



February 10, 2026

Toral Cowieson, CEO
Unicode Consortium

Dear Ms. Cowieson:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10.4 million members and supporters globally, including more than 700,000 in California. As we approach the Year of the Horse, we respectfully urge Unicode to remove the horse racing–themed emojis, specifically the Horse Racing (🏇) and Horse's Gmail and SoftBank versions (🐎, 🐎) and to replace them with ones that realistically depict the suffering inflicted by horse racing. Please let me elaborate:

Unicode's current emojis present an idealized image that sharply contrasts with the reality of what horses endure in the racing industry. Horses are routinely pushed beyond their physical limits, often sustaining catastrophic injuries that frequently lead to [death](#). In the United States, an average of 24 horses die on racetracks every week, and these figures reflect only reported on-track fatalities.

Many horses discarded from tracks in the U.S. are sent to slaughterhouses in [Canada](#) or Mexico, where they're processed into products such as dog food. In [South Korea](#) and Japan, horses are also slaughtered for human consumption, companion animal food, and cosmetics when they fail to win races. It's ironic that the Year of the Horse symbolizes freedom and vitality while horses in the racing industry are deprived of autonomy. There is almost limitless evidence that they are whipped and drugged with illegal substances, including cocaine, and that they routinely sustain fatal injuries.

By depicting horse racing through the current emojis, Unicode unwittingly contributes to the public's lack of awareness about the horses' suffering and awful lives and helps normalize an industry rife with cruelty and exploitation. And, as with other forms of language and symbolism, emojis shape cultural values—harmful portrayals can and should evolve.

Removing the horse-racing emojis would position the consortium as a leader in advancing visual language. Another option would be to replace them with [this alternative emoji](#) that reflects the realities of the industry.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

Ingrid Newkirk
Founder

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OF ANIMALS

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