

Equestrian Venue Passes AWAG Gold Standard

The site for equestrian competition during the upcoming Olympic Games impresses local government agency.

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The Animal Welfare Advisory Group (AWAG) has given its approval to the facilities that will house horses competing in the 2008 Olympic Games in Hong Kong.

The AWAG was established in 1997 and operates under the auspices of the Hong Kong government's Agriculture, Fisheries, and Conservation Department. AWAG members who visited the two Olympic equestrian venues in Hong Kong--Sha Tin and Beas River--say they are confident that equine welfare will be a top priority during the Games.

"I think the welfare of the horses is being very well taken care of," says Chan Pui-tin, after he and five AWAG colleagues inspected the venues on June 24.

"We have asked a lot of questions on a range of topics, big and small, such as whether the horses will suffer from heat stroke, mosquito bites, motion sickness, jet lag, and how they are taken care of if they are sick. We feel all these questions have been answered satisfactorily, and I must say this has been an eye-opening visit ... the range of facilities is impressive."

Pui-tin says he and his colleagues were impressed by various facilities and installations such as the veterinary clinic, stabling areas and the advanced static and mobile cooling systems.

"Before I came here I had a lot of reservations and doubts, but after seeing the facilities my confidence has risen dramatically," Pui-tin says.