

NATIONAL EQUINE FORUM

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
17th NATIONAL
EQUINE FORUM**

held on

Tuesday 31st March 2009

at

**The Royal Society
Carlton House Terrace**

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PAPERS

TOPIC	SPEAKER
Speech by The Minister for The Horse	Rt Hon Jane Kennedy MP, Minister for the Horse - delivered by Arik Dondi, Deputy Director for Exotic Diseases Policy
FEED	
The Impact of Biofuels and World Food Demand on Horse Feed	Jack Watts, Economist HGCA
Supplements – Sage of Wisdom or a Waste of Thyme?	Dr Pat Harris, MRCVS, Director of Science Mars Horsecare
Naturally Occurring Prohibited Substances and Accidental Doping	Chris Gordon, Technical Director Dodson and Horrell
THE INDUSTRY	
The Equestrian World: Is it Hobby, Sport, Recreation or Industry?	Richard Bacon, Equine Senior Leader Warwickshire College
The British Grooms Association	Lucy Katan, Executive Director British Grooms Association
Developments in Work Based Learning	Madge Moore, National Director Lantra England
LIVERY COMPANIES	
The Worshipful Company of Saddlers	The Master, Jonathan Godrich
The Worshipful Company of Farriers	The Mater, Carl Bettison AWCF
The Worshipful Company of Loriners	Past Master, Richard Walker Amott and Patricia Nassau Williams
OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES	
Report on Olympic and Paralympic Games 2008	Will Connell, World Class Performance Director British Equestrian Federation
Preparations for Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012	Tim Hadaway, Equestrian Manager, London Organising Committee
BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY UNDERGRADUATE PRESENTATION 2009	
Foot Balance and Lameness in Riding School Horses	Laura Corbin, Eqvalan Duo Thesis of the Year winner, formerly of Warwickshire College
TOPICAL SPOTS	
Horses in the Recession	Graham Cory, Chief Executive British Horse Society
BEVA Laminitis Study	Dr Nicola Menzies Gow, Royal Veterinary College
Vaccines	Brig. Paul Jepson MRCVS, The Horse Trust

SPEECH BY RT HON JANE KENNEDY MP
MINISTER FOR THE HORSE

The speech by the Minister for the Horse will be posted on the DEFRA website

www.defra.gov.uk

THE IMPACT OF BIOFUELS AND WORLD FOOD DEMAND ON HORSE FEED

Jack Watts, HGCA

Copy of presentation available in PowerPoint as a PDF file from janrogersequine@aol.com (959KB)

SUPPLEMENTS – SAGE OF WISDOM OR A WASTE OF THYME

Dr P Harris Equine Studies Group, WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition

R Bishop, Regulatory Affairs MARS HorseCare Ltd.

Very few horse feeders today provide their animals with a simple, single cereal or compound feed plus roughage diet. Many add other separate feeding stuffs and supplements in order to personalise the diet, add that little bit extra to boost performance, support health, correct an imbalance etc.

However, amongst scientists, regulators and horsemen, there is a great deal of, often heated, discussion over this whole topic:

- What do we mean by a supplement?
- Do we need them?
- Do they work?
- Are they safe?
- Are they legal?

What do we mean by a supplement?

What we as horse owners commonly call a supplement or nutraceutical is not in fact a legal entity. In EU feed law, supplements are classed the same as compound feeds, where they are defined as “a mixture of feed materials, whether or not containing any additive, for oral feeding in the form of complementary feeding stuffs or complete feeding stuffs”. (see: The Feedingstuffs Regulations 2005 Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 3281 The Feeding Stuffs (England) Regulations 2005. The term *additive* is also sometimes used to describe a supplement, but this has specific meaning in feed law, through the additives regulation (EC 1831/2003), which lists under

defined categories those additives permitted for use in animal feed. (and on the official list http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/food/animalnutrition/feedadditives/index_en.htm).

For the purpose of this presentation I will consider supplements as they are used in practice i.e. as feedstuffs that do not form more than 5% of the total ration by weight (and are not items such as carrots, apples, mints etc). They can then usefully be divided according to their core purpose e.g.

- ***Fundamental dietary supplements*** contain substances with established nutritional requirements and therefore include vitamins, minerals and trace elements. These supplements are often used to balance the ration and thereby ensure that specific dietary goals are attained.

- ***Specialised dietary supplements***

In a recent review for the National Academies of Science (USA)¹ on supplement safety the committee (which included the author) defined an Animal Dietary Supplement as '*A substance for oral consumption by horses, dogs, or cats, whether in/on feed or offered separately, intended for specific benefit to the animal by means other than provision of nutrients regarded as essential, or provision of essential nutrients for intended effect on the animal beyond normal nutritional needs, but not including legally defined drugs*'.

This definition if applied here would include the various nutraceuticals and other nutrients that are commonly suggested to have highly supportive effects on, for example, health, performance and behaviour. For example supplements may contain nutrients in amounts far greater than minimal nutritional requirements but known to provide support at these higher levels (e.g. high doses of Biotin, and antioxidants such as Vitamin E), or conversely other components for which there is no scientifically established dietary requirement (e.g. chromium, various herbs, chondroitin sulphate, glucosamine).

¹ NRC (2009) Safety for dietary supplements for horses dogs and Cats. National Academies press Washington.

Supplements may consist of single ingredients, simple combinations or more complex cocktails of feed ingredients and additives.

Do we need them?

Some nutritionists are of the opinion for both humans and animals that supplements are unnecessary because a balanced diet will provide all the nutrients required. However, one of the tenets of good feeding is feed the horse as an individual, and supplements are a means by which the diet can be tailored. Not all animals can be provided with a balanced diet nor can we always be certain of the quality of the diet (in particular the forage component) and in such instances the supplement may act as an 'insurance cover'.

- ***Fundamental dietary supplements:*** These supplements are often used to balance the ration and thereby ensure that specific dietary goals are attained. In many cases when fed as recommended their use can be supported e.g. appropriate dietary supplementation with vitamins and minerals is essential when the core diet does not provide adequate amounts. This is commonly seen when forage based or forage/ cereal based diets are being fed or when the dietary intake is being restricted for specific clinical reasons (e.g. obesity, laminitis etc).
- ***Specialised dietary supplements:*** It is increasingly being appreciated that nutrition can play a very important role in the management and support of certain diseases and conditions. This means that certain individual animals may have particular requirements or may respond to the inclusion of particular nutrients or feedstuffs in their diets. The issue now may be how to recognise such individuals.

Do they work?

There can sometimes be quite considerable misinformation and hype associated with some supplements, which actually confuses the situation and makes it very difficult for owners/feeders to make informed decisions on whether a particular supplement is likely to work in their horse or not before they purchase the product. While there has been a marked increase in the number of specialised dietary supplements on the market, this has not been matched by a concomitant increase in research in these areas.

Many substances are marketed without adequate understanding of their function *in the horse*; too often there is little or no evidence that the metabolic or physiological mechanism which they contribute to is a limiting factor or influences the particular problem in the first place; nor whether other processes may be influenced, and no real evidence that they will affect the actual problem or improve performance or behaviour in the field. Very few have any proven science *in the horse* to back their product claims, although a few products are now being backed by some science. However, just because the science is not there at the moment to support them does not necessarily mean that they are not of benefit to the horse but it does mean that one has to approach their use even more carefully.

It is also important to realise that horses are individuals and they do not always respond in the same way and so what might work for one individual may not for another. The underlying cause of a particular problem may also differ between individuals, which again may affect their response to the supplement. For example, although an appropriate, adequate and balanced diet will in most cases be enough to produce and sustain good quality hoof horn and growth, under certain circumstances additional supplementation of biotin (at the right level for the right length of time (e.g. 3-4mg/100kg BW/day for at least 6 – 9 months) may assist certain animals. However, some types of hoof horn defects will not respond to biotin alone and may require other nutrients to be present in adequate or perhaps higher than normally recommended levels for

benefits to occur. But some problems with hoof wall production and growth may not, respond to any nutritional manipulations. Unfortunately it is not possible by eye to determine which horses have which type of defect.

What about safety?

An important consideration, often forgotten with respect to supplements is *safety*. One argument is that the 'only thing hurt by trying a product that doesn't work is your wallet' – but this is not always true. For some animals using a product that does not work will mean that their clinical condition remains unresolved and even get worse, or it might result directly in an adverse effect through toxicity, interaction with other components of the ration or medications etc.

The nature of the supplement, how it was made or processed, what it is being fed with, the status of the horse etc all may influence whether a particular supplement is safe or not. Depending on the material there may be a risk of contamination by unwanted and/or potentially toxic materials. It is important to realise for example cross-reactions and contraindications are known to occur between certain medicinal/drug therapies and herbal/spice preparations. Taking into consideration all sources of a particular nutrient in the ration can be very important when considering adding in a supplement or a mixture of different supplements all containing that nutrient. For selenium for example the differences between adequate, optimum and potential toxicity intakes are fairly small, and levels of toxicity could be approached if multiple selenium containing supplements are used.

It should be realised that safety can be difficult to determine absolutely under all circumstance for example the fact that certain herbs have been fed for centuries does not mean that they are always safe to be fed at any intake level and in any form as is illustrated by garlic. Recent work has suggested that garlic ingestion has the potential at high doses to result in skin lesions or perhaps more importantly haemolytic anaemia in the

horse. The recent NRC review of garlic concluded that there are insufficient safety data to define a no observed adverse effect level (NOAEL) or even a safe upper intake level (SUL) for garlic in the horse. With such limited data, the committee could only report a historical safe intake and estimate a presumed safe intake (PSI) for dehydrated garlic powder of up to 90mg/kg BW in healthy non oxidatively stressed animals, equivalent to ~50g in a 550kg horse and 30g in a 350kg pony.

Are they legal?

There are two meanings of legal in this context. Firstly in relation to their use in sport, where there are potential conflicts with certain medication rules for racing and competition, by the inclusion of certain materials. In addition the presence of certain contaminants and/or naturally occurring substances may result in medication issues.

Secondly, the regulatory control of nutritional supplements is within EU Food and Feed law. This allows nutritional claims to support health. In the case of some functional claims made for nutraceuticals, where nutrients may be present at levels significantly different from published requirements, these often operate on the dividing line between feedstuffs and medicines. Under current UK law², a veterinary medicinal product is defined as:

- a.) any substance or combination of substances presented as having properties for treating or preventing disease in animals; or*
- b.) any substance or combination of substances that may be used in, or administered to, animals with a view either to restoring, correcting or modifying physiological functions by exerting a pharmacological, immunological or metabolic action, or to making a medical diagnosis.*

² The Veterinary Medicines Regulations use the Community law definition of veterinary medicinal Product: Article 1.2 of the amended Directive (2001/82/EC as amended by 2004/28/EC)

To place such products on the market requires a marketing authorisation backed by significant research proving safety and efficacy, (see UK Veterinary Medicines Directorate: VMD). Supplement companies must be careful not to “cross the line” in terms of being presented as nutritional supplements while making strong functional claims bordering on medicinal. The VMD increasingly monitors the presence of these so-called unauthorised medicines. Suppliers/manufacturers should follow appropriate industry &/or legal guidelines.

Conclusion

Obviously from a horse-owner’s perspective, we all want to do the best for the horse(s) in our care. Some form of tailoring of the diet will often assist in achieving this, by helping to support particular issues in an individual horse, relating to its behaviour, health etc. For some animals such tailoring may occur through the appropriate choice of the products that make up the core ration but for many the form this tends to take is through the use of supplements. But the message is caveat emptor: there’s lots of choice but its not equaled by a robust evidence-base, and legislation is clear but not always helpful! So it best to do some homework: what’s the issue, what might help, how might it help, do a bit of desk research to find out what ingredients or substances might help, read the label to check what you want is in there, check whether it will be adding anything else to the ration that might result in an imbalance or over supplementation, ask for advice from your veterinarian or a nutritionist. Finally if the decision is to use a particular product, make sure any effect is monitored and if there is no apparent effect in the appropriate time scale then rethink.

Going forward it important that we ask for more appropriate supporting evidence for the products we wish to use, that veterinarians are able to provide informed advice and that suppliers/manufacturers

respond positively. This will not be without cost, as work to support potential efficacy and likely safety will be expensive and will therefore need to be reflected in the costs of such supplements.

Overall the above does leave anyone involved with horses with a dilemma – *'how to avoid dismissing possibly advantageous supplements that will add to the quality of life of horse and rider because of a lack of evidence of efficacy or safety, but without accepting all 'claims' that lack any supporting evidence'*.

In summary

- The fact that there is no independently verified scientific evidence to prove the effectiveness of a 'supplement' does not mean that it does not work
- But equally, the fact that it apparently worked for another horse does not mean that it will necessarily work for yours nor that it is safe or legal to feed in all circumstances.
- Realistically assess the potential benefit and risks for your horse and monitor use appropriately.

And finally

- Before giving a 'supplement' check what levels of the active ingredients/nutrients are in the remainder of the horse's overall diet, so that you do not inadvertently overdose.

CROSS-CONTAMINATION, ACCIDENTAL DOPING AND NATURALLY-OCCURRING PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

Christopher Gordon, Chairman of BETA Feed Committee

Doping violations in any sport make headline news and can have disastrous consequences for competitors and the reputation of the sport involved including effects on sponsorship, participation, Olympic status and also raises issues of welfare.

There are many regulatory authorities that control doping in sport including WADA, NADO, BOA, BHA, FEI and BEF – all with a common purpose of ensuring sport remains “clean and fair”.

What are the facts behind the headline stories?

Equestrian sports are distinct in that they involve both a human and an equine athlete and there must be consistent sanctions for doping violations for both. Understandably the equine athlete is considered preponderant to the human athlete.

There are three classes of prohibited substances:

1. Doping – attempt to influence performance
2. Medication A } prohibited substances that can be used
3. Medication B } for bona fide vet treatment

Following a positive dope test there could be one of four scenarios:

1. Intentional doping occurred
2. There was a problem regarding the withdrawal of a bona fide medicine that had been legitimately administered (whether injected, fed or topical) - ignorance of recommended withdrawal times is no excuse
3. Cross-contamination in feed
4. A naturally occurring prohibited substance may have been unknowingly present in a feed material, forage, supplement or bedding

How big is this problem?

The British Horseracing Authority published figures which showed that in 2007 a total of 9,035 samples taken from horses were analysed with 7 (0.08%) of them being confirmed as positive. Clearly the risks are very low,

but the consequences can be disastrous with loss of prize money, value, earnings, prestige, owners, trainers, riders, feed/supplement manufacturers and team placings. With the exception of prize money, all of these are undeterminable losses which are exceptionally difficult to put a value on.

NOPS – what are they and where do they come from?

Naturally occurring prohibited substances (or NOPS) are often considered to be as a result of some form of raw material “contamination” but as many of these substances are endogenous they are not a form of contamination. The definition of a prohibited substance is “any substance that can exert an effect on a horse” which is a broad, all encompassing definition that is open to interpretation. In practice the main NOPS that we are concerned with include:

- Caffeine (cacao)
- Theobromine (cacao)
- Hyoscine (nightshade – *Datura*)
- Hordenine (germinating barley)
- Morphine (opium poppy – *Papaver somniferum*)
- Atropine (nightshade – *Atropa belladonna*)
- Nicotine (tobacco)
- Theophylline (tea)
- Gamma Oryzanol (rice bran)

What problems have occurred with NOPS in the past?

Back in the 1980s there were a number of cases of positive detections of caffeine and theobromine which resulted in a number of racehorses being disqualified. Sources were traced back to cherco meal, a by-product of coffee manufacture and a common ingredient in cattle feed – and also a supplement using a biscuit meal as a base or carrier. The regulators (Jockey Club) accepted that low levels of such NOPS could not always be avoided and introduced a threshold level of 2 ppm for theobromine; the manufacturers have, with a few occasional exceptions managed to control their feeds and supplements within this criteria.

The next spate of disqualifications occurred more recently between 2002 and 2008 and involved traces of morphine that were associated with the feed. Prior to 2002 there had been no recorded disqualifications of horses in the UK due to the presence of morphine in feed although there had been some incidences in France. The feed manufacturers were obviously concerned and looked at what had changed in 2002.

The answer was eventually clear. In 2002 the cultivation of morphine poppies (*Papaver somniferum*) in the south of England was rapidly increasing as an ideal break crop following cereals. The nature of the crop

meant that the pharmaceutical company for whom the morphine was grown under contract was understandably discreet with details of their new crop. The popularity of morphine poppies continues to grow and now thousands of hectares are being grown and the distribution of the morphine poppy covers most of the UK.

This poses an enormous problem for manufacturers of feed, supplements, forage and even bedding due to the possible presence of morphine within raw materials, farm equipment, storage and transport. Because such presence often occurs in discrete pockets rather than as a homogenous inclusion, normal sampling and testing procedures are unlikely to find it. In addition many raw materials are now sourced globally with the inherent associated risks.

What can be done?

As this is a problem that faces the industry, BETA formed a working party in 2004, which has been in discussions with the regulatory authorities including BHA, EHSLC, BEF, NTF and the CNEF. A new Manufacturers' Code which is based on the existing UFAS Feed Safety Code has been developed to include NOPS. The new code – which has the catchy title BETA/UFAS NOPS Manufacturers' Code – is being announced today.

Next steps

The new BETA/UFAS Manufacturers' Code is set to be launched this spring. This will set a new industry standard, thereby demonstrating that the industry is doing everything possible to reduce the risk of NOPS occurring in feed. Stakeholders (e.g. trainers and riders) will be informed and work will continue with the regulators.

Conclusion – is my feed guaranteed?

An absolute guarantee is not achievable but the BETA-UFAS Code will considerably reduce the risk and will offer those competing under FEI or racing regulations the best possible protection.

Horses competing in affiliated competitions or under the rules of racing will be advised to select feed and supplements that are manufactured under the BETA-UFAS Code. Look for the BETA-UFAS endorsement on your feeds and supplements later this year.

Guide to acronyms

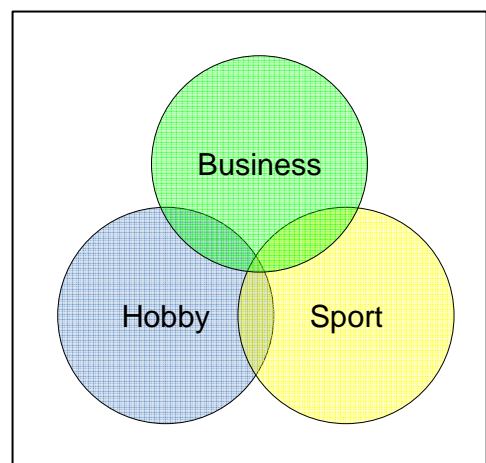
BETA	British Equestrian Trade Association
BEF	British Equestrian Federation
BHA	British Horseracing Authority
BOA	British Olympic Association
CNEF	Club Nutrition Equine Français
EHSLC	European Horseracing Scientific Liaison Committee
FEI	International Equestrian Federation
NADO	National Anti-Doping Organisation
NOPS	Naturally-Occurring Prohibited Substances
NTF	National Trainers' Federation
UFAS	Universal Feed Assurance Scheme
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency

HORSE WORLD – A HOBBY, SPORT, BUSINESS, INDUSTRY?

Richard Bacon MBA, Warwickshire College

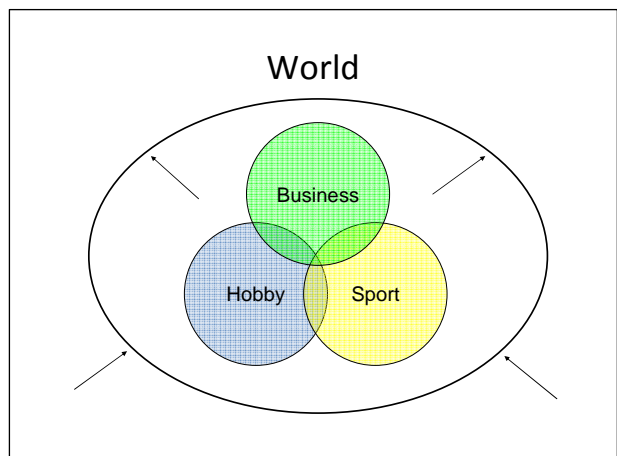
The title is a very open one, and could be answered in many ways. Two that came to mind in planning were the statistical and the philosophical. Over recent years a mass of statistical detail has been researched, and much of it presented at previous Forums, so I am going to present a more philosophical answer today, based around key themes of **interconnection** and **professionalism**. My premise is that this is a journey on which much progress has been made over the last 10 years, and one that can now be progressed further.

The reality is that, for most people connected with horses, they are essentially a hobby. Most horses are owned and ridden for pleasure. This hobby consumes a lot of spare time and not so spare income, but is a treasured part of leisure time. It is a hobby with much to commend it – physically active, outdoors pursuit; good for physical and mental health. It develops responsibility and reliability in young people, and an awareness of risk and how to manage it (surely better than insulation from risk?). It is particularly appealing to girls who are less likely to engage in physical activity than boys, and can be a unifying activity within families.

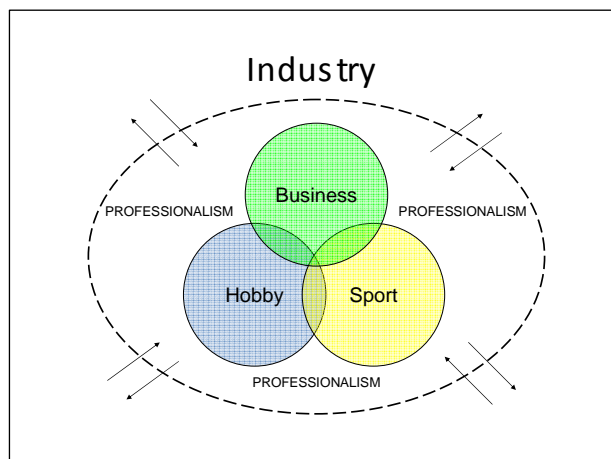


For some people their hobby becomes their sport, whilst for others it becomes their business. Further, equestrian sportspeople often have to fund their sport through business activity. Finally, a minority (but one from whom much can be learnt) start from the premise of horses as a business venture.

Should these interconnected activities be viewed as a world or an industry? I have never found the "world" concept helpful, as my conceptual model for the themes illustrates. The problem with the "world" view is that it is self-contained, difficult for ideas to get in or out - and some stereotypical images could be applied. It loses interconnectedness with other constituencies, be they businesses,



sports or society in general.



Over the years the concept of a Horse Industry has become more established, and is now the norm. We have the British Horse Industry Confederation to represent the sector to Government, who themselves sponsored, 3 years ago now, a Strategy for the Horse Industry. The concept of an industry is both modern and appropriate for a related group of economic activity that is comparable

to other significant sectors, such as horticulture of curries. Industry also conjures up an image of a more open system where ideas and opportunities are freely exchanged, with other sectors and activities, for advancement and increased professionalism.

What achievements and challenges can we identify regarding professionalism in relation to these four dimensions – hobby, sport, business and industry?

Hobby: We have a strong tradition for high standards of equine care and welfare, supported by proactive welfare organisations and qualifications structures. However, with the growth in private horse ownership has come an increase in welfare problems of ignorance, rather than neglect, through people acquiring unsuitable horses or ones that they lack proper knowledge to care for. This highlights a need for ongoing awareness raising and education. It also places an onus on businesses providing horse care services, including livery yards, to ensure that owners are able to provide for the welfare needs of their animals.

Sport: There have been some important changes of approach in recent years: the recent focus on coaching, and not just instruction; the need for rider fitness, not just the training of the horse; the edge that can be achieved through nutrition and sports psychology. Despite the success on the world stage, is there still an opportunity to learn from examples of other sports, for example the dedication and single-minded approach of GB cycling? Are elite riders distracted by the need to run the yard and pay the bills to achieve the same level?

Business: Weakness in business skills has often been noted regarding equestrian enterprises. In recent years, efforts have been made by leading bodies to raise business awareness and facilitate upskilling in this area. Often these activities are attended by open-minded proprietors, aware of the need for fresh ideas, rather than those most in need. Anyone running

an equine business, whether the motivation derives from a hobby, sport or commercial intent, needs to be focussed on meeting the needs of customers, open to learn from best business practice wherever it is to be found. Time needs to be given to the care of the business, the same as it does to the horse.

Industry: Whilst a great many positive strides forward have been taken in professionalism, there are just too many organisations in the industry? Passports are available from 70+ issuing authorities and a similar proliferation of organisations offering UKCC qualifications. Contrast that with other successful sports, or equestrian nations, where governance and representation are much more unified. All organisations need to look very carefully at efficiency and effectiveness with which the needs of the marketplace are supplied. If we started with a blank sheet of paper, would we design an equine industry like we have now – different organisations representing the same groups; governing bodies for facets of essentially the same sport? Does this meet the needs of the customer – the horse owner or rider – with maximum efficiency and effectiveness? If not, what should be done about it?

In conclusion, the ongoing challenge to anyone involved with horses – as a hobby, sport, business or industry body – is to be continually moving forward in interconnectedness and professionalism, for the benefit of the horse and the whole industry.

THE BRITISH GROOMS ASSOCIATION

Lucy Katan, Executive Director, British Grooms Association

Introduction is a 90 sec movie – showing grooms at work.

These are just a few of our proud members. They are all grooms and they care for their horses daily with passion, dedication and professionalism. Being a groom is not just a job, it is a vocation.

Six years ago, Graham Suggett invited me to come and present to the Forum on the topic 'A groom for the 21st Century". I nervously presented to you my dream about how grooms should achieve more recognition, support and respect than they were currently receiving. I suggested the creation of an annual groom's prize and the formation of a representative membership body.

It was thanks to this opportunity that you the Forum gave me, that I am proud to say that we are now in the 6th year of the Kuster BEF Groom Award and in May 2007 I launched the British Grooms Association – the world's only Professional Association for equine grooms. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you Chairman and the Forum, for allowing grooms to have a voice for the first time.

I always believed that the hardworking heroes and heroines of our industry deserved their own Association. In 2006 I discovered UnLtd – the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs. They believed in my vision and were shocked at the lack of modernisation of the working conditions in our industry and I subsequently won £25,000 worth of funding - this enabled me to create the BGA.

What we have done?

The BGA has over 700 members to date. We have developed a comprehensive website which is jam packed with dedicated advice and guidance for both grooms, employers and parents.

With support from Lantra we have developed the Equine Skills CV scheme, which is giving grooms the opportunity to gain a recognised job title – they no longer have to be termed just as a 'groom'... they can be endorsed by their employer to become either a Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced or Elite groom. Interestingly to date the highest take up of a level is the Elite – just showing how many grooms crave the recognition that they rightly deserve for their years of knowledge and experience.

This introduction of the 'appraisal' into the work place is just one example of how the BGA is working with employers to try and modernise. We received pro bono support from Law Works and have a downloadable 'Contract of Employment' on our website for all to use and since launch we have handled well over 100 direct enquiries from employers. We are proud that they choose to call us for help, but also acutely aware that there is little other support for them in the industry.

We strongly believe that to achieve the long overdue 'Social Change', we MUST work with the employers and not against them – this is a core aim of the Association.

But of course we are also there for our 700+ members. In our 22 months we have directly helped approximately 200 enquires with issues ranging from bullying to queries regarding pay, holiday and general working conditions.

Our members receive the quarterly magazine, British Grooms, which contains educational and informative articles solely focusing on grooms and their environment. Some of our members have even become more involved and are practicing their journalistic skills – a chance for some CPD.

One of the things that has shocked us since we launched is the amount of phone calls we have received from grooms who have been injured in the workplace and have not been insured. So many of them have been freelance and so received no Statutory Sick Pay, resulting in debt and increased stress. Thanks to the support of South Essex Insurance Brokers, we can now offer members the opportunity to insure themselves and their livelihood at exceptionally reasonable rates.

The BGA has represented grooms as a real voice since its launch and we are pleased that we are taking steps towards becoming a BEF Associate Member Body. This will mean that Great Britain is the leading nation in the support and development for its grooms – surely this will give us the edge in the lead up to 2012 and beyond.

At the BGA our work is carried out by me – the Chief Executive and also Chief envelope stuffer, our Voluntary Board of Directors, Magazine Editor and since January 2009 we now have a group of 15 BGA members who are uber keen and have become our Area Reps. My vision for the Association always saw that in time it would give grooms the chance to become more involved and act as a real voice for their fellow colleagues.

So as you can see, much has been achieved in the past 22 months and I have not even mentioned negotiating LGV funding on behalf of our members, the countless media stories we have generated, the community that is beginning to build throughout our membership and the members freelance adverts that are our highest viewed page on the website!

So what is the future?

At the BGA we work under five aims and have exciting projects linked with each:

Aim 1: To offer dedicated support and advice to grooms

Working with our solicitors we are currently developing more in depth SOS advice, including case studies and guides for freelance grooms including templates for their accounts and contracts.

We are also working with a small group of parents to create a more in depth help page. We are aware that so many are nervous about allowing their child to work as a groom and we want to build their knowledge and confidence.

Aim 2: To increase groom's skills recognition and job status

We want to continue to increase media surrounding grooms and their unique skill level. Maybe Horse and Hound could help us here by denoting one page a month, specifically talking to and promoting grooms?

We are linking further with recruitment agencies and colleges to encourage an increased use of the Equine Skills CV. The agencies support the idea of the 'levels' of a groom becoming more uniform and in turn receiving greater recognition with the emergence of a career ladder.

Aim 3: Achieve modernisation of grooms' working conditions

We are currently developing an Equestrian Employers' Handbook. This will be a real support for employers to help them to deal with scenarios ranging from hiring and disciplinary procedures, to pregnancies... all queries that we have received since our launch.

We also aim to highlight good employment practice via our website and media case studies. It is important for the employers to understand and embrace the idea of modernising their employment practices – recruitment of staff is an expensive process, it makes good business sense to motivate and retain those that work for you, rather than exploit and demoralise and so need to start over again.

Aim 4: Build a sense of community in the groom's population

We are working towards establishing Regional Networks, encouraging mentoring and support for the younger ones in the workplace. Moving forward we hope to work closer with the BEF Member Bodies to help build our membership promotion.

Aim 5: Contribute towards the stabilisation of the recruitment and retention issues in the equestrian workforce

Six years ago I raised the issue –

- Too few young people are coming into the industry, and gaining the right experience to become top grooms.
- and
- Too many experienced grooms are leaving the industry due to poor working conditions, and lack of career development.

I honestly believe that this situation is equally as bad now, as it was six years ago. When I talk at a college, out of a usual audience of approximately 80 students, all who are studying ND's and HND's there are barely any who want to work hands on with horses as a groom. "What do you want to do?" I ask in exasperation ... they shrug their shoulders.. but what they do know is that they don't want to become a groom.

At the other end, we have received so many emails from individuals who are no longer grooms and stopped doing the job that they loved due to poor employment conditions and an endless lack of respect. Our attrition of members sadly is high; we ask everyone who falls out of membership their reason for leaving, nearly 80% are no longer a groom.

We still have not got any real research for the general side of the industry – i.e. all those that fall under the BEF and not the racing sector. Lantra have

offered to carry out a research project into grooms and equestrian employment trends, but they can't fund it. We will be working towards finding some funding from somewhere to carry out this crucial piece of work.

DEVELOPMENTS IN WORK BASED LEARNING

Madge Moore, National Director England, Lantra

Summary from PowerPoint slides:

What is work based learning?

For the equine industry, there are two types – working pupils and apprenticeships.

What are Apprenticeships?

A package of learning – an 'Apprenticeship Framework':

- Knowledge-based element (technical certificate)
- Competence-based element (NVQ)
- Transferable or key skills
- Employment Rights and Responsibilities

Two levels:

- Apprenticeships
- Advanced Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships

The Government has recently stated its support for Apprenticeships with the publication of: 'World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All. The Government's strategy for the future of Apprenticeships in England' (Dius 2008)

A snapshot of key statements:

- The Government has introduced a requirement for all young people to be in education or training until the age of 18, by 2015
 - They anticipate that around one in five of all young people will be undertaking an Apprenticeship within the next decade
 - They ensure that by 2013 every suitably qualified young person who wants to take up an Apprenticeship place will be able to do so

How does an Apprenticeship work?

Delivered as a partnership with:

- the employer
- the provider
- the apprentice

Delivered by on and off the job training

Funding may be available towards the training

Recruitment locally or via the Apprenticeship website

What are the benefits?

Business benefits:

- Improve productivity & retention of staff
- Apprentices learn the skills specific to your yard
- Motivates the workforce
- Avoids skills shortages

Learner benefits:

- Earn while they learn
- Develop skills and knowledge which lead to nationally recognised qualifications
- Learn in a way that is suitable to the individual & their employer

What are my responsibilities as an employer?

- You must give your apprentice an induction into their role and provide on-the-job training.
- You are also responsible for the wages of your apprentices.
- You need to take be aware that an apprentice will be classed the same as your other employees.

Cost for employers?

All employed apprentices must receive a wage of no less than £80 per week, this will rise to £95 from August 2009

Where the apprentice is 19 or over, the employers are expected to make a contribution towards the cost of training

Uptake of apprenticeships?

June 2007 – July 2008 (England only)

111 on Apprenticeships

29 enrolments on Advanced Apprenticeships

Can the equine industry afford to ignore this form of funded training?

Where can I find out more?

- Equine Industry & apprenticeships, please contact Lantra Connect: 0845 707 8007 or connect@lantra.co.uk
- Work books to support the Equine NVQ are available from Lantra, please email: standardsandquals@lantra.co.uk
- The National Apprenticeship website also has information for learners, employers and parents as well as a job matching service: www.apprenticeships.org.uk

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF SADDLERS

The Master, Jonathan Godrich

As a group of Livery Companies we have been asked to talk on “The role of the Livery Companies in Equestrianism”: in the case of the Saddlers’ one might say that it boils down to three things – you sit on it, you pull it or you are drawn by it! But this would be too simplistic and refers solely to the saddlery trade, whereas our involvement with equestrianism is much larger. But first, what are Livery Companies and who are the Saddlers?

The origins of Livery Companies date back to at least Saxon times. Essentially they were groups of people plying the same craft or trade, who lived and worked nearby and who banded together in informal arrangements to regulate competition, keep standards high and generally act together for mutual benefit - particularly in providing charitable back up, such as giving support following injury or to a saddler’s dependants after his death. So it was with the Saddlers’ Company, whose origins date back to at least 1160. To be a member of our Livery Company, you had to be involved in making saddles, bridles or harnesses. However as time passed the membership became diluted to suit political and social ends until, at the end of the 1800’s, only 9% of the Saddlers’ Company membership was involved directly in the trade. That has now changed and, out of a total membership of around 200 Freemen and Liverymen, some 25-30% of company members are currently directly involved in the business of making saddlery or in the associated saddlery retail sector. Furthermore, we have a small group of Honorary members called Yeomen, whom we describe as ‘Distinguished users of the saddle’ - they include the Princess Royal.

Whilst the Saddlers’ is closely tied to its trade, the Company itself is not a trade association – that is the role of the Society of Master Saddlers (the SMS), albeit it is heavily supported both financially and in other ways by the Company. We encourage both up and coming saddlery trainees and

qualified craftsmen - not least through our financial and physical support of SMS activities at the BETA Trade Fair and at its National Saddlery Competition held each year at Saddlers' Hall. But this is only one aspect of the support we give to the industry and equestrianism through education, training and our charitable activities.

Our overarching aim is to get riders of all competences - from the youngest to the most experienced equestrians - sitting on and using saddlery of the highest quality: and to us that means British saddlery, whether made in leather or synthetic material, by a rural craft saddler or by one of the manufacturing companies from Walsall. And, while the British manufacturers have a reputation that is second to none, any idea that foreign imports are of inferior quality is rapidly being overtaken by some very high quality imports from Europe and elsewhere. So, while the UK saddlery trade is small, active and exports much of its product (around 25,000 saddles are sold abroad each year), competition is very fierce. And it is because of this, let alone for the safety of the rider, that the Saddlers' Company has constantly sought to maintain and enhance standards of workmanship within the saddlery industry through the provision of training grants, by awarding prizes, in encouraging the design and implementation of equipment standards and in a host of other ways.

Working with the SMS, with the two City and Guilds qualifying saddlery training organisations that exist today (Capel Manor College and the Saddlery Training Centre at Salisbury) and with Master Saddlers who deliver training at their work benches, the Saddlers' Company has been instrumental in devising, reviewing and implementing new training qualification schemes for the industry, in conjunction with the City & Guilds Institute (with whom we have had a very close connection since the 1880s - and on whose Council we have had a Senior Company member ever since). Indeed we are also a City & Guilds Awarding Body. Together we have built up the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, which takes a minimum of 4 years

to put trainees through Level 2 and 3 City & Guilds qualifications before they can apply to become a "qualified saddler" - and, later on, a "Master Saddler". But the costs to an individual of this training are very great and the rules applying to Government funding are frequently tortuous, especially for those aged over 25. Thus we supplement such spending with Saddlers' Company funds: for instance through our Millennium Apprenticeship Scheme, through our bursaries and prizes for students undergoing saddlery courses at Capel Manor College and for the apprentices and other 'New Entrant' trainees at the Saddlery Training Centre. All this support is also made available to the Armed Forces Saddlery shops - notably those with the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment and the Kings' Troop Royal Horse Artillery.

And, last year, we started a new funding programme within our Apprenticing Charity called the Saddlers' Company Training Certificates Scheme. This is targeted at the Walsall trade manufacturers who require their trainees to be competent in parts of, but not a complete, saddlery qualification skill - thus their training does not attract government funding. We are helping to fill that gap - on a matched basis with those companies - to encourage them to take on or to retrain staff and thereby give them usable, transferable skills.

In 1363, under a Charter given by Edward III, the Saddlers' Company's power of Search was reconfirmed. This allowed the Master and Wardens to descend on any saddlery establishment within two miles of the City of London to inspect premises to ensure good practice. If pewter nails were being used, old saddles were being passed off as new or poor workmanship was evident, fines would be administered, goods would be burned in the street and the hapless saddler could be put out of business. While we still practice the right of the Search today, it is a much more benign affair, aimed at providing guidance and support to -the trade.

So far I have concentrated on the saddlery industry because it is inextricably linked to equestrianism. On a broader front, we provide academic bursaries to students undertaking degree and post-graduate courses in Equine Science. Equally we assist a wide variety of people who are involved, across the piste, in equestrian pursuits, be that as amateur or professional riders, as trainers or in other equestrian activities. We support the Riding Opportunities Scheme and the Ebony Horse Club in Brixton, which use riding and horse management as a vehicle to give difficult children with very low esteem a real sense of purpose, whilst also encouraging others, who are more fortunate but cannot afford to ride, the opportunity to take part in equestrian pursuits. Similarly we give substantial backing to the RDA network; while on a parallel tack, we have set up a trust fund to give direct financial support to those who are training for the Paralympic games - not just in 2012 but for every Olympic games thereafter. We are conscious of the difficulties of those who support the Paralympic riders, particularly their grooms, many of whom are very closely related to the competitors and who, in the pre-Olympic funding handouts, attract relatively limited support.

On another level - one which reaches into every corner of the equestrian world - we provide grants and prizes each year in support of British Horse Society and British Equestrian Federation activities. In conjunction with those two organisations, we aim to provide encouragement, incentive and practical support where it will be most effective - thus our training grants are used to support instructor training, provide equipment and so on. And we award prizes, from saddles to money vouchers. In doing so we target young riders, be they competing at the Pony Club Championships or elsewhere; but we also support up and coming riders (such as Georgie Spence) and the much more experienced riders of all abilities at annual events such as Badminton and Burghley, at Heavy Horse Shows, Donkey Breed Society and Driving Championships, RDA Championships at Hartpury and the Combined Services Equestrian Association Competitions at Melton Mowbray and Olympia.

While on a completely different course, the Company bank-rolled the British Horse Database when it was set up in the early 1990's. Times have moved on, but while the British Horse Database sadly failed to deliver, we feel that the Company's support of that scheme led to the later introduction of the current National Equine Database..

The Saddlers' motto is Hold Fast, Sit Sure. It relates as much to the need for the knights of old to remain secure in the saddle lest they be easily done to death by a dagger wielding infantryman as they floundered immobile on the ground, as it does to our determination today to ensure the highest standards of safety for both horse and rider through well founded training qualifications and in encouraging innovative thinking and the highest quality of workmanship within the saddlery industry.

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FARRIERS

The Master, Carl Bettison AWCF Hons

- The WCF was established in 1356 to set standards of shoeing in the City of London

The Worshipful Company of Farriers has its origins in 1356, when the mayor of the City of London, one Henry Pykard, called together the farriers of London to form the "Marshalls of the City of London" because of the "many offences and dangers" committed by the farriers in and around London. Six hundred and fifty years later the Company still has the responsibility for securing adequate standards of competence and conduct among persons engaged in the shoeing of horses, and it also actively promotes and encourages the art, science, training, and education of farriery.

- Today the Company sets and runs the examination which all the apprentices sit at the end of their four year apprenticeship, so its role has expanded from the City of London to encompass the whole of the UK.
- In 1975 the Company was at the forefront of the establishment of the Farriers Registration Council and the introduction of the law which required all farriers to be registered

*A great deal of work by the Company with the help of Michael Mates, MP and Past Master, and the National Association of Farriers, Blacksmiths and Agricultural Engineers led to the passing of the **Farriers (Registration) Act**, 1975 amended 1977 and 2002 "to prevent and avoid suffering by cruelty to horses arising from the shoeing of horses by unskilled persons; to promote the training of farriers and shoeing smiths; to provide for the establishment of a Farriers Registration Council to register persons engaged in farriery and to prohibit the shoeing of horses by unskilled persons". Farriery is defined by the 1975 Act as "any work in connection with the preparation or treatment of the foot of a horse for the immediate reception of a shoe thereon, the fitting by nailing or otherwise of a shoe to the foot or the finishing off of such work to the foot". Section 1 of the act gives the Company the function of securing adequate standards of competence and conduct amongst farriers, and advancing the art and science of farriery education. The Company has three representatives on the Council, one of whom serves as chairman, and the Council recognises the Diploma*

of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (Dip WCF) as a prescribed examination for Registration.

- The Diploma of The Worshipful Company of Farriers is regarded as the best entry level examination in farriery, and the WCF ensures that the standard of the exam remains high, so much so that many overseas farriers travel to the UK to take it.

The Company has for more than 100 years been the examining body for farriery. Its professional examinations are administered by the Examinations Board, which is an entirely independent body within the Craft and is responsible only to the Court of the Company. The Board includes a number of senior farrier and veterinary surgeons with extensive knowledge and experience of farriery matters. The Diploma 'DipWCF', formerly RSS is taken by students at the end of their apprenticeship. It is the prescribed examination for admission to the Register of Farriers. It comprises a live horse-shoeing test, a written paper, and an oral assessment to establish that the candidate has the knowledge and practical skill to shoe horses to a safe and acceptable standard.

One of the most impressive events the Company holds twice a year is the ceremony for the presentation of diploma certificates to newly qualified farriers. The day starts with a church service, which is followed by a formal ceremony of presentation, rather akin to a degree ceremony, where the Master presents each successful candidate with their Diploma certificate – and to any who have passed the higher exams. For many it may be their first trip to London – particularly for those from overseas who have chosen to come and take the Diploma voluntarily, which emphasises its position as the gold standard for basic farriery training.

- To meet the demands of equestrian world the WCF also sets and runs two higher level examinations, which help to recognize farriers who are able to shoe to the exacting standards required for shoeing top competition horses, as well as working alongside veterinary surgeons on lame horses

Associateship 'AWCF', formerly AFCL: *This exam, for candidates who already hold the DipWCF, concentrates on therapeutic and remedial farriery as required by the equine veterinary surgeon in everyday practice. A very high standard of technical competence is required, and the syllabus is detailed. Candidates are required to undertake a searching written test, make and fit a therapeutic shoe, and to carry out advanced farriery procedures as required when working with a veterinary surgeon. The Associateship examination may be taken by*

candidates who have held the Diploma qualification for a period of not less than 2 years.

Fellowship 'FWCF': *The Fellowship recognises the highest level of ability. Candidates who already hold the Associateship are required to submit a thesis, prepare and present a lecture, and also undertake a practical shoeing test. The Fellowship examination may be taken by those who have been Associates for a period of not less than 12 months and who have had at least 5 full years experience after obtaining the Diploma.*

- As well as exams, the Company's **Craft Committee** keeps abreast of developments within the craft, and organises seminars and conferences for both vets and farriers. Those working with horses never stop learning and the WCF together with the Farriers Registration Council and the National Association of Farriers Blacksmiths & Agricultural Engineers have set up a Continuing Professional Development scheme, although in its early years, it is proving successful with many more farriers attending clinics and workshops, which should lead to more farriers attaining their higher exams

A system has been set up to monitor CPD and to record points earned and there are a variety of courses and competitions aiming to enable farriers to develop their technical knowledge and techniques, including the use of modern materials, and also related topics such as modern business practice and software, client relationships, and remedial shoeing. as formal courses and the intention is for it to be up and running in the very near future. Most other professions now have some form of mandatory or semi-mandatory requirement, and farriery will follow.

- The WCF also award prizes for farriery competitions, both shoemaking and shoeing and also award prizes for Best Shod Horse competitions at County Shows and many equestrian competitions

*The Company also awards **silver and bronze medals** at farriery competitions throughout the country, and rosettes and plaques in best shod horse competitions, which are designed to encourage the grass-roots farrier who has limited time to take part in farriery events. We help to finance a **Youth Exchange Scheme** for young farriers, mainly with the USA, which gives both exchanges some valuable experience. Through the Company's Charitable Trust, we are able to provide some financial support for the relief of poverty, hardship or sickness among farriers where needed.*

- Today the membership of the Worshipful Company of Farriers consists of registered farriers, veterinary surgeons and a mixture of people all

committed to the welfare of the Horse. Through the vitality of the craft and the adaptability of the Company, there is therefore an unbroken link between the Company of today and the "Citizens and Farriers of London" incorporated as a Fellowship within the City in the Middle Ages, and the Company is justly proud in combining its history of involvement in the City with its deep involvement in the modern craft of farriery.

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF LORINERS

Past Master Richard Walker-Amott and Patricia Nassau-Williams

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF LORINERS

Past Master Richard Walker-Arnott and Patricia Nassau-Williams

Introductory remarks – RWA will deal with history and current charitable, sporting and service links, TNW with current education, promotional and information activity.

RWA

1. 13th century origin of the guild – concern from the beginning for education and charity

13th century origin – trade union and employers organisation for metal workers in iron and copper. Ordinances of 1261 made provisions to ensure good workmanship, arranged conditions of work. Also provision for apprentices and mention of alms box of the guild – so current educational and charitable activity nearly 750 years old.

2. Inward looking for centuries

I do not think that in those days the Company raised its sights above the immediate concerns of its members, almost always highly protectionist.

3. What influence of the company on the design and use of lorinery?

No record survives to show how the medieval loriner related to his customer – did he sell a range of his own designs, or did he work to someone else's order. The medieval loriner was usually a sub-contractor to e.g. saddlers. I very much doubt whether the guild as a corporate entity thought it was any part of its remit to play a wider role in equestrianism.

4. Over the centuries the loriner's craft moved away from London

The last loriner to work in London did so in the late 19th century. However, the company's charter did not require a candidate for the livery to be a working loriner, and whereas in 1696 the livery had been 185 strong by 1899 the number had risen to 444. We now have about 360 liverymen.

5. Relatively recent change of focus in education and charity, and support of riding talent

In the late twentieth century the focus of company's charitable activity changed from support of its own members to help for equestrian charities, a move which was paralleled by the development of support of equestrian education.

It has made many donations to the Riding for the Disabled Association, particularly to its Riding School on Wormwood Scrubs. It has developed strong relationships with the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery and with the Household Cavalry. It has created an affiliation with an Army Cadet Force detachment in Tottenham, itself linked to The Blues and Royals. It supports riding clubs for young people in two inner city areas of London, It has made many distinguished men and women, prominent in the world of the horse, Honorary Freeman or Honorary Liverymen - the most notable example being HRH The Princess Royal, Master in 1992.

The company makes an annual award to the Loriners' European Young Rider, gives annual prizes for the best recruit of The King's Troop & The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, gives an award at the Gatcombe Park Festival of Eventing and presents the Loriners' Cup at the Combined Services annual inter-service competition.

The Company has promoted British Standards for saddle trees and has funded veterinary research at Cambridge University.

Mention of that educational establishment is my cue to hand you over to Tricia Nassau Williams.

TNW

6. The bit, the principal item of lorinery

Lorinery encompasses **all** the metal work used to saddle and harness the horse. This includes harness and bridle furniture, saddle trees, stirrups and spurs. It is however **the horses bit** that is the subject of the greatest attention.

Interest in bits and biting has been experiencing something of a renaissance in recent years, with new and diverse designs of bits being made available and marketed. In fact at this time there is quite a "buzz" about biting. In a commercial world where each new product must be promoted this can sometimes lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation by the end user – the rider.

7. Education in the increasingly complex topic of bits and biting

The Loriners' Company today strives to serve both the retailer and the end-user by providing a better understanding of the tools of our trade

Many of the riding public are confused and bemused by the vast array of seemingly endless different designs of horse bit. This is where the Loriners' Company **functions at its best by supporting welfare, safety and performance through education.** Education can provide a clear explanation of all of the issues concerning the biting of the horse including the work of the Equine Dental Technician – and consideration of the horse's individual conformation and the understanding of the role that the rider must play in the successful biting the horse.

There is a need to acknowledge that bridling and biting will only be as successful as the skill of horseman or woman at the other ends of the reins. Bits are only a **communication tool**, and one that will rely on the rider **listening** to the horse as well as commanding it; in short, the rider can not purchase a successful answer however well designed or costly an item it may be.

As with any **specialist topic, ideas and opinions will vary**, but with a simple foundation of understanding upon which to build further knowledge, it is possible to make the selecting, fitting and use of bitted and bitless bridles much less confusing for the rider, and thus beneficial to the horse.

8. Courses provided by the Company

Lorinery Retailing – the British Equestrian Trade Association

The Company provides both funding assistance for and presents this one day course that is aimed at the saddlery retailer. Its primary goal is to assist retailers with the knowledge required to provide their customers with sound biting information and advice on selection.

Cordwainers at Capel Manor College

The Company is now in its tenth year of presenting the Lorinery module of this two year saddlery craft course. Based at Capel Manor College in Enfield the Lorinery tuition provides a sound spring board from which to launch the College's talented young saddlers into a commercial environment. Assisting them with a rounded understanding of lorinery items in their craft and thier implementation.

Lorinery for the Riding Public

This two day course, also held at Capel Manor College, is for anyone wishing to look further into all the aspects of biting and saddling the horse. A wide range of delegates have attended this including saddlers, riding instructors, Equine Dental Technicians, Equine Physiotherapists as well as members of the riding public.

9. The Pony Club

Lorinery Achievement Badge – launched in 2008 and accompanied by a Lorinery Achievement *Badge Buddy* Book, this provides grass roots instruction on bits and biting for our adult riders of the future.

Polocrosse Project – the company is providing matched funding to the set up cost of Polo Crosse equipment for branches of the Pony Club across the UK. Twenty new branches across the UK have now joined this fast-growing and affordable sport

Pony Club Polo – sponsorship provision and an award for the winning team.

Pony Club Publications – the company has assisted the Pony Club by providing editorial contributions as requested for Pony Club publications.

Instructors' Courses – the Company has funded a successful pilot course for Young Instructors and is sponsoring the first full course this year.

10. British Horse Society

Regional CPD for Instructors in 2009 (Continual Professional Development) on saddlery & lorinery. The company is assisting by providing lectures for several of the BHS **regional instructor's seminars** this year.

11. Seminars

The company has run seminars in association with the **B.H.S** and also the **Archaeological Leather Group**. These have brought together a wide range of delegates that mixed riders and trainers along with historians and archaeologists and proved to be an interesting "melting pot" of interest and areas of specialism.

The Society of Master Saddlery

New for 2009 is a course designed to give the working saddler detailed information on bridle measuring, fitting and selection. Included in this will be section on lorinery provided by the company.

12. Lorinery Information Source, and provision of editorials and lectures

Via phone and the internet the Company offers information and links to a wide range of contacts throughout equestrianism. These vary from trade inquiries to historical, archaeological ones as well as biting advice. The company is able to provide an independent non product linked viewpoint on these subjects.

The company frequently provides editorials and lectures as requested by equestrian publications and associations. In the last twelve months some of these have included; the National Pony Society, the British Skewbald & Piebald Association, BHS affiliated riding clubs, Your Horse Live, Contour Events and equestrian magazines etc.

13. Stirrups for the Queen's State Coach

While casting and stamping of saddlery furniture (buckles, clips etc) is still carried out in this country by a small number of manufactures the vast majority of the Lorinery (bits, stirrups, spurs & buckles) is imported from the Far East. The days of producing individually hand forged bits to special order are no longer economically viable and consequently all but gone.

The company did however commission the production of a set of gold plated stirrups as a gift to Her Majesty The Queen. These were for the postilion riders of the Gold State Coach.

Cast via the lost wax process, exquisitely finished and then coated in gold leaf these were indeed a testament to the craft & skill still available in this country today.

The items mentioned are examples of the Company's continuing commitment both to those projects that incorporate its craft as well as providing assistance to all involved in equestrianism.

Thank you

REPORT ON HONG KONG 2008 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES 2008

Will Connell, World Class Performance Director, BEF

The Challenges

Distance from GBR to Hong Kong

Import/export; the resident equine population

The climate

Space on the site

Separation from BOA/BPA in Beijing

The Test Event

Identified [heat & humidity](#) as a prime environmental factor

As such windows for competition were early am and late pm

Effective cooling of equine was paramount and Team GBR developed excellent processes for this by getting the combination of cooling with water and fans, focus of where to apply water to effectively cool the equine, and walking just right

Air quality very carefully monitored in all areas, indoors and out

Equine exertion tested on XC course with heart rate monitors

The Plan

Equines had to be fitter than usual. The eventing equines were fitter than turned out to be required because the XC was 8 minutes not 10 minutes

All equines to have thoroughly clean airways

Fitness was to peak at pre export quarantine and gradually build up on arrival at HK

Detailed monitoring daily including blood sampling, body weight, water consumption, urine passed, temperature, food offered, food taken

Riders were fitter

CAN DO attitude

Getting There

6000 miles

All horses (and riders!) travelled extremely well

Air conditioned horseboxes awaited arrival at HK

All forage was flown in and kept in ordinary corn bins

Lack of space

The equestrian area at the racecourse was extremely compact but turned out to work very well

Two containers were converted to be a lounge and a tack/store room

Separation from BOA/BPA

More challenging for staff

Communications more difficult

It created additional tasks and required more accreditation

But it was not felt that equestrianism "missed out"

Had own "opening ceremony"

Execution

Selection – early selection adopted but will be reviewed

Soundness issues presented themselves in a couple of cases

Performance was on par with team expectations but public expectations were higher, especially in eventing. Could have done better.

Last minute XC course changes created unnecessary challenges

Funding

Funding for the next cycle (2009 – 2013) to mean increased resources but increased responsibility and accountability

Amount £17, 318,60

Info: www.bef.co.uk and www.equestrianteamgbr.co.uk

PREPARATION FOR OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES 2012

Tim Hadaway, Equestrian Manager, London Organising Committee

Why Greenwich Park?

- London is committed to delivering a 'compact Games' with majority of venues sited within or near to Olympic Park in Stratford. For equestrian sport Greenwich offers an opportunity to demonstrate to the IOC that it can be delivered at the heart of the Games ensuring a true Olympic experience for athletes, grooms, owners and spectators.
- London is also committed to delivering a 'Green Games' with access to venues focussed around public transport. No established equestrian venues offer the potential Greenwich does in this respect.
- The Games are all about sport. Site does not need to accommodate other attractions often associated with traditional equestrian events such as trade stands and country fairs.
- Being a location that is central, of a spectacular nature and easily accessible by an inner city population otherwise not normally exposed to equestrian sport, ensures an unparalleled opportunity to increase awareness of and participation in the sport.
- Building on this opportunity the BEF are driving a project to increase and broaden participation including working with Greenwich Council to develop a new community riding centre and establishing a schools programme introducing groups of children across London to riding.
- Greenwich offers the ability to co-locate the jumping, running and shooting elements of Modern Pentathlon. Total cost to LOCOG would increase significantly should equestrian sports be located outside London as an additional venue would have to be developed for this sport within London due to competitors needing to complete all 5 disciplines in one day. The remaining Modern Pentathlon disciplines are due to take place within the Olympic Park.
- Scale of an Olympic equestrian facility far exceeds that which is easily sustainable in legacy. Developing a temporary facility removes the risk of leaving behind a 'white elephant' venue. Worth noting that all major equestrian events in the UK are delivered each year using overlay and therefore they essentially constitute temporary venues.

Site feasibility:

- Current plans accommodate the FEI specification for an Olympic venue. Both the International and British Equestrian Federations support the choice of Greenwich.
- The site will make good use of existing buildings accommodating the grooms in a first class hotel on site, Olympic Family hospitality in Queens House and various offices and meeting rooms within the buildings of the National Maritime Museum.

- The site will be compact ensuring an operationally sound venue convenient for athletes, grooms, officials and spectators alike.
- The Park offers an inspirational setting for the cross country course, accommodating the appropriate distance and making excellent use of the many natural and beautiful parkland features.
- Arena capacity of 23,000 is comfortably serviced by the public transport system.
- Capacity for cross country is yet to be finalised but will significantly exceed the bid commitment of 30,000 which simply reflected the international federation's minimum requirement at the time. Final number likely to be determined by transport capacity bearing in mind London's commitment to delivering a 'green games', final course and venue design, and security considerations.

Local issues:

- **Damage to park, archaeology, trees and other ecological concerns** – no trees will be cut down, the project is subject to town planning with full environmental impact assessment required, working closely with Royal Parks and all other statutory bodies to ensure no long term impact on the Park's ecology and heritage.
- **Park closures** – cordoning off elements of Park from April for venue build but full park closure not planned until security screening during first half of July, plan to open up parts of the Park from late August
- **Road closures** – none anticipated prior to Games period, transport assessment ongoing to determine closures during Games time
- **Transport issues** – transport plan available for consultation during 2009, 50% increased capacity planned for the DLR

Equestrian issues:

- Equestrian community concerned at a lack of any **legacy**. Legacy will include:
 - Equipment redistribution including jumps (show jumping and cross country), arena surface, dressage arenas etc
 - BEF project to increase and broaden participation including working with Greenwich Council to develop new community riding centre and launch of schools programme introducing school children across London to riding
 - Exploring with Royal Parks potential to generate long term benefits for the Park and its users – ground improvement, irrigation and other services, new children's play area
- Further concern expressed over insufficient **spectator capacity** particularly on cross country day:
 - Main arena capacity of 23,000 is much larger than any previous equestrian event in this country, resulting in well over 200,000 ticketed opportunities across the 10 competition days scheduled during the Games

- o Modelling is ongoing to determine final number for cross country day – will maximise use of main arena (23k) with big screens and course running through, number in open Park will likely be determined by transport solutions, course and venue design and security considerations (nb. number of paying spectators at Badminton and Burghley is lower than the current public perception and therefore numbers at Greenwich are likely to be closer to these events than commonly expected)

Key Facts

Venue:	Greenwich Park
Sports:	Olympic Equestrian – Eventing, Dressage &
Jumping	Olympic Modern Pentathlon – Jumping, Running &
Shooting	Paralympic Equestrian – Dressage
Athletes:	Olympic – 200 (plus 25 reserve) Paralympic – 75
Horses:	Olympic – 200 (plus 25 reserve) Paralympic – 75
Spectator Capacity:	Main Arena – 23,000 Cross Country (Greenwich Park) – to be determined
Dates of competition: (provisional)	Olympic – Sun 29 th July to Fri 10 th August 2012 Paralympic – Fri 31 st August to Tues 4 th September
No. of sessions:	11 Olympic competition sessions 5 Paralympic competition sessions

FOOT BALANCE AND LAMENESS IN RIDING SCHOOL HORSES

THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY UNDERGRADUATE PRESENTATION 2009

Laura Corbin, Eqvalan Duo Equine Thesis of the Year Winner

Correct foot balance in the horse is the subject of much debate amongst both veterinarians and farriers (Ovniczek *et al.* 1995). There is a general consensus that improper foot balance is a major contributing factor in many cases of lameness as well as being an important contributor in the development of specific diseases of the foot (Parks 2005). A majority of research aimed at identifying links between poor foot balance and lameness or injury has been carried out in racehorses. Epidemiological studies have identified low hoof angles (Kane *et al.* 1998; Kobluk *et al.* 1990) and large toe-heel angle differences (Kane *et al.* 1998; McIlwraith *et al.* 2003) as risk factors for injury. Numerous experimental studies have been carried out in order to study the effects of imbalance on the structures of the foot and limb; such studies have shown the considerable impact that alterations in hoof angle can have on joint angles (Chateau *et al.* 2004) and tendon strain (Thompson *et al.* 1993).

Definitions of foot balance include 'the equal distribution of weight over the foot' (Turner 1992) and 'hoof preparation that enhances performance and interferes minimally with long term athletic ability' (Balch *et al.* 1997). There is general agreement that whilst absolute balance is the ideal, limitations - due mainly to unfavourable conformational characteristics, mean that this is not always achievable and it is more important that shoe/foot configuration is appropriate for the horse as an individual (Moyer 1996). Until relatively recently, the assessment of foot balance was largely subjective (Wilson *et al.* 1998). It has now been recognised that assessment of foot balance using hoof measurements may be a more satisfactory method (Turner 1992, 1996). However, there is no standard methodology for assessing a horse's foot balance from such measurements. One aim of this study was to develop a quantitative definition of foot balance based on direct measurements of the foot such that multiple horses could be assessed by the same criteria using a repeatable and reliable method. In addition the method developed was to be used to investigate the relationship between foot balance and lameness in riding school horses.

A scoring system was devised for assessing foot balance and was based on the presence or absence of six abnormalities of the foot described in the literature as being indicative of poor foot balance. Definitions of the

abnormalities used were those presented by Turner (1992, 1996). A total of 81 riding school horses were recruited from two populations and foot imbalance scores calculated. Horses were also categorised according to their recent lameness histories.

Results showed that lame and chronically lame horses tended to have significantly worse foot balance (according to the specific criteria used in this study) than non-lame horses. There was however no evidence of a difference in mean hoof angle between horses in the different lameness categories (as previously observed in racehorses). There was no difference in foot imbalance scores of horses in the two populations and none of the horses were without any of the abnormalities considered (i.e. an imbalance score of zero). A majority of the abnormalities occurred more frequently in lame horses than in non-lame horses, cases of sheared heels in particular appeared to be over-represented in the lame groups.

The results of this study emphasise the importance of maintaining good foot balance in order to prevent lameness in riding school horses. Ensuring horses have good foot balance could reduce the incidence of lameness resulting in increased welfare and decreased costs, particularly in the case of chronic conditions such as navicular syndrome. Turner and Stork (1988) concluded that hoof abnormalities should be corrected whenever encountered in order to decrease the chances of future lameness and whilst this study supports these views, it is important to acknowledge the fact that correcting poor foot balance is rarely straight forward. Curtis (1999) points out that while a large proportion of lamenesses seen could be avoided or treated by simple compliance with the rules governing foot balance, it must be borne in mind that many hoof balance problems are caused by poor leg conformation. With many conformational problems being insurmountable (Curtis 1999) it is important that horses are carefully selected in terms of their conformation.

There is considerable scope for more research to be conducted in the area of foot balance in riding school horses. Potentially the most useful follow up study would be a prospective study which would enable considerably more information to be collected regarding the incidences of lameness suffered by subjects; collaborative work with farriers might be most productive. In the future methods such as those described here might be applied to a range of situations including farriery training and conformation assessment for studbooks or prior to purchasing.

HORSES IN THE RECESSION

Graham Cory, Chief Executive British Horse Society

The Effects of the Recession

1. The recession is global and affects just about every sector of the economy, although some sectors will be hit harder than others: banking and construction are predictable casualties, whilst food retailing is faring less badly.
2. We have tended to reassure ourselves that equestrians will always put their horses first, foregoing holidays and personal luxuries for the sake of their horses and their riding. But true though that may be, it goes only so far: if outgoings eventually exceed incomings, expenditure on horses will have to be curtailed. This will become even more inevitable if the horse owner loses his or her job, or if the aggregated family income is reduced.
3. Although my colleagues on the NEF Organising Committee besought me not to make this presentation too gloomy, we should not delude ourselves into believing that the equestrian sector will escape the pain. It won't. At the same time as the capacity to meet day to day expenses comes under pressure, feed and bedding costs, farriery and veterinary fees and, of course, transport costs conspire to put horse owners under significant strain. And a rather obvious example of the way in which recession in another part of the economy impacts adversely on the equestrian sector is the availability (and therefore the cost) of wood shavings. The downturn in building activity inevitably leads to a reduction in the by-products of construction, and reduced supply will inevitably push up prices. (Here, if you need one, is proof that RPI, which is reducing, is not mirrored in all parts of the economy.)
4. As regards the various equestrian organisations, The British Horse Society fully expects to have to work twice as hard to achieve half as much in terms of membership recruitment and retention. And although BHS membership is still well up on this time last year, with some 750 members added to the roll in the last two months alone, we are far from confident that this state of affairs will persist. I know that colleagues in other equestrian membership organisations are budgeting on the basis that membership levels will actually decrease in 2009 and possibly 2010. So I am sure the BHS is not alone in looking for every opportunity to strip costs out of the operation whilst at the same time maintaining the services for which our members pay their subscriptions. Indeed, it is central to our strategy for 2009 and 2010 that the BHS must, by virtue of the range and quality of its offerings,

become even more indispensable to every horse owner and rider, rather than the be first thing to be pruned when budgets get tight.

Surviving the credit crunch

5. So much for the organisations. What about owners and riders themselves? The daily cost of keeping a horse or pony can mount up, particularly so during the winter months when additional feed and bedding are usually required. Inevitably at this time of year there will also be occasional unexpected costs, such as lost shoes and repairs to damaged rugs. Every winter we see an increase in calls from horse owners who are struggling financially, or who simply cannot find the extra time required to give their horse or pony the additional care required.
6. However, over the last few months the Welfare Department has received a marked increase in calls from horse owners who are becoming increasingly concerned about how they will be able to afford to keep their horses in the current economic climate. We are already seeing an increase in abandoned horses and the situation is unlikely to improve in the near future.
7. We have therefore put together a list of suggestions to help horse owners save money without cutting corners, and thus compromising welfare. Sometimes making small changes can make a big difference. Our Top Tips for surviving the credit crunch are as follows:

- **Evaluate your horse's diet**

Does your horse really need expensive concentrate feeds and mixes? Many horses can thrive on diets that just include forage. In fact, this is better for their digestive health. Some horses do need to receive hard feed, such as aged horses and those in hard work, but many are fine on good quality forage, which is, of course, much cheaper. If you are going to make changes to your horse's diet, these should always be done gradually and it is vital to manage your horse's weight to ensure he stays at the right level of condition. Most feed companies have helplines that will offer impartial advice to owners looking to reduce their feeding bills and, of course, the BHS Welfare Department will be able to provide information and guidance.

- **Don't supplement your bills unnecessarily**

There are hundreds of different feed supplements, powders and potions on the market, given to horses for a myriad of different reasons. These are rarely cheap, so next time you find yourself about to fork out for something, ask yourself if your horse really needs it. There's a good chance he doesn't and you could save a few pounds. Many of the supplements available have little or no scientific proof to back up their

claims, so you have no way of knowing if you are getting value for your money or simply pouring it down the drain. It's well worth spending a little time researching how useful the supplement really is and asking your vet for their opinion before handing over your cash.

Even where supplements are proven to work, many horse owners feed them unnecessarily. A balanced diet should provide everything that a horse needs without resorting to expensive supplements. However, there will always be animals with a genuine and specific need for extras – so talk to your vet or a nutritionist if you're concerned.

- **Make your horse sing for his supper**

If you feed forage in a haynet, try using one with small holes, or put one haynet inside another. This makes it harder for your horse to get the hay out, which has two benefits. Firstly, it will keep him busy – great for his psychological well-being. Secondly, it means your horse will be less likely to spend most of the night spreading his forage throughout his bed – so you can save money on both hay and bedding. Of course, it is essential not to make it too hard for him to eat his fill and, as ever, you should monitor his weight and condition.

- **Look to the long term**

Although quite costly to install, it may be worth considering using rubber matting in your stables. Stables with rubber matting require much less bedding (straw or shavings) than those without so, over time, the mats will pay for themselves with reduced bedding costs. Moreover, it reduces the time taken to muck out each morning, although it is important to make sure that the mats are maintained correctly.

- **Watch your worming**

Adequate worm control is essential and part of any horse owner's duty of care to ensure the animal's welfare. However, we are often guilty of overusing wormers, which is bad news for our pockets and, in fact, it contributes to resistance against worming products. You can save money by giving your horse the correct amount of wormer according to his weight. Over-estimating the dose won't benefit your horse and just wastes cash. Make sure that you worm strategically – use the right product at the right time of year. Your vet can advise you on which products to use, and when to use them – as can BHS Welfare.

Rather than routinely administering a dose of wormer, consider getting your horse's faecal egg counts done regularly. This is cheaper than buying a wormer and means you can dose your horse only when he actually needs it.

- **Let your horse be a horse**

A horse in a stable is more expensive than one in a field when you factor in the cost of bedding and feed. So, to save money, turn your horse out as much as possible. Most horses can thrive outdoors in almost all weather, provided they have access to good quality forage, hard standing, a good shelter and are rugged appropriately. Of course, this isn't suitable for all horses, particularly if they are elderly or poor-doers, but it does have the added benefit of allowing the horse to meet his behavioural needs for exercise, foraging and socialising. Turnout can be easy on your pocket and great for your horse!

- **Get by with a little help from your friends**

Clubbing together with friends means you can buy in bulk and obtain discounts on items such as feed, hay, bedding and wormers. It might also be a good idea to try and car-share on the way to the yard or tack shop to save on fuel costs. If you don't know many other horsy people in your area, why not get involved with your BHS county committee where you are bound to meet like-minded people?

- **Make do and mend**

Remember that your horse doesn't care what he looks like so there is no need to spend a fortune on fancy rugs and equipment just because it's stylish. What matters is that your horse is warm and well looked after. So, save money by getting your rugs repaired and re-proofed, and keep your tack in good condition with regular cleaning. It's a lot cheaper than buying new and your horse won't thank you for spending a fortune on the latest fashions.

- **Have a clearout**

Does your horse actually need 17 different rugs? Is it really worth hanging on to the saddle that doesn't fit any of your horses just in case it might come in useful later on? Be ruthless and have a good clearout of your horsy tack and equipment – it's amazing how you can accumulate a huge amount of stuff you never use. When you've identified what you don't need, sell it on an internet auction site or through the local paper. OK, it might not make you a fortune, but it'll pay a few feed bills over the winter.

- **Share and share alike**

Getting a sharer for your horse may seem like many owner's worst nightmare, but it can work well and save you an awful lot of money as long as you go into it with your eyes open. The right sharer will contribute towards costs and can save time with stable duties and exercising your horse. It's important to ensure you get the right sharer

– one that will get on with you and your horse and that you can rely on. This might take a while, so don't leave your search until you're desperate for the extra income.

It's also vital to make it clear where everyone stands – put everything in writing and have a signed agreement that covers who is responsible for which costs, stable duties – and when the sharer has access to the horse. Also, make sure you include any restrictions on the use of the horse – for example, perhaps he is not sound to jump or can't be hacked out alone.

BHS Welfare are happy to discuss sharer agreements with anyone who might be considering this course of action.

Finally, if you do get a sharer – and it has worked successfully for a great many people – remember that they are paying for their access to the horse, so allow them to enjoy him and try not to interfere. You could spend the extra free time you will have counting the money that you've saved!

- **Saving on the move**

There are many ways to cut down costs on the move, whether it's just out hacking or transporting horses in a lorry. Some of the measures you could take include:

- Tax your lorry for six months rather than 12. This does work out slightly more expensive over a year, but spreads the cost.
- Save on tax by taking your lorry off the road when you're not using it – perhaps in the winter for many of us, and the summer for hunters.
- Watch your tyres – making sure tyres are correctly inflated and leaving your lorry or trailer on hard standing when not in use will help tyres to last longer and save on costly replacements.
- Save fuel on travelling to shows and paying entry fees – find out where your local bridleways and safe off-road equestrian routes are by contacting our GIS Officer and ride or carriage drive, explore and keep you and your horse fit for free (contact Sarah Shackleton with your postcode on emagin@bhs.org.uk or call 01926 707812).
- When hacking out, try to keep roadwork to a minimum – this will keep the wear and tear down on your horse's shoes and help them to last longer. Regular foot care from a registered farrier remains essential however.

For further details and advice contact BHS Welfare on 01926 707804 or visit www.bhs.org.uk

BEVA/BVA-AWF STUDY ON RECOVERY FROM ACUTE PASTURE-ASSOCIATED LAMINITIS IN HORSES AND PONIES MANAGED IN FIRST OPINION PRACTICE

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Summary

107 cases of acute pasture-associated laminitis were recruited from first opinion practice to study factors associated with clinical severity, survival and return to ridden exercise. There were 43 mares and 64 geldings, median age 11 years. 31% were small ponies, 42% large ponies/cobs, 16% small horses and 11% large horses. 90% had acute laminitis. 61% were mild (Obel grade 1 or 2) and 29% were severe (Obel grade 3 or 4). 40% had previously had laminitis and were significantly less likely to have severe laminitis than those which had not. 83% were overweight and there was a trend towards severe laminitis cases having a higher body mass index (BMI). Eight weeks after disease onset, 95% were alive. Lower body weight, optimal body condition, mild rather than severe laminitis and acute/chronic founder were significantly associated with survival. There was a trend towards treatment with the drug acepromazine being associated with survival. 59% were being ridden again; this was 2.6 times more likely in animals without previous laminitis. The clinical outcome was judged by a panel of three veterinarians as good in 72% of cases. Clinical outcome was significantly associated with horse type; outcome was bad in none of the small horses compared with 34.1% of large ponies/cobs, 32.4% of small

ponies and 30.0% of large horses. The take home message for horse owners is that laminitis may be more severe in ponies, large breeds of horse and overweight individuals and that overweight horses that get laminitis are more likely to be euthanased.

VACCINATION OVERVIEW

Brigadier Paul Jepson MRCVS, Chief Executive The Horse Trust

Vaccination is universally recognised as the key to disease prevention. Sometimes called immunisation, it is the administration of an agent (the vaccine) that stimulates the body's own immune system to protect itself against disease. Typically this is disease caused by infection with viruses and bacteria but there are increasing scope to apply the principle to other types of disease including cancer.

The body's immune reaction can be divided into the innate response and an adaptive response. The innate system is an inflammatory response to what it identifies as an invasion of foreign material called an antigen. The response is non specific, immediate and requires no previous exposure to that antigen. For example "clean" young foals, 2-3 months old, challenged with Equine Herpes Virus will develop the disease but recover before any specific antibody is produced. The "adaptive" response is specific to a particular antigen, for example the toxin causing tetanus or parts of the bacterium causing strangles. It is slow, taking days to produce circulating antibodies but it does get better each time it is challenged and after the first exposure to a specific antigen it can prevent the disease developing.

The ideal vaccine is effective, long lasting and safe. They are broadly classified as either dead or live. Dead vaccines cannot produce infectious disease but they do require at least 2 doses, and then boosters to remain effective. To enhance the stimulation of the immune system and the efficiency of the dead vaccine it is mixed with an adjuvant and manufacturers use different adjuvants varying from simple irritants (Alum) to the sophisticated ISCOM (Immune stimulating complex) and Carbopol. Live vaccines replicate in the body simulating infection and stimulating immunity but without disease. They have to be modified in some way to make them safe and this is where a lot of development is currently focused, typically tagging DNA from the antigen onto a harmless live carrier virus such as Canary Pox.

Is vaccination safe? The answer to this is almost invariably yes. It is not possible to over vaccinate and potential vaccines are subject to stringent testing before licensing. There are exceptions such as the live African Horse Sickness vaccine which can cause the disease and fatalities but when faced with the alternative it still makes vaccination a sensible choice.

Are vaccines effective? Again the answer is almost invariably yes, but for the vaccine to work and stimulate immunity, the animal has to be in good health to react. It is important that the vaccine is matched to the microorganism that it is designed to protect against. Influenza viruses are

notorious for evolving, a process called "antigenic drift", and the manufacturers constantly struggle to make sure their vaccines are matched to what is perceived as the current threat based on information from the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) and our own Animal Health Trust. There are currently no recommended changes to the composition of influenza vaccine.

What of the future? The refining of existing vaccines and the development of new vaccines continues. There are newly licensed, highly effective, vaccines to protect against the threat of West Nile Virus. There is the exciting prospect of vaccines against Grass Sickness, sarcoids, RAO (heaves), and sweet itch. The value of vaccines has never been better illustrated than by our need to have a safe and effective vaccine against African Horse Sickness which could decimate our horse population and the whole equestrian industry. Such is the threat that we have secured the establishment of an EU bank of vaccine for use in controlling an outbreak in Europe. Sadly the existing vaccine is neither very safe nor very effective but we have every reason to believe that a new generation of high tech African Horse Sickness vaccines will be available within a few years.

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NOTICES

**The National Equine Forum is run in conjunction with the
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**If you wish to suggest topics for future Forums please e-mail:
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