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FEI™ UPDATE

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

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A MESSAGE FROM DR MARK HART, CHAIR OF FEI MEDICAL COMMITTEE



Dear friends, colleagues, and equestrian sport enthusiasts,

On behalf of the FEI, I write to you in the beginning of the New Year to reiterate and remind each and every one of you of our responsibility, as both a community and individuals, in the face of this global pandemic.

Over the past year, Covid-19 has tested our resilience, our public systems, and our civic duty and unfortunately, it will continue to do so for the months to come. And although there is now light at the end of the tunnel with the recent approval of several highly effective and safe vaccines, there is still much work to be done until adequate numbers of people can be vaccinated to control this pandemic.

In addition to the recent increase in Covid-19 infection rates, hospitalisations and deaths, there is concerning news of new virus strains. As expected, all RNA viruses such as Covid-19 have naturally occurring viral mutations and several variants have been found over the past month which appear to be much more transmissible but fortunately not more lethal. To date, there is no evidence that the current approved vaccines are any less effective against these variants and there are multiple ongoing surveillance programmes monitoring these developments.

It is crucial we do not let our guard down prematurely because of pandemic fatigue. So far, we have shown our strength as a community. We were quick to react in 2020 when the whole world and sporting industry went into complete lockdown. We established a thorough and comprehensive [Return to Play Policy](#) to supplement local/national public health measures, with additional equestrian specific guidelines to ensure we adequately addressed issues for all participants.

We rallied together and went above and beyond national requirements to make our equestrian Events safe, so that our sport could continue and so that the livelihoods and dreams of so many individuals and organisations could be protected. This was no easy feat and we should be proud of all we have achieved up to now. For this, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the global equestrian community for embracing all the mitigation measures and consistently working to push forward despite the incredibly challenging circumstances.

The FEI has remained fully focused when it comes to ensuring the safety of all participants at our Events, and has been diligently tracking reports of non-compliance to address concerns and find solutions.

As I have said before, our social responsibility far outweighs our professional and sporting goals - but they are not incompatible. We have shown this through the Events that our loyal Organisers have managed to host since the outbreak began. However, we must continue to show our determination to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 at Events by rigorously applying all of the rules and respecting local restrictions and FEI guidelines.

We have all heard alarming reports of non-compliance in all areas of life. Whatever role you play at a show - Organiser, Athlete, Groom and/or support personnel, Owner, Official, Veterinarian or a Volunteer - don't let your behaviour result in an FEI Event becoming a super-spreader event.

There is no room for complacency, we must remain steadfast. Wear a mask, socially distance, avoid group gatherings whenever possible and frequently wash your hands, and encourage others to do the same. The actions of every individual and every community will affect the ultimate outcome and timeline of this pandemic. It is essential we stand together, united in our resolve to reduce the transmission and spread of Covid-19.

This is a responsibility we all bear and we must embrace it wholeheartedly.

I strongly recommend that you visit the FEI's [Return to Play](#) hub which is updated regularly and where you will find a vast array of information, guidelines and requirements. Should you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact [Catherine Bollon](#).

Once again, thank you for your time, your understanding, and your commitment to the sport and to the well-being of every individual in our community.

Play Safe and continue to make us proud!

Kind regards,



Dr Mark Hart
Chair, FEI Medical Committee

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