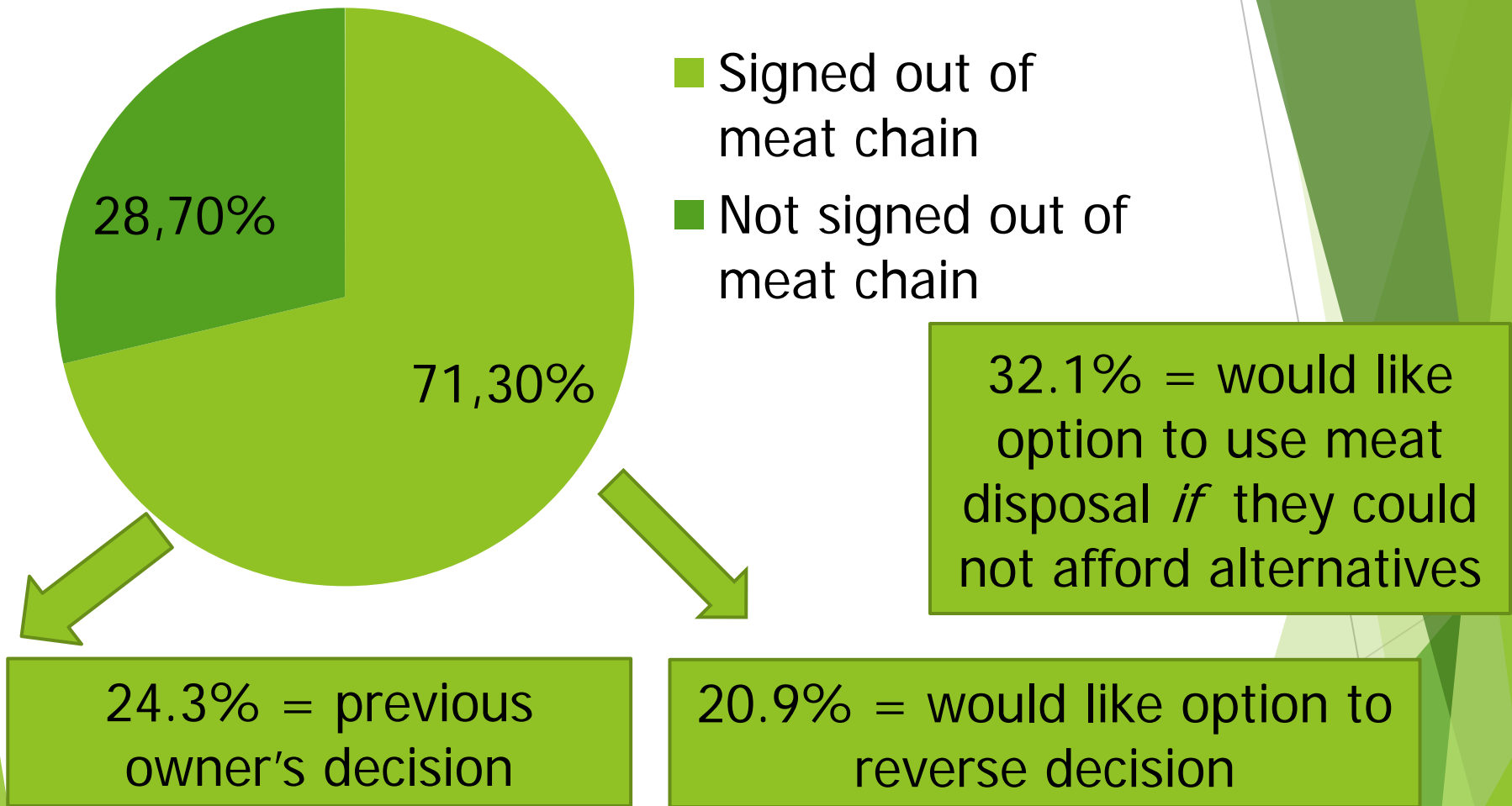


Figure 1: Proportions of respondents' horses signed out / not signed out of meat chain (total n=165)



Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

Most owners (88.1%) have considered options for EoL

Consideration was positively associated with length of ownership ( $P < 0.05$ )

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

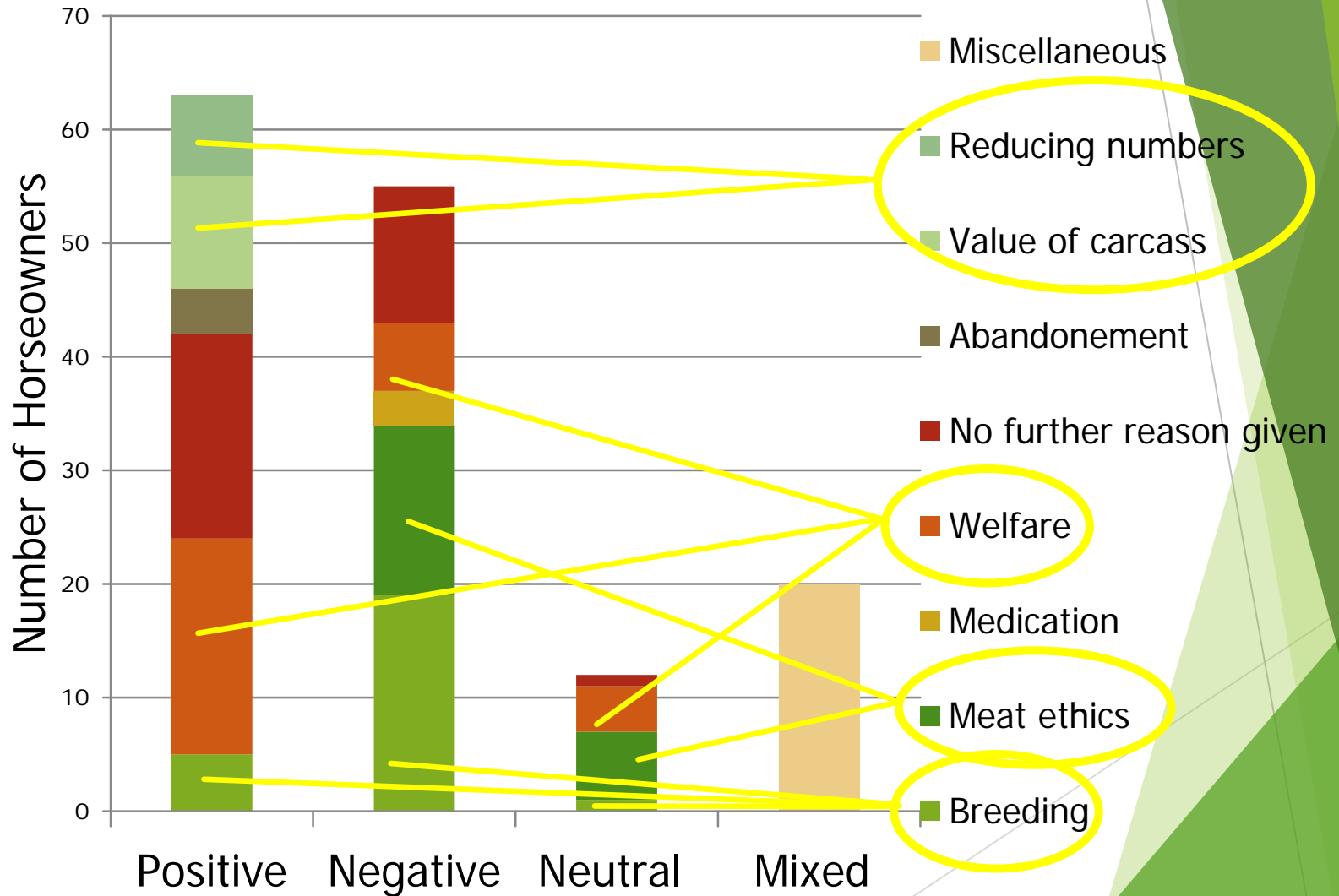


Figure 2: General attitudes to the use of horses as meat

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

- Horse owners “buy-in” to passport regulations, but lack full understanding
- Effectiveness of passporting provokes emotional responses from many owners:

*”Scrap them altogether. Burden on the law abiding, easily circumvented by the law breakers”*

*”Scrap the lot - it is a waste of time and money”*

- The majority of this population are excluded from the meat trade by their passport, limiting disposal options for current or future owners.





- 1/3 of owners were open to the possibility of using the meat trade to dispose of their animals, but many would be prohibited by passport regulations.
- ½ of owners saw potential benefits in the use of horse meat, especially re. potential reduction in breeding and welfare issues.
- Owner negativity towards horsemeat linked to risks of breeding for meat purposes and general ethical standpoints.
- Horses enjoying long ownership are likely to be well provided for.
- Biggest risk is to the unwanted horse.

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

Aim: To explore horse owners' perceptions of the horse passports to identify recommended future amendments to protect equine welfare

- Owners clearly lack confidence in the passport
- Recent research (Horseman *et al.*, 2016) concurred that "passport legislation failures" and "high cost of euthanasia" were some of the root causes of poor welfare



WorldHorseWelfare



Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

“We recommend that industry leaders, including welfare charities, lobby the Government to seek amendments to the existing EU passport legislation to allow horses that are currently banned from entering the human food chain, due to treatment with certain prohibited substances, to be slaughtered for human consumption after a suitable withdrawal period”

(Horseman *et al.*, 2016)



e



Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

Applications to industry: -

- Help aid research into end of life decision making
- Appreciate potential influence of passport regulations on options for horses and their owners

# Any Questions?



# References

- ▶ Boden, L. A., Parkin, T., D. H., Yates, J., Mellor, D. and Kao, R. R. (2012) Summary of the current knowledge of on the size and spatial distribution of the horse population within Great Britain, *BMC Veterinary Research*, **8**.
- ▶ Robin, C.A., Wylie, C.E., Wood, J.L.N. and Newton, J.R., 2011. Making use of equine population demography for disease control purposes: Preliminary observations on the difficulties of counting and locating horses in Great Britain. *Equine Veterinary Journal*, **43** (3), pp.372-375.
- ▶ Horseman, S., Whay, D., Mullan, S., Knowles, T., Barr, A. and Buller (2016) Equine Welfare in England and Wales: "Horses in our hands". Available via <http://www.worldhorsewelfare.org/survey-equine-welfare-england-and-wales>