

NATIONAL EQUINE FORUM

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National Equine Forum celebrates 20 years

The National Equine Forum celebrates 20 years in March next year with a new venue. In 2012 the event, which offers the finest opportunity for you to hear and debate the latest equestrian news, views and research, will be held in the amphitheatre style lecture room at Institution of Mechanical Engineers, just off Parliament Square in London on Thursday 8 March 2012. This change of location reflects the desire of those attending to have tiered seating, which the previous venue was unable to provide.

The NEF is a unique, annual event bringing all sectors of the UK's equestrian industry together for a day of lectures, discussions and networking, led by some of the country's most knowledgeable and influential vets, politicians, riders, teachers and business leaders. The 2012 programme promises to be one of the most topical and inspiring to date.

Nick Meakin, NED Director, will provide an update on passports and the National Equine Database, which are regarded as pivotal to the successful implementation of any disease control strategy. Tim Brigstocke will then consider the hotly debated issues of protection of native breeds against over-breeding, where identification also has an important role.

On the subject of exercise Catriona Cook, from the BHS, will explore the problems of future access for riders and then Dr Rachel Murray of the Animal Health Trust will examine the effects of arena surfaces on lameness, a subject which has received significant attention in relation to the 2012 Olympic Games.

Lively discussion is anticipated with a presentation from Sue Pimbley, who has both taught and employed equine graduates, on the value of equine degrees and a paper from Helen Neibuhr, of Darbys solicitors, on the relative merits of courts or conciliation in solving disputes. We will then have the BHS Thesis Award, where Lisa Randle explains how people perceive equine obesity, a topic that maintains a consistently high media profile and generates some heated viewpoints.

On the work of international charities Roly Owers, Chief Executive of World Horse Welfare and Petra Ingram, Chief Executive of The Brooke, will discuss their attempts to encourage behaviour change in developing nations on the handling and use of horses and donkeys.

Closer to home Stuart Earley, the Chief Executive of the Scottish SPCA, will talk about its success in working with the British Horseracing Authority to improve welfare in racing, a subject which has received plenty of publicity in 2011. Discussion will then move on to doping, with Janice Shardlow, BEF's Head of Legal and Governance taking a look everyday competitions, rather than racing or top level FEI events, and debating the issue of welfare versus performance.

In the popular veterinary spot Professor Derek Knottenbelt has been given a specially extended slot to provide a taste of his extensive knowledge on sarcoids and headshaking, while in the topical spot Michael Seals, the newly appointed chairman, will discuss the new Animal Health and Welfare Board for England, and Professor Josh Slater will look at equine health security at the Olympic Games.

The National Equine Forum is organised by a committee of individuals reflecting various sectors of the equestrian industry. It is chaired by Professor Sir Colin Spedding, convened by Miles Williamson-Noble and has as its President HRH The Princess Royal.

It is sponsored by the Association of British Riding Schools, Bedmax, BEVA Trust, The Blue Cross, British Equestrian Federation, British Equestrian Trade Association, British Horse Society, British Horseracing Authority, Bulley Davey, Darbys Solicitors, Dodson and Horrell, Donkey Sanctuary, Equine Products UK, Horse Trust, Jeffress Scholarship Trust, , NFU Mutual Insurance, South Essex Insurance Brokers, Weatherbys Group and World Horse Welfare.

Tickets are available to equestrian trade delegates and equestrian professionals at a cost of £100 per person, which includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day. To apply please contact the Hon Secretary, Mrs Tracy Allen, at Warwickshire College, Moreton Morrell, Warwick, CV35 9BL email teallen@warkscol.ac.uk. For further information on the NEF visit www.bef.co.uk

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