



West Lothian
Council

Advice to Applicants On Licence Conditions

The Riding Establishment Act 1964 & 1970

Riding Establishment Licences are administered by The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service.

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Riding Establishment

To run a riding establishment (where horses or ponies are hired out for riding or used for riding instruction) in Scotland, you need a licence from the local authority.

LICENSING CONDITIONS AND GUIDANCE

1.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 1.1 A copy of the licence and its conditions must be suitably displayed to the public in a prominent position.
- 1.2 Certificates of insurance must be prominently displayed.
- 1.3 Access shall be permitted to any authorised officer of the Licensing Authority at any time and all reasonable directions and requirements of such officer or the Licensing Authority shall be complied with.
- 1.4 The Licence holder must surrender the licence if and when called upon to do so by the Licensing Authority.
- 1.5 The establishment must, at all times, be laid out and operated in accordance with an approved plan, to be attached to the licence. Before carrying out any alterations, plans must be submitted to and approved by the licensing officer of the local authority.
- 1.6 The Horse Passports (Scotland) Regulations 2005 require all equidae, regardless of age or status to be accompanied by a passport. All owners must obtain individual passports for each animal owned. Passports can be held by the owner or keeper.
- 1.7 All foals born after July 2009 must be microchipped by the end of the year of their birth or within 6 months of birth, whichever is later. In addition, all older animals not identified under the current system will also have to be microchipped.
- 1.8 Any individual working (either paid or voluntarily) for the applicant who is doing regulated work in terms of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 is registered on the PVG Scheme.

2.0 ACCOMMODATION

- 2.1 That there will be available at all times accommodation for horses suitable as respects construction, size, number of occupants, lighting, ventilation, drainage and cleanliness and that these requirements will be complied with not only in the case of new buildings but also in the case of buildings converted for use as stabling.
- 2.2 The construction of the riding establishment must be substantial, adequate to contain the animals, and provide with warmth and shelter in clean and hygienic conditions. There must be convenient and safe access to stalls and boxes.

As horses and ponies vary greatly in size it is difficult to set an ideal size for loose boxes, barns or stables. However as a minimum, each animal should

have sufficient room to lie down, readily rise and turn around in comfort. All passageways should be sufficiently wide to enable animals to be led safely past each other and provide sufficient room to enable an animal to be turned comfortably. The British Horse Society recommend the following stable sizes:

Horses – 12' x 12' (3.65m x 3.65m)
Large Horses – 12' x 14' (3.65m x 4.25m)
Ponies – 10' x 10' (3.05m x 3.05m)
Large ponies – 10' x 12' (3.05m x 3.65m)

- 2.3 The building should be constructed soundly, with no exposed surfaces or projections likely to cause injury. All surfaces should be capable of being cleaned and disinfected. If surfaces are treated, non toxic paints or wood preservatives should be used.
- 2.4 Fixtures and fittings such as tie rings, hay racks and water bowls should be free of sharp edges and positioned to avoid injury, particularly to the eyes. If used, hay nets should be fixed at the animal's head height, allowing it to eat comfortably yet avoiding the risk of getting its feet or head collar caught in the net when empty.
- 2.5 Walls / fences constructed and maintained to avoid injury to the horse and rider
- 2.6 Floors should be reasonably even, non-slip and designed to give good drainage, taking stable waste away from the animal.
- 2.7 Doors should be a minimum of 4ft wide and open outwards. They should be capable of being securely fastened with top and bottom bolts.
- 2.8 Yards must provide enough space for every animal kept there
- 2.9 Adequate accommodation must be provided for forage, bedding, stable equipment and saddlery

3.0 **BEDDING**

- 3.1 Adequate and suitable bedding material that will absorb urine is necessary in all accommodation to provide warmth, protection against injury and to enable the animal to lie down in comfort. Bedding material should be non-toxic, free of dust and mould and should allow effective drainage or be absorbent enough to maintain a dry bed and assist in keeping the air fresh. Where rubber matting is used, a small amount of disposable bedding should be added to absorb urine. Whatever bedding is used, it should be well managed, changed and cleaned regularly.

4.0 **DRAINAGE**

- 4.1 Drainage must be adequate to carry away liquid voided by the horse and keep the standings dry.

5.0 **LIGHTING**

- 5.1 Lighting must be adequate to render the use of artificial light unnecessary in daylight. Sufficient light is essential within all stabling both for the animal to see adequately and also to enable inspection and safe handling at all times. This can include portable lighting. Light bulbs should be enclosed in safety fittings with cabling secured well out of reach.

6.0 VENTILATION

- 6.1 Ventilation must provide fresh air without draughts. Windows and ventilation slats should provide adequate air circulation without creating draughts. Perspex or safety glass (with grilles fitted between the animal and the glass is advisable. One window or top door should normally be open at all times.
- 6.2 Roofs should be high enough to provide adequate ventilation including good air circulation. There should be a minimum clear space to the eaves of 60-90 cm (2-3ft) above the ears of the animals in its normal standing position.

7.0 EQUIPMENT

- 7.1 Any riding equipment supplied for a horse let out on hire must be free from visible defect which is likely to cause suffering to the horse or accident to the rider
- 7.2 All tack shall be maintained in a good and safe condition and regularly inspected for defects and deterioration. Tack shall be appropriate for the horse concerned.
- 7.3 Persons undertaking any riding activity at the riding establishment should at all times wear suitable head protection which complies with the current approved standard, i.e. PAS015 and BSEN 1384.
- 7.4 Protective headgear shall be replaced periodically according to use and manufacturers recommendations. Damaged and dropped hats shall not be worn until checked for safe use by the manufacturers or other competent person

8.0 PASTURES

- 8.1 As a general rule, each horse require's a minimum of one to one and a half acres of good grazing if no supplementary feeding is being provided, as overcrowding may lead to competition for food, water and space. However, this will depend on the ground conditions, the time of year, type of horse and degree of pasture management employed. It is not always practical or possible to remove animals from fields or pastures which become muddy; however it is essential that they are comfortable, well drained area on which to stand and lie down and on which to be fed and watered.
- 8.2 A good pasture management programme is advisable to avoid over-grazing, to aid worm control, maintain good drainage and control weeds. This may include, for example picking up droppings, rotating grazing areas and where possible removing animals when the ground is very wet to prevent poaching (where the pasture breaks into wet muddy patches) and health problems.
- 8.3 Fields should be kept clear of dangerous objects and poisonous plants. Ragwort is one of the plants covered under the Weeds Act 1959 and should

be controlled and disposed of in accordance with the Scottish Government "Guidance on How to Prevent the Spread of Ragwort". Ragwort should be pulled by the roots rather than being cut, and should not be left where animals could have access to it as it remains toxic after being uprooted.

- 8.4 Other plants and trees such as privet, box, leylandii, broom, laburnum, oak, beech and yew are also toxic to horses, ponies, donkeys and hybrids therefore, they should not have access to these (or their clippings) at any time. Where fields are adjacent to housing, care should be taken to ensure that they do not gain access to garden waste including lawn cuttings. Safe hedge types for horses, ponies, donkeys and hybrids include hawthorn and hazel; trees that are suitable for use in paddocks include ash, birch, willow, sycamore, lime and poplar. However in all cases it is prudent to ensure that they cannot damage trees by chewing their bark.

9.0 FENCING

- 9.1 Fences should be strong enough and of sufficient height to prevent escape (eg higher fences may be required for stallions) and designed, constructed and maintained to avoid the risk of injury with no sharp projections. Gateways should be designed to allow for the easy and safe passage of animals and gates should be fastened securely to prevent injury and escape. In some situations gates may need to be padlocked. Sheep wire should not be used. Barbed wire should not be used in fields used by animals but where it is present an inner fence (which could be electric) should be erected to avoid direct contact with the barbed wire. Where plain wire is used measures should be taken to ensure it is sufficiently visible to the animal. It is important that the wire is kept taut to prevent the possibility of animals becoming entangled in loose wire.
- 9.2 The British Horse Society recommend that the fences should be 4ft (1.25m) high. The specific recommendations are as follows:

Horses – 3'6' to 4'6' (1.08m – 1.38m)

Ponies – 3'3' to 4'3' (1m – 1.3m)

Stallions – 4'6' to 6'0' (1.38m – 1.8m)

10.0 TETHERING

- 10.1 Tethering can be defined as securing an animal by an appropriately attached chain to a centre point or anchorage, causing it to be confined to a desired area. Tethering is not a suitable method of long-term management of an animal, as it restricts that animal's freedom to exercise itself, to find food and water, or to escape from attacks. It also risks an animal becoming entangled, or injuring itself, on tethering equipment. Tethering may be useful as an exceptional short-term method of animal management during brief stops during a journey, to prevent danger to the animal, or to humans, whilst proper long-term arrangements are made, or in medical cases where short-term restriction of food intake is required under veterinary advice

11.0 RUGS

- 11.1 Not all animals will need a rug in inclement weather as some hardy breeds with thick coats are capable of living outdoors throughout the year without rugs. Some of these hardy breeds often thrive better without rugs, as rugs can sometimes be a cause of skin irritation. However, where animals are of less hardy breeding, clipped, elderly or infirm they may require a rug to help

keep them warm and dry during cold, wet weather or provide protection from flies.

Rugs and hoods should be of the correct size, the correct type (ie designed for the use to which they are being put) or the correct weight to suit the animal and the weather conditions, and correctly fitted to prevent rubbing, hair loss and abrasions. Rugs should be regularly removed so the animal's body condition and general health can be checked. Ideally this should be done daily.

Rugs should be cleaned and if necessary, repaired regularly and all fastenings kept in good working order. A spare rug should be available to allow a very wet rug to be dried out.

12.0 MAINTENANCE

- 12.1 Riding Establishment's should be kept in a good state of repair at all times.
- 12.2 Yards should be kept from accumulations that can cause injury to the horse or riders.

13.0 FOOD AND WATER SUPPLIES

- 13.1 Horses must be adequately supplied with suitable food & drink. Horses, ponies donkeys and hybrids are naturally trickle feeders who eat little and often, whose diet is mainly grasses, which have a high roughage and low energy content. They should be provided with a balanced, predominately fibre-based diet; either grass, hay haylage or hay replacement in order to mimic their natural feeding pattern as closely as possible. They should be fed an appropriate diet that reflects their needs and maintains good condition. Consideration should include the age, type, weight, condition, health and level of work of the individual.
- 13.2 Good grazing should ensure an adequate intake of roughage and minerals; if grazing is poor supplementary feeding may be required.

All conserved forage should be of good quality; it should be clean (free from soil, debris and poisonous plants), smell fresh and be free from dust and mould. Feeding forage at floor level is good for the animals respiratory health, provided the underlying ground is kept reasonably clean. It also means that they eat in a similar position to that when grazing naturally.

The quantity of cereals fed as supplementary feed in addition to any grazing or similar fodder should be no more than that necessary to provide the required energy for the type of work done and body condition of the animal. Each feed should be well mixed and freshly prepared. Animals should not be asked to perform hard or fast work on a full stomach.

Feed should be correctly processed, stored in vermin-proof containers, carefully handled to prevent spoiling and to ensure the nutritional value is maintained. Feed containers and utensils should be kept clean to discourage rodents and protect the health of the animal. Contaminated, mouldy or stale leftover food and forage should not be fed to the animals and should be removed daily.

- 13.3 Where loose horses, ponies, donkeys or hybrids are fed in groups there should be one feeder per animal plus an extra feeding point. Two body

lengths should be allowed between feeders to minimise the risk of injury through competition for food.

- 13.4 The weight and condition of every animal should be monitored regularly to avoid welfare problems and feeding adjusted as necessary for animals that are too fat or too thin. Obesity and over eating remains the major cause of laminitis. At any time of year fat animals will fall into the high risk category for developing laminitis. Fat animals, particularly when the lush spring grass or during an autumn growth of flush with its high energy content is freely available, are particularly at risk. Grazing may therefore need to be restricted at this time.
- 13.5 Water supplied for drinking purposes for people shall be wholesome in accordance with current legislation. It is essential that all animals have continuous access to a clean supply of fresh water or that adequate clean water is made available to them on a frequent and regular basis throughout the day. Natural water sources such as streams are not always satisfactory, as they may be contaminated, so an alternative supply may be required unless natural water sources are clean, copious, have easy access and do not have a sandy base which may cause problems if disturbed when the animals drink. Extra care should be taken during hot or icy weather to ensure the water supply is maintained and sufficient, for example, by regularly breaking the ice during cold spells or providing an additional water source during hot weather. Additional water may need to be provided after exercise.
- 13.6 The water trough should be securely fixed at a convenient height to allow, if necessary, animals of different size to drink comfortably and it should not be possible for them to paw the water or dislodge the trough and knock it over. There should be no sharp edges, protruding corners or exposed taps – they should be boxed in. Water troughs and containers should be cleaned regularly to prevent build up of algae. Troughs should be positioned in a way so that it would not be possible for an animal to be trapped or cornered in the area of the trough. Where buckets are used, they should be checked regularly to ensure that the animal has water.
- 13.7 Water not intended for drinking purposes shall be clearly marked with appropriate signage.

14.0 MANAGEMENT – SUPERVISION

- 14.1 That paramount consideration will be given to the condition of horses and that they will be maintained in good health and in all respect be physically fit, in the case of a horse kept for the purpose of its being let out on hire for riding or a horse kept for the purpose of its being used in providing instruction in riding, the horse will be suitable for the purpose for which it is kept.
- 14.2 Suitable systems of management and horse husbandry must be in place, and a fit and proper person shall be available to exercise supervision and deal with emergencies.
- 14.3 No horse may be let out on hire for riding or used for providing instruction in riding without supervision by a responsible person of the age of 16 years or over unless (in the case of a horse let out for hire for riding) the holder of the licence is satisfied that the hirer of the horse is competent to ride without supervision
- 14.4 No horse ages three years or under nor any mare heavy with foal nor any mare within three months after foaling may be let out on hire for riding or used in return for payment for instruction in or demonstrating riding.

- 14.5 The carrying on of the business of the establishment must at no time be left in the charge of any person under 16 years of age.
- 14.6 All horses should be visited at suitable intervals
- 14.7 The licence holder should ensure that all horses are adequately rested, exercised, and groomed
- 14.8 The licence holder should have relevant qualifications and or experience in teaching and husbandry.
- 14.9 Animals at grass should be inspected at least once a day, preferable more often. Stabled or group-housed animals should be inspected at least twice a day, again preferably more frequently. Particular attention should be paid to their gait, demeanour, feet, body condition and appetite so that early signs of disease, injury, illness or signs of parasites can be noticed and appropriate treatment promptly provided. Close examinations should also be conducted at regular intervals in order to identify any problems (eg skin conditions such as lice, rain, scald, mud fever, ringworm and sweet itch) which may not be apparent from a distance.
- 14.10 Apart from those on turnout with little work, animals should be groomed regularly to ensure the coat is clean, free from wounds or parasites and to detect rug, tack or harness rubbing. Particular attention must be taken to ensure mud and dirt is removed prior to them being tacked up but grooming of animals at grass, particularly in winter, must not be excessive as it could remove protective grease and dirt.

15.0 INSURANCE

- 15.1 The licence holder must hold a current insurance policy which insures them against liability for any injury sustained by those who hire a horse from them for riding. It should also cover those who use a horse in return for payment, instruction in riding and arising out of the hire or use of a horse as aforesaid and which also insures such persons in respect of any liability which may be incurred by them in respect of injury to any person caused by, or arising out of, the hire or use of a horse as aforesaid.

16.0 HEALTH & WELFARE

- 16.1 Everyone responsible for the supervision of horses, ponies, donkeys or hybrids should be able to recognise signs of ill health, should have a basic knowledge of first aid.
- 16.2 All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread amongst horses of infectious or contagious diseases.
- 16.3 Veterinary first aid equipment and medicines must be provided and maintained on the premises.
- 16.4 It is also important that owners and keepers have access to a veterinary surgeon to diagnose or treat any illness, injury or disease and have their contact details easily available, including out of hours details. One of the purposes of horse passports is to record all medicines administered to each animal. It is therefore important that the passport is available whenever your veterinary surgeon treats your animal so they can record the medicines given.

- 16.4 When an animal becomes unwell, the cause of this deterioration should be identified and immediate remedial action taken. Veterinary advice should be obtained if the animal appears to be ill or in pain and the cause is not clear or if initial first aid treatment is not effective.
- 16.5 A horse found to be in need of veterinary attention must not be returned to work until the holder of the licence has obtained at his own expense and has lodged with the local authority a veterinary certificate that the horse is fit for work.
- 16.6 A parasite control programme should be put in place following consultation with a veterinary surgeon; this may include the use of wormers, and appropriate faecal worm egg counts. Careful pasture management including the rotation of grazing and dung collection is an important part of an effective parasite control programme. Where groups of horses, ponies, donkeys or hybrids are kept together, worming programmes are most effective if they are all treated simultaneously with the same product (or at the very least different products with the same active ingredient).
- 16.7 There should be adequate control of infectious and contagious disease by a programme agreed with a veterinary surgeon, which will include appropriate hygiene and isolation procedures and vaccination. The main diseases for which vaccination is available are equine influenza, tetanus and equine herpes virus.
- 16.8 Teeth should be inspected by a veterinary surgeon or qualified equine dental technician at least once a year, and rasped or otherwise treated if necessary. Animals with worn or abnormal teeth are unable to chew their food properly which leads to poor digestion. Owners and keepers should look out for signs of this problem, such as half-chewed food dropping out of the mouth, poor condition and lack of energy; and abnormal mouth movements when ridden.
- 16.9 Every owner and keeper should have some understanding of the care of an animal's feet which grow continuously and the need to treat lameness promptly and effectively. Feet should be trimmed by a competent person and attention should be given to their growth and balance. They should not be expected to work at a level above that which the hooves are capable of, whether shod or unshod. In the main, animals ridden or driven on roads or hard, rough surfaces will need to be regularly shod by a registered farrier. However, if they are used unshod they will need to be carefully managed and receive regular hoof care which ensures their use on difficult surfaces does not cause them to become sore. In the case of foot problems, advice should be obtained from a registered farrier. Advice from the veterinary surgeon or farrier should be followed diligently.
- 16.10 Flies can cause a great deal of irritation to horses particularly during the summer and can introduce infection of wounds so an appropriate treatment from a veterinary surgeon should be used. Midges can also be a source of irritation during the spring and summer and can cause sweet itch (an allergic skin condition). Consideration should be given to preventative fly and midge control through the use of fly repellents, fly rugs or masks and for animals sensitive to fly or midge bites, stabling at dawn and dusk when flies and particularly midges are most active.

17.0 **THE NEED TO EXHIBIT NORMAL BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS**

- 17.1 Horses and ponies require adequate exercise, or freedom to exercise, and this will require time and effort from the owner or keeper. Animals that are continuously stabled should be either exercised (ridden or in hand) or be given space in which to exercise themselves each day, unless under veterinary advice to do otherwise. Ideally all animals should be permitted a period of free exercise (i.e not ridden or restrained by lead rein) every day, either via turnout or in a school.
- 17.2 Horses, ponies, donkeys and hybrids require calm, consistent and sympathetic handling by competent people. They respond best to a firm but gentle approach and to rewards for correct responses.

18.0 **THE NEED TO BE HOUSED WITH OR APART FROM OTHER ANIMALS**

- 18.1 Being gregarious animals they prefer to live in social groups. Ideally they should be socialised with members of their own species but, where this is not possible, other animals, such as cattle, sheep or goats may be used to provide company. They also enjoy human company so, if kept on their own, they require more frequent human contact and supervision.
- 18.2 They should always be treated as individuals even when kept in large groups. When forming new groups care should be taken to avoid fighting and stress, particularly if they are to be mixed together. This risk can be reduced by increasing the space allowance or by penning the new animal close to the existing group for a short period and / or removing back shoes of all animals during the introduction period. Separation of incompatible animals is particularly important in this system; they should not be mixed in fields or communal barns if any one individual is aggressive. Incompatible individuals, such as entire males (colts, stallions) and rigs (a stallion with undescended testicles or a horse which has been incompletely castrated) should be managed in order to prevent fighting or injury. In communal barns mares heavily in foal or with foal at foot should also be separated from other animals. When living in groups they always develop a pecking order, so it is important to be aware of bullying. It is important that the correct amount of feed and water is provided for all the animals in the group. Care needs to be taken to ensure that those lower down the pecking order are getting the feed and water they require.

19.0 **SADDLERY AND HARNESS**

- 19.1 Saddlery and harness should be suitable for the purpose, being appropriate to the needs and abilities of both the animals and rider. They should be correctly fitted, preferably by a qualified saddler and the fit should be checked when the animal changes condition. Equipment should be regularly cleaned and maintained in good order to ensure comfort, safety and effectiveness. Bits should be appropriate for the individual animal; halters and head collars should not be left on unattended animals for a long period of time. Particular care needs to be taken when used on young or growing animals and these items should be checked frequently for deterioration, rubbing, wear and damage.
- 19.2 Boots and bandages if used should be suitable for the purpose, correctly fitted to avoid discomfort or injury and only left on for the minimum time necessary.

20.0 **TRANSPORTING OF ANIMAL**

- 20.1 The transporting of animals should always be as safe and stress free as possible and in accordance with legal requirements. No one shall transport animals or cause them to be transported in a way likely to cause them injury or undue suffering
- 20.2 No animal shall be transported unless it is fit for the intended journey, and all animals shall be transported in conditions guaranteed not to cause them injury or unnecessary suffering.
- 20.3 Animals that are injured or that present physiological weakness or pathological processes shall not be considered fit for transport and in particular if:
- They are unable to move independently without pain or to walk unassisted;
 - They present a severe open wound, or prolapse;
 - They are pregnant females for whom 90% or more of the expected gestation period has already passed, or females who have given birth in the previous week;
 - They are new born mammals in which the navel has not completely healed.
- 20.4 The EC regulations do not apply to the transport of animals when the journey is not in connection with an economic activity nor to the transport of animals directly to or from veterinary practices or clinics, under the advice of a veterinary surgeon.
- 20.5 Journey times should be kept to a minimum
- 20.6 The vehicle and its loading and unloading facilities are designed, constructed and maintained to avoid injury and suffering to ensure the safety of the animals;
- 20.7 Water, feed and rest are given to the animals as needed and sufficient floor space and height is available in the transport;
- 20.8 Horses, ponies, donkeys and hybrids older than 8 months must wear halters during transport – unless they are unbroken;
- 20.9 If they are transported on a multi-deck vehicle they must only be carried on the lowest deck, with no other animals above them. In this circumstance, the compartment height must be at least 75cm higher than the height of the withers of the highest animal;
- 20.10 They must not be transported in groups of more than four animals
- 20.11 Unbroken animals must not be transported for more than 8 hours

21.0 **FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

- 21.1 The licence holder must ensure that appropriate steps will be taken for the protection and extrication of horses in case of fire. Stables animals should be capable of being released quickly in the event of fire or other emergencies in accordance with a pre-agreed emergency turnout plan.

- 21.2 Advice should be sought from local Fire Prevention Officer in relation to statutory requirements. All equipment and services (lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems) should be kept clean, inspected at mains voltage should be installed by a competent electrician. Wiring and fittings should be inaccessible to animals, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents and properly earthed. All metal pipework and structural steelwork should be properly earthed. Highly inflammable liquid material or combustible material should not be stored in or close to stables where animals are housed. Roof beams and other ledges should be cleaned regularly. Smoking in stable areas should be prohibited.
- 21.3 The name, address and telephone number of the licence holder / premises must be kept displayed in a prominent position at the outside of the premises
- 21.4 Instructions as to the action to be taken in the event of fire are to be displayed in a prominent position on the outside of the premises.
- 21.5 No smoking notices should be prominently displayed throughout the establishment
- 21.6 Fire fighting appliances available for use at all times e.g. water buckets, hoses, fire extinguishers.

22.0 RECORD KEEPING

- 22.1 A register must be kept by the licence holder of all horses in his possession aged three years and under and usually kept on the premises which shall be available for inspection by an authorised officer at all reasonable times.
- 22.2 Record to be kept of the health of the horses this should include date, type of illness and medicine administered. This record should include the date of worming, vaccination's and any other aspect of the horses health.
- 22.3 Written risk assessment of the premises to be kept onsite at all times.

23.0 CLEANLINESS

- 23.1 Ensure that the premises are maintained in a clean and tidy state at all times.

24.0 ISOLATION

- 24.1 Isolation box / stable should be available for use at all times

25.0 WASTE

- 25.1 There must be provision for storage and disposal of manure and spoiled straw

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