



Final Report

General Assembly (Mexico)

November 2023

Professor Nat Waran

(Chair of the EEWB)

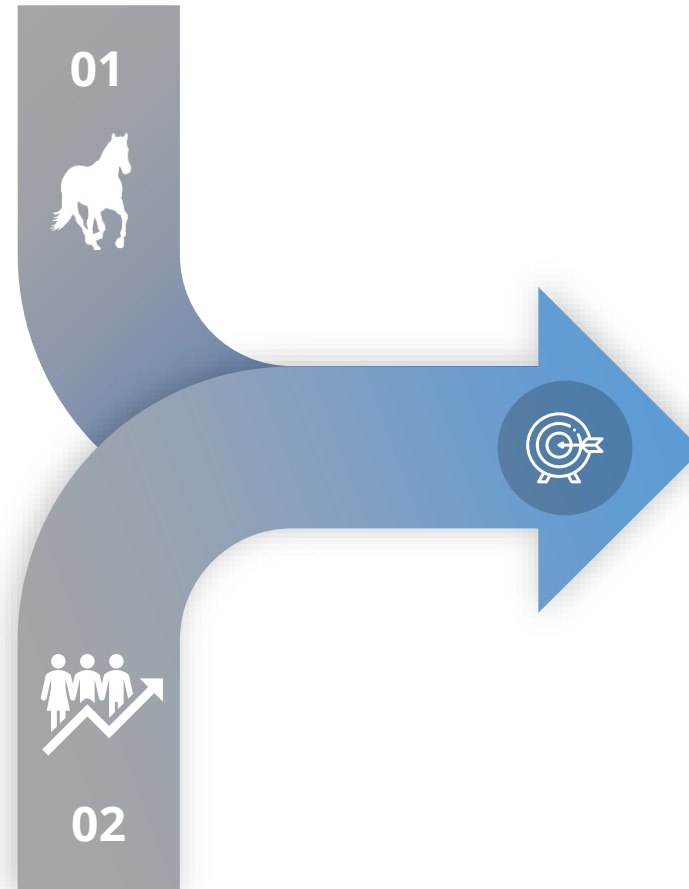
EEWB Commission - Objectives

Positive welfare

To ensure that horses involved in sport can experience positive welfare throughout their lives

Guide FEI

To guide FEI regulations, policies and practices and inform wider-reaching advocacy and information



Social Licence to Operate

To ensure continued social acceptance of the involvement of horses in sport

Social Licence to Operate

Social
Licence

Social
Control

Public
Acceptance

Approval

Self – Regulation

Freedom to
Operate



Tipping point

Social Licence plays a significant role in which industries thrive, and which ones fail

Rejection

Berger 2011

Legislation

Banned



2023 Public/Equestrian concerns regarding the welfare of horses in sport

The Public's Perception of Horses in Sport

New research shows that while public opinion still supports riding horses, concerns around welfare in sport remain.



Equestrian sport is being encouraged to continue being 'brave and proactive' on welfare to maintain public acceptance. (Petra Eckert - stock.adobe.com)
By: World Horse Welfare | June 16, 2023

Around 60% of **the** general public are still not content with the status quo: two in five (40%) say they would support the continued involvement of horses in sport only if their welfare was improved (*World Horse Welfare Survey Results May 2023*)

Participants' ideal of prioritising horse welfare does not align with their practice; there is inconsistency between what participants share publicly and what they think privately about horse welfare (*Luke et al., 2023*).

The growing misalignment between the industry's understanding of horse welfare and society's changing views fuel the increasing threat to the industry's social licence to operate (*Douglas et al 2023*)

Animal Welfare

How equestrians conceptualise horse welfare: Does it facilitate or hinder change?

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 01 September 2023

Karen L Luke , Andrea Rawluk , Tina McAdie , Bradley P Smith and Amanda K Warren-Smith

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Abstract

More than ever the welfare of horses in equestrian sport is in the spotlight. In response

Open Access Article

A Delphi Study to Determine International and National Equestrian Expert Opinions on Domains and Sub-Domains Essential to Managing Sporthorse Health and Welfare in the Olympic Disciplines

by [Jane M. Williams](#)^{1,*}, [Lise C. Berg](#)^{2,†}, [Hilary M. Clayton](#)^{3,†}, [Katharina Kirsch](#)^{4,†}, [David Marlin](#)^{5,†}, [Hayley Randle](#)^{6,†}, [Lars Roepstroff](#)^{7,†}, [Marianne Sloet van Oldruitenborgh-Oosterbaan](#)^{8,†} and [Michael A. Weishaupt](#)^{9,†}

Charles Sturt leads international collaboration exploring positive emotion in Thoroughbred horses

11 MAY 2023



[Curtis K. Heleski](#)

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jevs.2023.104266>

Gloucester GL19 3BE, UK
 University of Copenhagen, Højebakkegaards Alle 5, 2630 Taastrup,
 Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
 Institute for Agricultural Engineering and Bioeconomy (ATB), Max-
 y
 ridge CB4 0WZ, UK
 Veterinary Sciences, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW

Public Sport—Sor

Swedish Research Council

[Start](#) / [Swecris](#) / The bit(less) debate and how to facilitate human behaviour change to improve ...

RESEARCH PROJECT | 1 January 2024–31 December 2026

The bit(less) debate and how to facilitate human behaviour change to improve horse welfare

A concerning high percentage, i.e. 35-80% of sports horses suffer from mouth injuries. Limited research has addressed the causes of these injuries, although such knowledge would improve horse welfare. Certain types of bits can increase the risk, as can improper fit or use of the bit and associated rein tension.

A concerning high percentage, i.e. 35-80% of sports horses suffer from mouth injuries.

[View PDF](#) Download full issue



Applied Animal Behaviour Science
 Volume 259, February 2023, 105855



Bit use and its relevance for rider safety, rider satisfaction and horse welfare in equestrian sport

[Karen L. Luke](#)^a, [Tina McAdie](#)^a, [Amanda K. Warren-Smith](#)^b, [Bradley P. Smith](#)^a

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2023.105855>

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Highlights

- Bitless horses had better welfare during riding compared with bitted horses.

Equestrian Sports and Its Implications for Equine Welfare

[Heidrun Gehlen](#)^{*}

3 / Approved: 23 August 2023 / Online: 24 August 2023 (07:59:33 CEST)

Gehlen, H. The Use of Bits in Equestrian Sports and Its Implications for Equine Welfare. *Preprints* 2023, 20944/preprints202308.1725.v1 [Copy](#)

TOTAL
 2, gate bit use in equestrian sports, focusing on welfare and performance as bit use has been subject of debate. The literature review, survey, and video analyses. Research on physiological and behavioral effects of bit use, discussing and. The survey involved 250 equestrians, gathering data on experiences, opinions, and practices regarding bit PROJ ferent bits are used during competitions and that riders prioritize factors like horse satisfaction, consistent 2023 when riding at home, while show use focusses on factors like control. Video analyses showed high conformity RESE summer, indicating reliability and validity. Palham and loose ring bits were most used, while 3-ring and full cheek

EEWB Commission- July and August 2022

First online meeting, followed by First in-person workshop held by Commission in Lausanne.



AGENDA EEW COMMISSION MEETING		AGENDA EEW COMMISSION MEETING		AGENDA EEW COMMISSION MEETING		AGENDA EEW COMMISSION MEETING																																						
FEI FEDÉRATION ÉQUESTRE INTERNATIONALE		FEI FEDÉRATION ÉQUESTRE INTERNATIONALE		FEI FEDÉRATION ÉQUESTRE INTERNATIONALE		FEI FEDÉRATION ÉQUESTRE INTERNATIONALE																																						
Meeting title: Commission for Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Date: Wednesday 3 & Thursday 4 August 2022 Time: 09:00 to 17:00 CEST Location: Conference room 2 Chair: Professor Dr Natalia Watan Minutes Taker: Barbara Rodel, FEI Manager President's Office		11:00 Coffee break 11:30 Session 1 - Pillar E1 - Engagement and Communication (Presentation and Discussion with FEI Media team) Report on Surveys (Annex 2a) - Equitation Community Survey prelin results - General Public Survey progress (Annex 2b) Website and General Communications including FEI Channels (Annex 2c) - How can we best facilitate a "two-way communication"? - How well are communications regarding equine wellbeing understood by the public? - Impact on the public of unconscious bias in choice of words (eg. Partners)? - Should we recommend more "openness" in communication regarding welfare? 0 Ethics? Where is this present in our Framework - is this an additional pillar or an ethical issue such as "sustainability" overarching? 0 Media Clippings - how could these be used to inform FEI of public opinion re welfare and ethics? 12:30 Lunch 13:30 Session 2 - Pillar E2 - Education and FEI Officials (Presentation and Discussion with FEI Education) - The role of Officials in Equine Ethics and Welfare - How are Officials educated, different courses, careers, etc? - How is the message of Horse Welfare & "paramount" communicated within the FEI education system of Officials? - How Officials are supported to ensure high standards of welfare? - How "mentorship" content of the FEI Campus (online education platform) is populated, updated, etc.2 - Is there a role for specific "Equine Welfare and Responsibility" training (Annex 2 example of a 'tool' developed for racing): https://onlinetrainingplatform.com.au/online/policies/renewwelfare-framework/		4:15 Session 3 - Pillar E3 - Effective Regulation (Presentation and discussion with FEI Legal) - Consider the FEI Welfare of the Horse Regulatory Framework: There are numerous technical rules about horse welfare in each Discipline Rules and in the Veterinary Regulations. Consider how we want to progress with these (Annex 4 - eg: A Welfare Handbook)? - How is horse welfare prioritised in the regulatory framework in relation to other factors such as commercial/historical/ rider pressure/ethics (eg.Sustainability)? - Tack and equipment - How is welfare prioritised in what can be used in different disciplines, and what is the process for this. Why are certain items of equipment required (eg.Bits must be used in dressage, Double bridle must be used at higher levels, spurs etc) and how are inconsistencies between disciplines dealt with (Mikael Rentsch and team)		10:15 Session 6 - Pillar E6 Empowerment (Discussion with representatives of FEI Officials/Event Organisers/Veterinarians) How is welfare supported and advanced? - Official level: Support for decision when horses are at the event- transparency and communication - Event level: Horse Inspections, Stables, Veterinary Officials, etc. - FEI level: transport of horses, quarantine, etc. - National Level - Individual Level - Riders/Trainers - Consider the use of an EEWB Charter (Annex 6)																																						
Participants <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participants</th> <th>Title</th> <th>Present</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Professor Dr Natalia Watan</td> <td>External Expert, Professor One Welfare and Executive Chair at the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) (George - NZL)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Professor Kathalijn Visser-Riedstra</td> <td>External Expert, Professor (UAS) Human-Animal Interactions at Arden University of Applied Sciences - Dronen, Flavoland, The Netherlands</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dr Camie Haleski</td> <td>External Expert, University of Kentucky, Equine Programs, Animal & Food Sciences - Lexington, Kentucky</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Professor Madeline Campbell</td> <td>External Expert, Professor of Veterinary Ethics, Nottingham University School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, Director, Empathy Veterinary Ethics</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mrs Jessica Stark</td> <td>WMO Communication & Public Affairs Director</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr Cayetano Martinez de Zuño</td> <td>Spanish Jumping Rider, International Jumping Riders Club (IJRC)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr Ken E. Lalo</td> <td>CAO Arbitrator, former Chair of the FEI Tribunal, President of the Social Equestrian Federation</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr Theo Elagoubiakis</td> <td>European Equestrian Federation President, FEI Board Member</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr Cesar Hirsch</td> <td>FEI Judge & Steward Level 3 and President of the Pan-American Equestrian Confederation (PAEC)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mrs Sabrina Szilaky</td> <td>FEI Secretary General</td> <td>Excused</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr Francisco Lima</td> <td>FEI Governance & Institutional Affairs Director</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mrs Barbara Rodel</td> <td>FEI Manager President's Office</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Participants	Title	Present	Professor Dr Natalia Watan	External Expert, Professor One Welfare and Executive Chair at the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) (George - NZL)		Professor Kathalijn Visser-Riedstra	External Expert, Professor (UAS) Human-Animal Interactions at Arden University of Applied Sciences - Dronen, Flavoland, The Netherlands		Dr Camie Haleski	External Expert, University of Kentucky, Equine Programs, Animal & Food Sciences - Lexington, Kentucky		Professor Madeline Campbell	External Expert, Professor of Veterinary Ethics, Nottingham University School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, Director, Empathy Veterinary Ethics		Mrs Jessica Stark	WMO Communication & Public Affairs Director		Mr Cayetano Martinez de Zuño	Spanish Jumping Rider, International Jumping Riders Club (IJRC)		Mr Ken E. Lalo	CAO Arbitrator, former Chair of the FEI Tribunal, President of the Social Equestrian Federation		Mr Theo Elagoubiakis	European Equestrian Federation President, FEI Board Member		Mr Cesar Hirsch	FEI Judge & Steward Level 3 and President of the Pan-American Equestrian Confederation (PAEC)		Mrs Sabrina Szilaky	FEI Secretary General	Excused	Mr Francisco Lima	FEI Governance & Institutional Affairs Director		Mrs Barbara Rodel	FEI Manager President's Office		5:00 Coffee break 5:30 Session 4 - Pillar E4 - Enforcement (Discussion with representatives of FEI Tribunal/Integrity) - What are the main concerns regarding enforcement of welfare regulations and codes in practice? - How are these concerns being addressed and how is this communicated? - How is data regarding infringement concerning welfare issues monitored and dealt with (eg.Complaints, Warnings, Yellow cards) across disciplines? Are there common themes identified that can be used to inform the FEI of issues of concern from a SLO perspective?		11:15 Coffee break 11:30 Developing the EEWB Road Map (Annex 7) - Discuss and agree the EEWB Road Map Structure and list any concerns and obvious recommended actions	
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				14:30 Introduction to the EEWB Dash Board (Annex 9) - Discuss and agree the range of EEWB metrics to be used to assess progress regarding SLO																																								
				15:00 Coffee break 15:30 Agree on any future Working Groups and Focus Activities Develop the Equine Ethics & Well-Being Framework																																								

Sport & Industry

Changes signalled to improve perception of horse sport and equine welfare

November 13, 2022 | Horsetalk.co.nz | 0 Comments | 3 min read

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Public Attitudes on the Use of Horses in Sport: Survey Report (November 2022)



<https://equinewellbeing.fei.org/key-documents.html>

Opinions of Equestrian Stakeholders on the use of Horses in Sport: Survey Report (November 2022)





Different Lenses - Equine Welfare



April 2023 – Interim Report: A Proposed Strategic Approach

30 Recommendations, 6 Priority Areas of Focus, 6 Enablers, An Equestrian Charter and a proposed Change Wheel



24 Recommendations to Improve Equine Wellbeing

The draft proposal presented at the FEI Sports Forum outlines measures to ensure that equine behavioural, social, physical and mental needs are met.



The Interim Report from the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission was presented during Session 1; Professor Dr Nathalie Waran (NZL) on the podium. (FEI photo)

- EEWB releases 6 focus points to give our sport a social license to involve horses!



Recommendations: Grouped into Five Key Areas

The FEI will:

01

Be a Leader

02

Be Trusted

03

Be Transparent

04

Be ProActive

05

Be Accountable

Recommendations: **Key Themes**



Be a Leader

- The FEI will play a critical role in advancing equine welfare globally by setting an example that others aspire towards

Be Trusted

- The FEI will embed equine welfare within its structure and ways of working to demonstrate its commitment to prioritising equine welfare in both policy and practice

Be Transparent

- The FEI will validate its commitment to equine welfare by being proactive in how it communicates, engaging in dialogue and providing credible information

Be ProActive

- The FEI must be prepared to challenge the status quo and demonstrate a dynamic path of action towards achieving the highest standards of equine welfare, taking their stakeholders with them

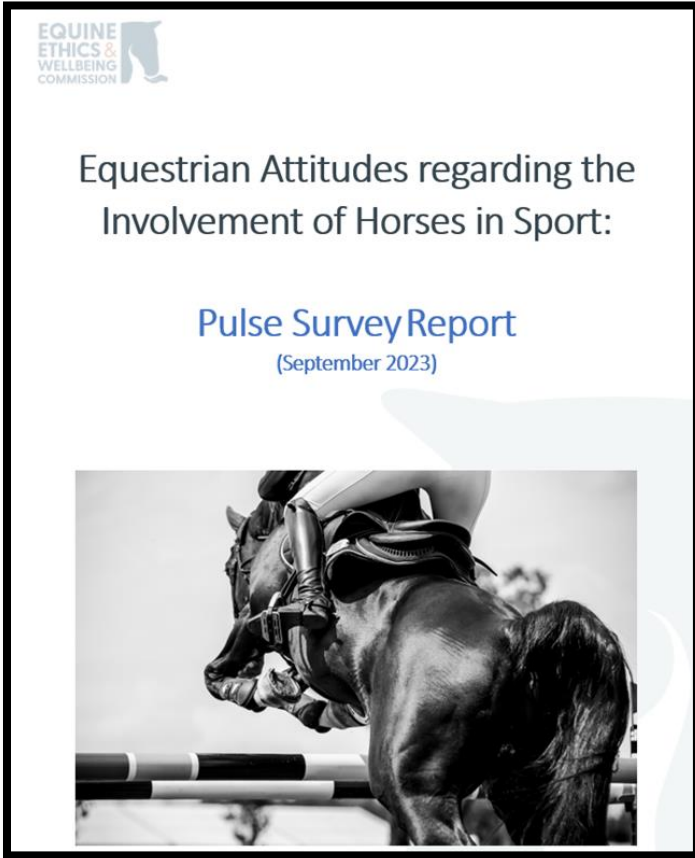
Be Accountable

- The FEI will achieve higher standards of welfare and earn trust more sustainably by inviting external scrutiny.

Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission – Information for the completing the Final Report



Feedback - Pulse survey Results 2023



5,700 responses

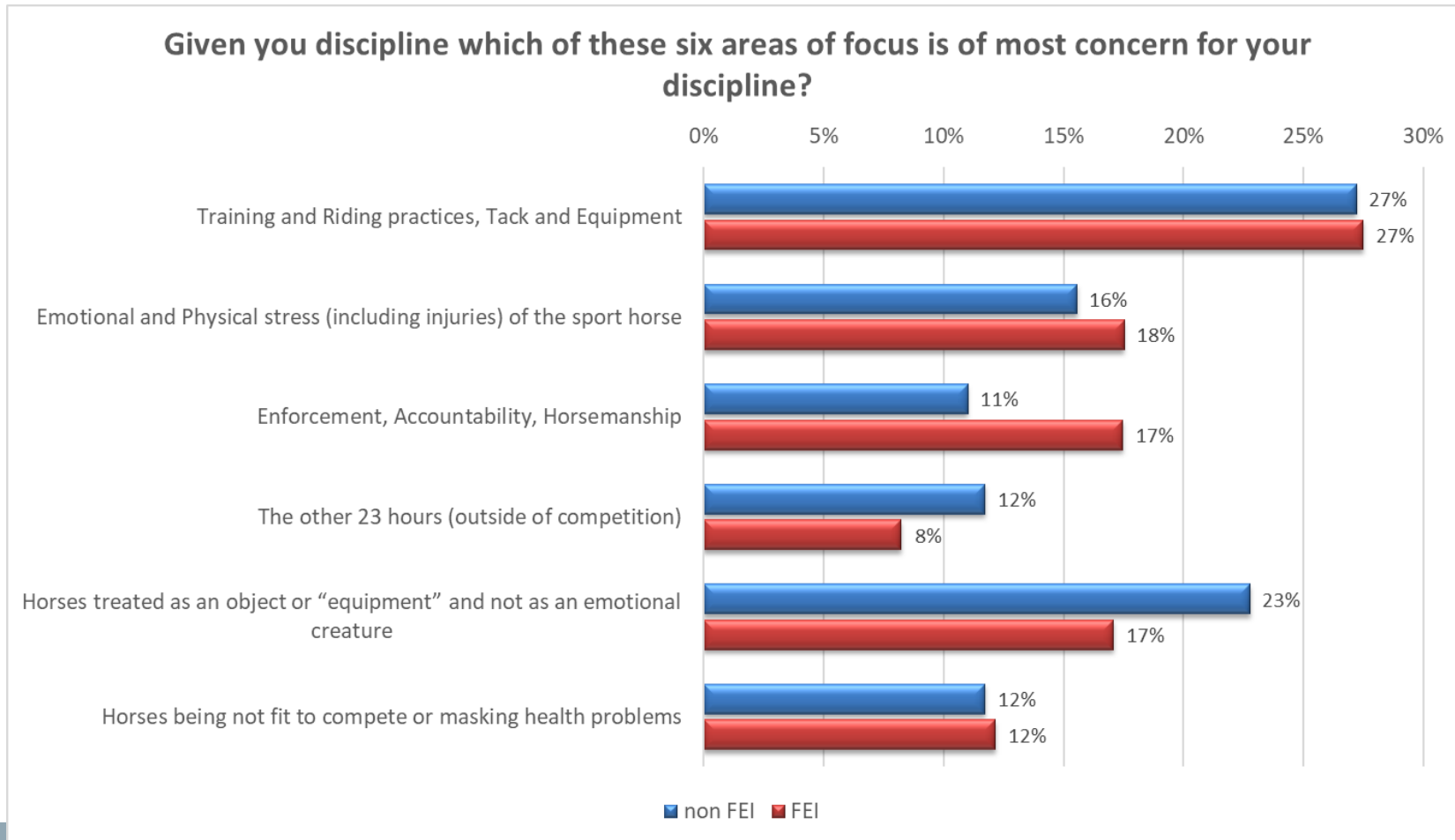
Survey objectives:

- To consider any changes or similarities in perceptions in the year since previous survey
- To socialise the Recommendations and gather equestrian opinion

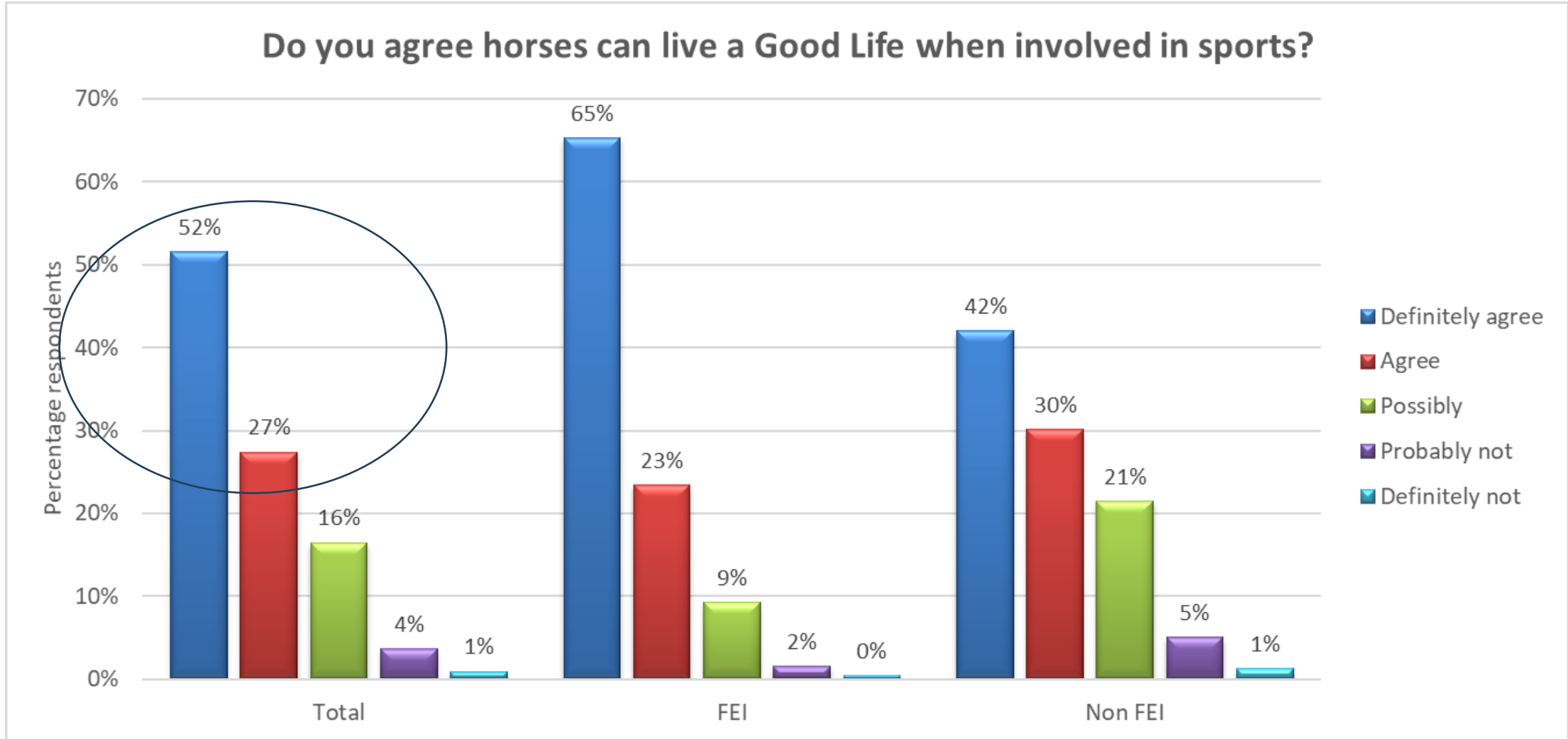


<https://equinewellbeing.fei.org/key-documents.html>

Key Priority Area is still Training & Riding; Tack & Equipment – similar FEI/non-FEI differences in priorities as compared with 2022 surveys

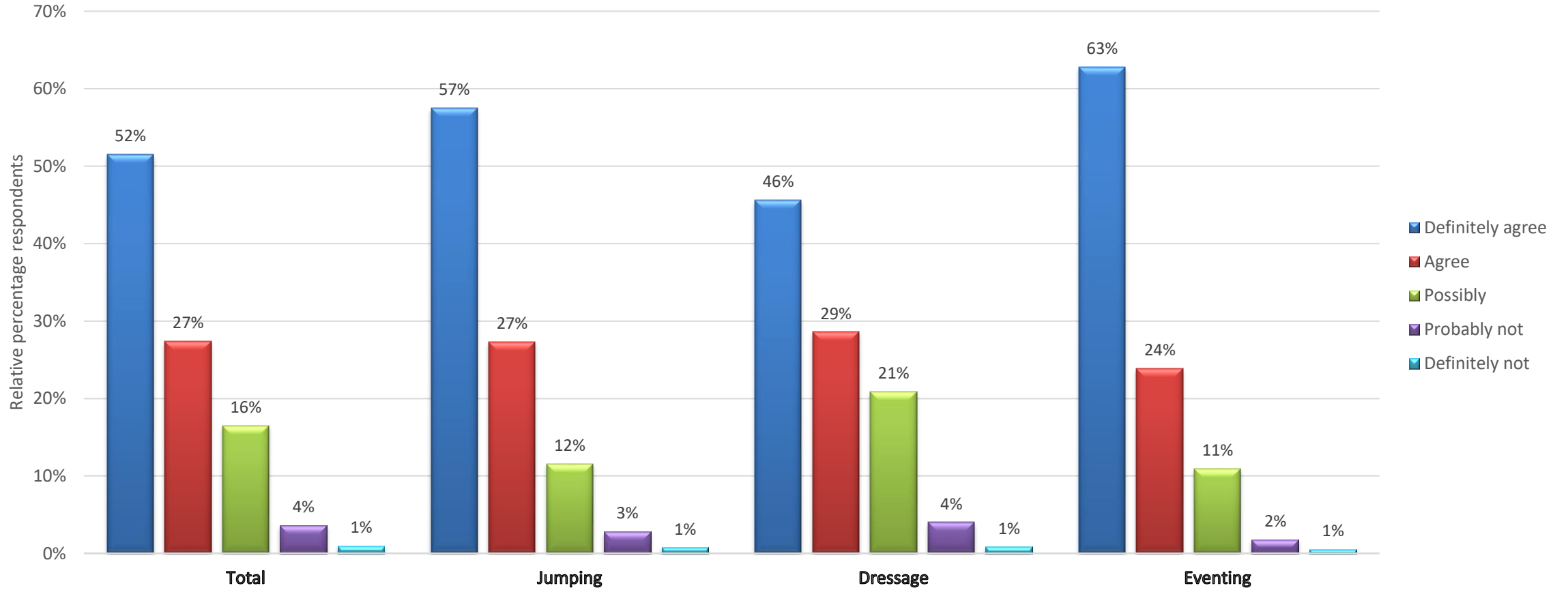


Overall, 79% of equestrian respondents agreed that horses can live a Good Life when involved in sport



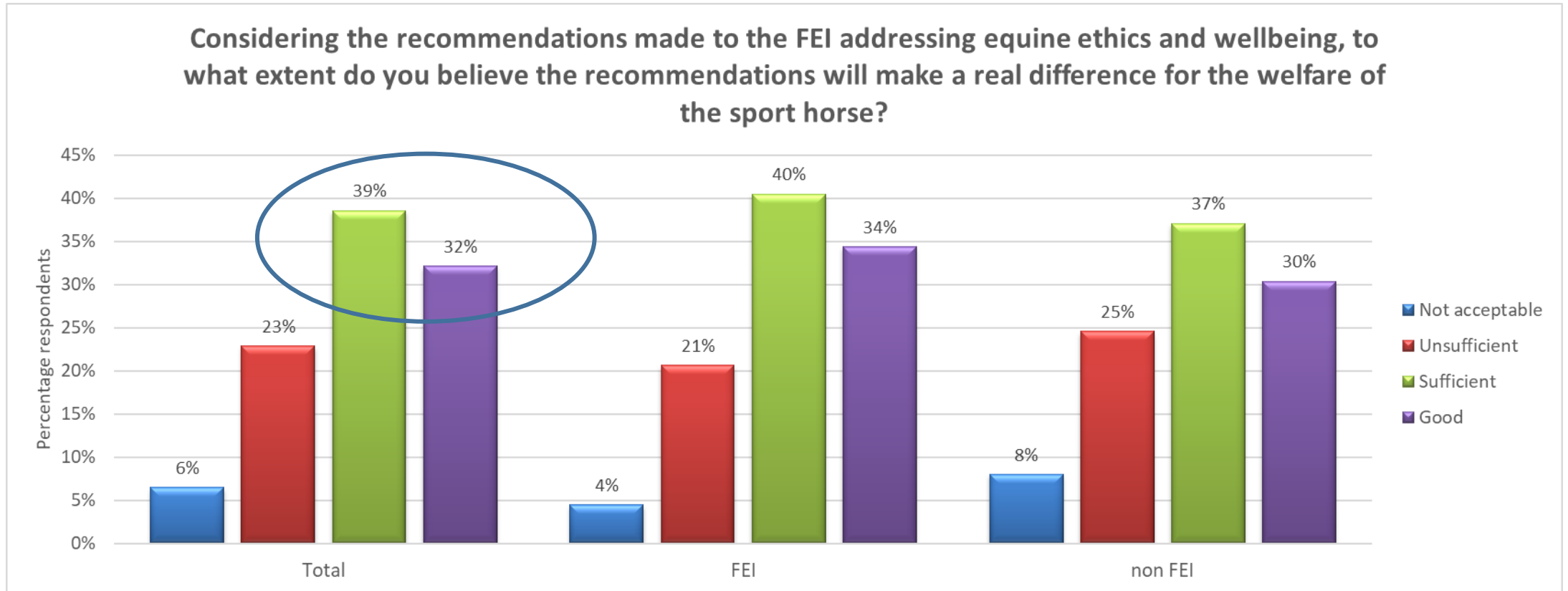
Overall agreement - but level of agreement differed between main disciplines

Do you agree horses can live a Good Life when involved in sports?

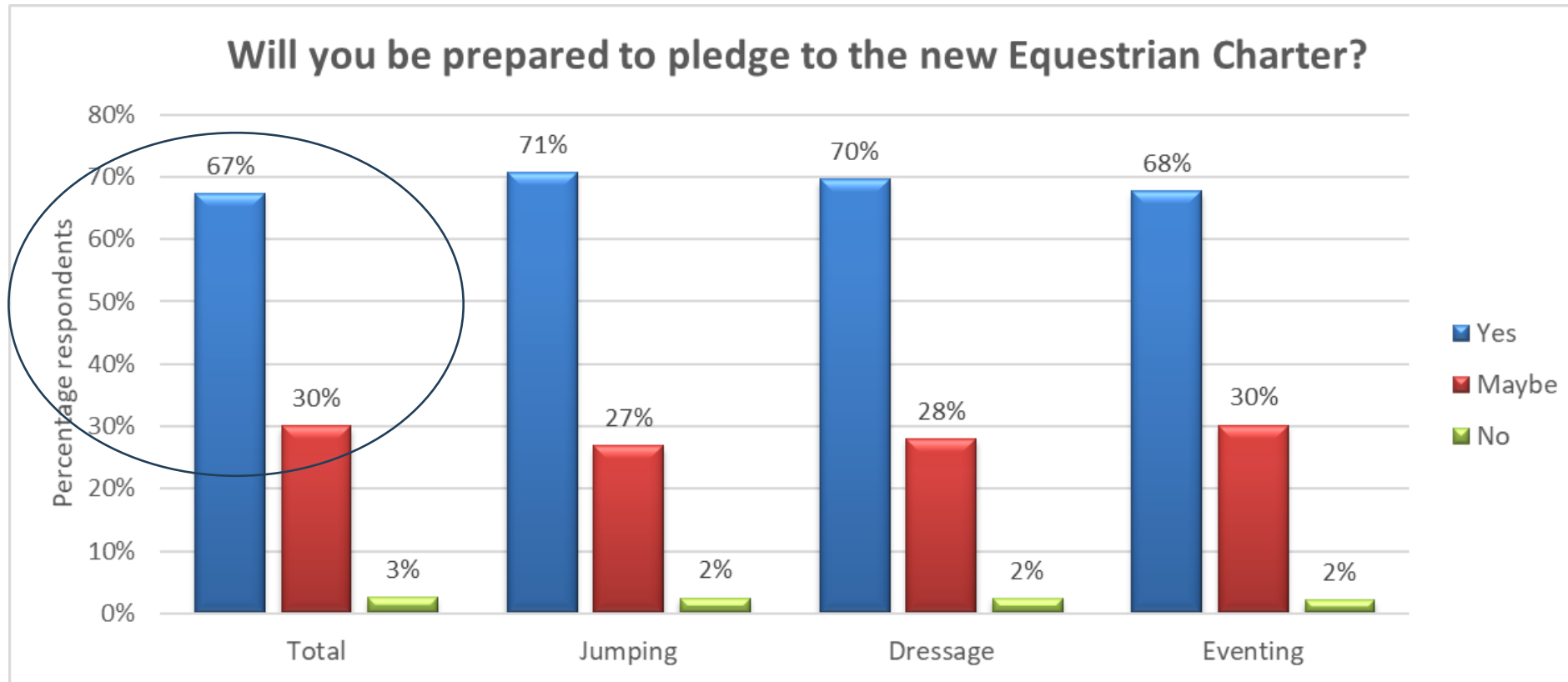




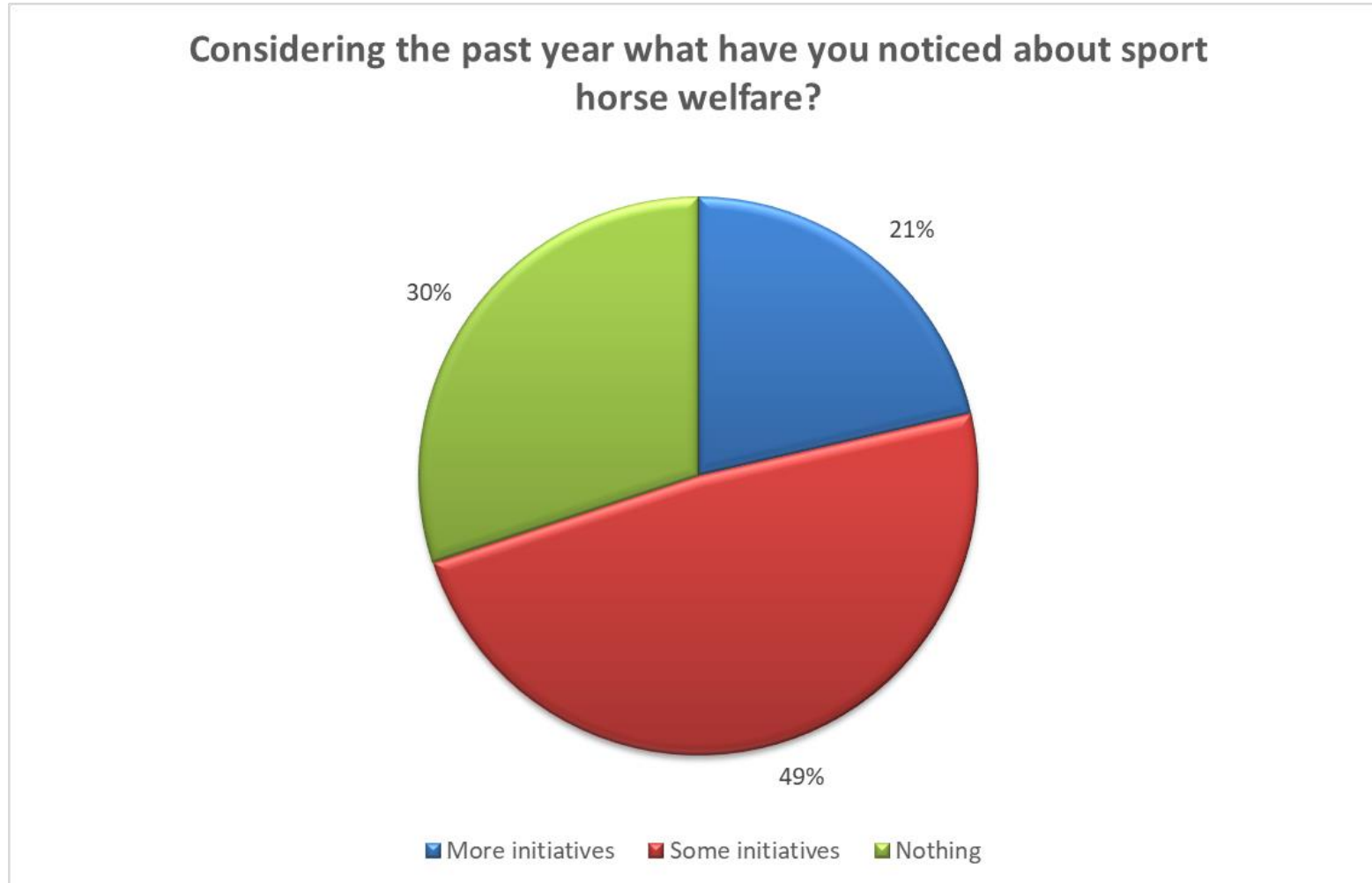
71% of equestrian respondents support the Commission's Recommendations



97% of respondents would or might support Charter (similar for 3 Disciplines)



70% of respondents reported noticing 'more or some' initiatives related to sport horse welfare over the past year



Direct Stakeholder Engagement



Various Stakeholder Engagement opportunities— Presentations/Discussion/Email Correspondence

Main Stakeholder Engagements of the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission members

Dates (Month/Year)	Event/Engagement
July-August 2022	Equine Community Survey in English, French and Spanish sent to FEI stakeholders, including NFs, Board Members HQ, Athletes, Officials, DQs and Owners
August 2022	Focus groups at annual conference of International Society of Equitation Science
September 2022	Discussion and analysis of survey results with input of equine science researchers
November 2022	Presentation of survey results and early recommendations at FEI General Assembly
November 2022	Discussed at seminar in Germany with the German equestrian community
November 2022	Presentation to the European Horse Network, members of the European Parliament Horse Group and a representative of the European Commission
December 2022	Presentation to the Dutch Horse Industry partners (, ,
December 2022	Delivered presentation as part of training for officials in Chile
January 2023	Presentation on social science and survey results to USEF followed by workshops

January 2023	Two informative sessions (one with judges and one with Stewards) during the 2023 Officials Forum in Lisbon (POR) from 13 to 17 January.
Feb 2023	Delivered presentations to the INEC General Assembly summary 31 National Federations.
March 2023	At the panel for Horses.tv about SLO
April 2023	Meeting with IDIC and IDTC
April 2023	Met with groomers at World Cup Final in Omaha
April 2023	Presentation of GA survey results and panel discussion at FEI Driving Forum, HE
24-26 April	Presentation of interim report, Q&A and discussion at FEI Sports Forum
April/May 2023	Interviews for a variety of Dutch Horse Magazines
May 2023	Presentation at National Equine Law Conference – Why is the FEI concerned with SLO
May 2023	Round Table discussion on SLO AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners)
May 2023	Delivered presentation at Global Sports Forum for Dutch Veterinarians
May 2023	Meeting with EEF Dressage group about EEWC recommendations
May 2023	Presentation at horse economic forum to Portugal's equine society in Lisbon

May 2023	Delivered presentation as part of training for officials in Brazil!
May 2023	Presentation in Poland to EEEPC conference on social science and work of EEWC
June 2023	Presentation on Equine Science Society – ‘Social License to Operate – why public perception matters for horse sport’ & short review article in Journal of Equine Veterinary Science
June 2023	Progress of the EEWC work highlighted at meeting of the Horse Group of the European Parliament
June 2023	Conducted pulse survey of FEI and equestrian community to gather feedback on EEWC recommendations
June 2023	Engagement with the British Equestrian Federation Ethics and Welfare Advisory Group about how the FEI Commission's recommendations apply and might be translated at national level
June 2023	Presentation to riding clubs, judges and riders in Merbach organized by German Federation
June 2023	EEWC work highlighted in panel discussion about social science at media event for equine sector in London
June 2023	EEWC Chair and Theo met with EEF Dressage working group
June 2023	EEWC Chair - Presentation to ESNZ members
June 2023	Presentation of the interim report and Recommendations to FEI Board and questions (webinar)

June 2023	Two webinars held with more than 100 members of FEI community on 26 and 28 June to present on recommendations, answer questions and take feedback.
July 2023	Presentation and Q&A at Equestrian Australia Conference ‘Expectations from the FEI Ethics & Wellbeing Commission in Managing Future Horse Health, Safety & Welfare: what can we do better?’
July 2023	EEWC Chair -online webinar - World Sport Horse Breeders Society – A Good Life for Horses- EEWC Recommendations - ‘Setting the sport horse up for success’
July 2023	EEWC Chair Presentation to NZ TB Racing Welfare Committee – A Good Life for Horses – EEWC Recommendations.
August 2023	EEWC Chair - North American Veterinary Medicine Society – Online talk – A Good Life for Horses- EEWC Recommendations
August 2023	World Trotting Conference presentation on social science and work of EEWC and interview with magazine
August 2023	Online meeting with EEF Dressage Group with Natalie W/Ther P regarding Recommendations and in particular the Double Bridle, General support for Recommendations but not for Double Bridle not being mandatory.
September 2023	Highlighted work of EEWC during panel discussion at annual conference of the British Equine Veterinary Association
September 2023	EEWC Chair presentation to New Zealand Equestrian Community at the EMZ conference
September 2023	EEWC met with all Equestrian Sports groups/Managers in NZ hosted by ESNZ – ‘One Voice’ for Horse Sports – ‘A Good Life for Horses’

September 2023	EEWC online presentation with NZ Pony Club organisation Conference
October 2023	EEWC Chair Online presentation to FEI Solidarity Meeting
October 2023	EEWC Chair in person Keynote Presentation to IFHA (Paris) on FEI Commission Recommendations
October 2023	EEWC Chair online presentation SLO, EEWC Recommendations and link to sustainability
October 1 st 2023	Final Feedback opportunity provided to FEI Board to inform final report
October 18 th 2023	Final Feedback date from FEI staff regarding the final report
October 2023	Feedback provided via FEI from federations regarding the proposed Equestrian Charter and scoring – FEI Board forwarded to EEWC by their consideration regarding changed wording. Response from EEWC in Appendix 5.
Around 50 approaches from public by email through Commission website	All responded to and any feedback noted
Specific correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Dijkon – letter to FEI and FEI Dressage technical committee regarding oral discomfort/pain and mandatory use of double bridle International Society for Equitation Science – public statement of support for Recommendations and Concerns re Double Bridle and Nonsensical tightness

Media Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports Horse Welfare Foundation – Public statement of support for Recommendations and alignment with their own studies Letter from IDTC and IDIC to FEI expressing concerns regarding early recommendations in relation to tack and equipment Email from Chair of FEI Dressage technical committee to clarify the identity of the ISES – responded to by M Wüsten Email from IDTC/IDIC to Theo/Commission with questions regarding the Recommendations- responded to by M Wüsten Danish Animal Ethics Organisation email support for recommendations World Horse Welfare email support for recommendations International Grooms Association discussion and request for survey British Equestrian Federation Welfare Advisory Committee email support Horse Society Botswana requesting the Survey questions to use
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2 FEI organised Webinars – Recordings Published and Themes Analysed

EQUINE ETHICS & WELLBEING COMMISSION Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission Final Report to the FEI Board (October 2023) equinewellbeing.fei.org

Appendix 2:
FEI EEWB COMMISSION STAKEHOLDER WEBINARS REPORT

In June 2023, the FEI EEWB Commission held two stakeholder webinars advertised to FEI Stakeholders at times to allow access for different time zones. The purpose of the webinars was to enable stakeholders to ask the Commission questions about the 30 Recommendations which the Commission has made to the FEI in their interim report. These consist of the 6 early recommendations made by the Commission and the 24 further recommendations as presented at the FEI Sports Forum 2023. The Commission specifically sought feedback from stakeholders on the following three questions:

- (1) Are all of the recommendations relevant? – If not, which ones and why not?
- (2) Are the recommendations implementable? – Why not?
- (3) Are there any areas that have been missed? – What are they?

Each webinar lasted for 90 minutes and there were spaces in the webinar to allow for questions to be asked and answered by the members of the Commission who were present. The number of questions / comments received from stakeholders was not considered sizeable enough to facilitate a formal thematic analysis. What follows is therefore a descriptive summary of questions received and answers given by the Commission, both during the webinars and subsequently, in written correspondence with stakeholders.

There were a number of questions / comments relating to the function of the Commission / work of the Commission so far. These included:

Q: Who made the questions in the [survey 2](#) I think they are quite 'loaded'!

Q: Did the EEWB receive the comments of the IDTC and IDRC regarding the recommendations?

Q: Do you believe it's realistic for the FEI as a sport governing body to facilitate checks outside of competition? Do they have the resources (financial & human) for this endeavour?

Q: Will the Commission/FEI be engaging with the European Commission on transport regulations regarding movement of horses?

Q: The independent nature of the committee will be very important

Q: What annual funding is available to the EEWB for further work on the recommendations, education, research, etc. in [general](#) there was little statement about the role of money and finances.

Q: If I understood correctly the EEWB did not and will not look at the sport rules. The EEWB will provide the recommendations/report and then it is up to the FEI to "translate" those recommendations into the sport rules. Is this correct?

The Commission responded to these and other similar questions and comments as follows:

The questions were formulated by the Commission to meet the specific task which the Commission had been given by the FEI, in accordance with methodology frequently used in industry surveys. All questions were formulated so that respondents could answer either positively or negatively.

The survey results as presented during the webinars were consistent with those previously presented by the Commission. The full survey results and all talk slides previously given have been made freely available on the EEWB website.

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EQUINE ETHICS & WELLBEING COMMISSION Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission Final Report to the FEI Board (October 2023) equinewellbeing.fei.org

The role of the Commission is to provide independent, objective advice on equine ethics and wellbeing to the FEI Board. The independence of the Commission is [important](#) and it is something which the Commission has taken care to protect. The Commission makes recommendations to the FEI Board. The FEI then decides on the course of action to address those recommendations (if they choose to do so) [and](#) funds such actions. It is the role of the FEI, not the EEWB, to consider the implications of the recommendations for FEI rules.

The Commission accepts that it will be complicated to facilitate checks outside of competition. The Commission has discussed this with the FEI legal department, and it will require further thinking by the FEI to consider how such checks can be undertaken.

There were a number of questions / comments about the concept of 'A Good Life' within the Commission's recommendations. These included:

Q: Who do you envisage will define specifically what a Good Life will mean? So far everything is very general.

Q: We used the Five Domains in our principles for social license are you saying that if something is consistent with this it would also be consistent with your definition of Good Life?

Q: To my previous point you are asking people to sign up/commit to provide a Good Life -but how do I know exactly what that is?

Q: So far you have not been able to really define a Good Life so you are asking people to sign up to an unknown.

The Commission responded to these and other similar questions as follows:

The Commission is not unwilling to define a Good Life, and indeed we have stated that whilst there is much known about horse needs and positive welfare, it is also important to consider a Good Life in relation to the way in which horses are involved in sport, and the various contexts experienced by sport horses. Good welfare is not simply about avoiding negative welfare impacts – it is also about promoting positive welfare impacts. The Five Domains model considers the animal's own experience of its life in terms of positive and negative welfare impacts taken across its lifetime – it is not a question of whether one action undertaken at a particular moment in time is 'consistent with (our) definition of a good life'. The concept of 'a Good Life' is constantly evolving as the evidence base provided by welfare science develops.

The Commission has provided a fuller discussion of the concept of 'A Good Life' and the proposed 5 Domains Approach to defining a Good Life in the fuller interim report (and will be refined further in the final report) submitted to the FEI Board. The Commission will talk to this in the Final report to the GA in Mexico, having completed the analysis of the summer 2023 pulse survey and questions from the engagement webinars requesting feedback on the concept of a Good Life and the Recommendations.

The Commission's Recommendation regarding the Equestrian Charter has three statements (I understand, I commit and undertake) – the last of which refers to a Good Life. Once the final report has been submitted to the FEI Board, the proposed vision of a Good Life will become clearer – and the work that is required to contextualise it for sports horses will be proposed.

There were a number of questions / comments about the concept of 'Evidence' within the Commission's recommendations, which included:

Q: How do you define what constitutes 'evidence'?

Q: Re - evidence - I agree for us it's about research evidence. The equestrian public don't necessarily appreciate the existing evidence – (as in the large amount of scientific evidence regarding what horses want and need). What needs to be explained (to them) is the difference between actual evidence and anecdotal opinion.

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EQUINE ETHICS & WELLBEING COMMISSION Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission Final Report to the FEI Board (October 2023) equinewellbeing.fei.org

The Commission responded to these and other similar questions as follows:

Ethical decision making should be based in evidence derived from welfare science. Ideally, such evidence should be derived from peer-reviewed scientific research evidence - which may be either qualitative or quantitative. [Fig.](#) Within the concept of 'veterinary evidence based Medicine' there is an established hierarchy of evidence types, ranging from systematic reviews (at the top of the pyramid) to expert opinion (at the bottom). To adequately safeguard the welfare of horses involved in sport, all stakeholders need to accept the need to consider objective evidence and be prepared to have their own beliefs challenged and to adapt them if the evolving scientific base suggests that it is appropriate to do so. From a public-facing, social license point of view, it is important that those of us involved in horse sport are seen to be basing our decisions on objective scientific evidence. Where there is a lack of good quality evidence, or where contradictory evidence exists then we should adopt the 'precautionary principle' i.e. give the horse the 'benefit of the doubt' and make the decision most likely to optimise equine welfare given the uncertainty of the evidence available to us.

There was a question about 'social license'

Q: Why does the EEWB believe that the Social License should be unwritten. Wouldn't it be more actionable and meaningful if there was a written statement of terms?

The Commission responded to this question as follows:

The definition of social license used by the EEWB is derived from various publications about what it is and why it matters. The concept of social license involves the beliefs, perceptions and opinions held by the general public and other interested or affected stakeholders. It is described as an unwritten, non-[legally-binding](#) social contract whereby the community gives industry the right to conduct its business. Just as the regulatory license has precise conditions, the social license to operate is intangible with conditions that are not universally defined, in addition to being subject to continuous change. The main drivers for granting or removing social license are the community/stakeholder perceptions of the social legitimacy and credibility of the activity or industry, and the presence or absence of trust. SLO can be granted (maintained) or removed by the public/community or stakeholder network. SLO difficulties can arise when the industry/community under the spotlight sees gaining a social license in terms of a series of tasks, terms or transactions (in effect making a deal) or where the industry/[community](#):

- o Fails to understand the public or stakeholder community concerns, and is unable to establish [social legitimacy](#)
- o Delays stakeholder engagement
- o Undermines its own credibility by failing to give reliable [information](#)
- o Fails to respect and listen to the [community](#)
- o Under-estimates the time and effort required to gain a [SLO](#)
- o Over-estimates (or, worse, assumes) the quality of the relationship with the [community](#)

There were a number of questions / comments about specific recommendations, to which the Commission offered the following responses:

Q: Have you looked more into what it requires in terms of training and possible rule changes for the officials?

A: Such detail is a matter for the FEI – the Commission makes [recommendations](#) and the FEI then considers how they might be enacted.

Q: The lifecycle data is very important. From my anecdotal observation, the median age of a horse 'retiring' or having a career-ending injury seems to be getting lower and lower.

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EQUINE ETHICS & WELLBEING COMMISSION Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission Final Report to the FEI Board (October 2023) equinewellbeing.fei.org

Q: How much in depth would the life cycle data have to be and is it realistic?

A: Lifecycle data is important and would be an area for future research. In relation to all research which may come out of the Commission's recommendations, stakeholders may make recommendations for funding priorities to the FEI. The Commission's interim report suggests the minimal lifecycle data which should be collected for each horse.

Q: I agree and believe that especially Stewards need to have more decision-making power.

A: Empowering officials is crucial, and a clear message of support for officials at national and international level is an important part of safeguarding welfare. We need to establish a culture where bad behaviour is not tolerated, both to protect equine welfare and because bad behaviour pulls all of equestrian sport into disrepute. Empowering the officials so that stakeholders can support them is an important first step.

Q: Re. Six Priority Areas of Focus - [medical](#) procedures masking health problems/Not fit to compete - how do you plan to proceed?

A: We have provided the Recommendation regarding additional external scrutiny at competitions.

Q: How will you define "Outside competition" - who and how to perform it?

A: Such detail is a matter for the FEI

Q: Is the Charter only for the FEI riders and coaches? Or for all equestrians?

A: For all equestrians.

Q: The 3 main recommendations are really good. Some of them I think will be more challenging to carry through than others, especially outside competitions. The different countries also vary a lot when it comes to national AW regulations, including horses.

A: Agreed.

Q: Would recommendations 4, 5 and 6 be the responsibility of the national federations?

A: The national federations have a significant role to play in picking up and enacting the recommendations. They may be able to do so somewhat more quickly and most flexibly than the FEI. All of the recommendations are the responsibility not only of the FEI but also of national federations and of individual stakeholders.

Q: On recommendation 11 - Ensure the existence of an effective 'zero-tolerance' policy which prevents, [prevents](#) and punishes any practice that compromises equine welfare and safety during and outside of competition. In making this recommendation, is the commission implying the FEI does not have an effective zero tolerance policy because there are recidivists regarding welfare infractions. May we please see the evidence for this?

A: The Commission's Recommendation addresses the perception and concerns expressed by survey respondents as well as commentary regarding consistency and ongoing accountability expressed by equine welfare scientists and equestrians. The recommendation is aimed towards ensuring that an effective policy is extended to cover outside of competition.

Following the two webinars, recordings made of them were placed on the Commission's website for open access.

END

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Consideration of some frequent questions

? Is there enough evidence to support a recommendation?

? What is a Good Life for Horses in Sport

? How can emotions be assessed in sport horses during performance

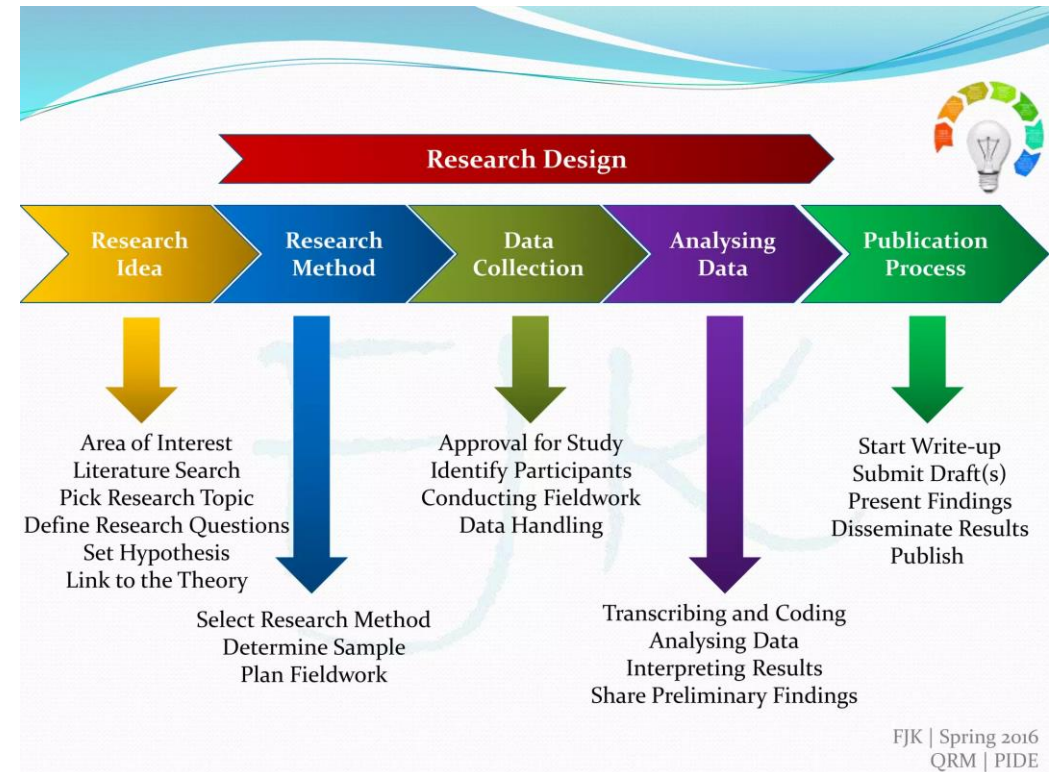
? Change will be challenging



Theme: 'Not enough Scientific Evidence'

'Science explains how things work, fills gaps in our knowledge and can bust myths that could have been considered truths for centuries.....'

(Wilkins 2013)





In pursuit of Truth - *'The Flying Gallop'*



Stubbs 1794



"The 1821 Derby at Epsom" by Théodore Géricault





Research provides evidence that can challenge the current state of knowledge

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Muybridge_race_horse_animated.gif



Photographic study of a horse galloping (animated),
by Eadweard Muybridge, 1887

"Annie G" at a Gallop

Provides evidence through critical enquiry



BUT – there will always be different interpretations

‘Proof is the high degree of acceptance of a theory following a process of inquiry and critical evaluation....’

(Walton 2016)

“It is the artist who is truthful, and it is the photograph that lies; for in reality time does not stop.”

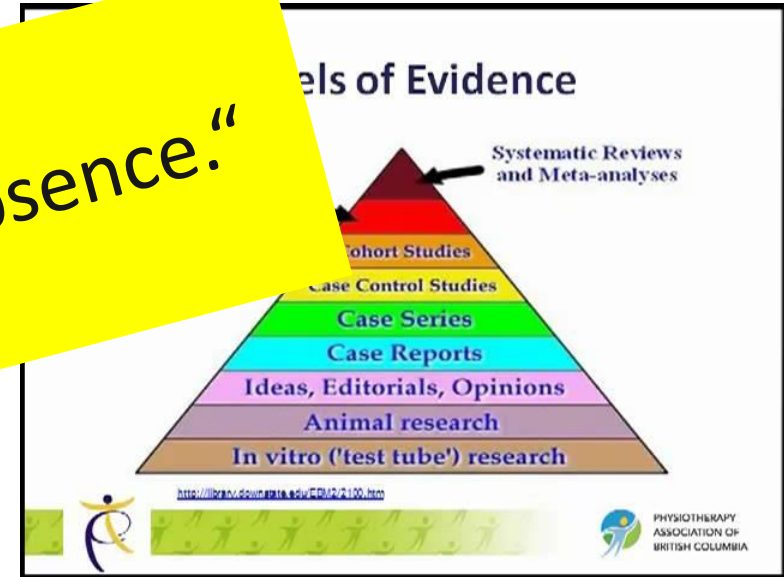
Rodin .



Questions for further consideration

- What kind of evidence is acceptable?
- What amount of evidence is acceptable?
- Who is responsible for gathering and evaluating evidence?
- What is the impact of evidence, if anything, if there is sufficient evidence of a need to?

“Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.”



Science is a very useful tool, but it is not the only tool

Risk Mitigation?

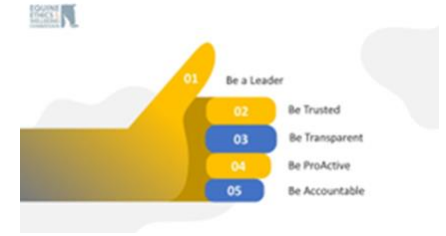
Adopting the 'Precautionary Principle'

Give the horse the '*benefit of the doubt*', by making decisions that consider likely risk to welfare, and are most likely to optimise equine welfare given the uncertainty of the evidence available.



Applying the 'precautionary principle', allows for timely responses to potentially serious risks to equine welfare and/or SLO

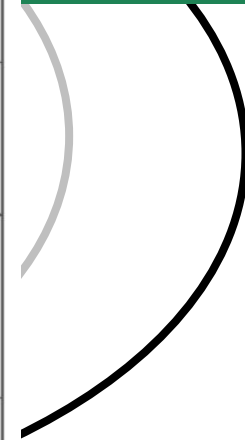
The Fundamental Tenet to the Proposed Welfare



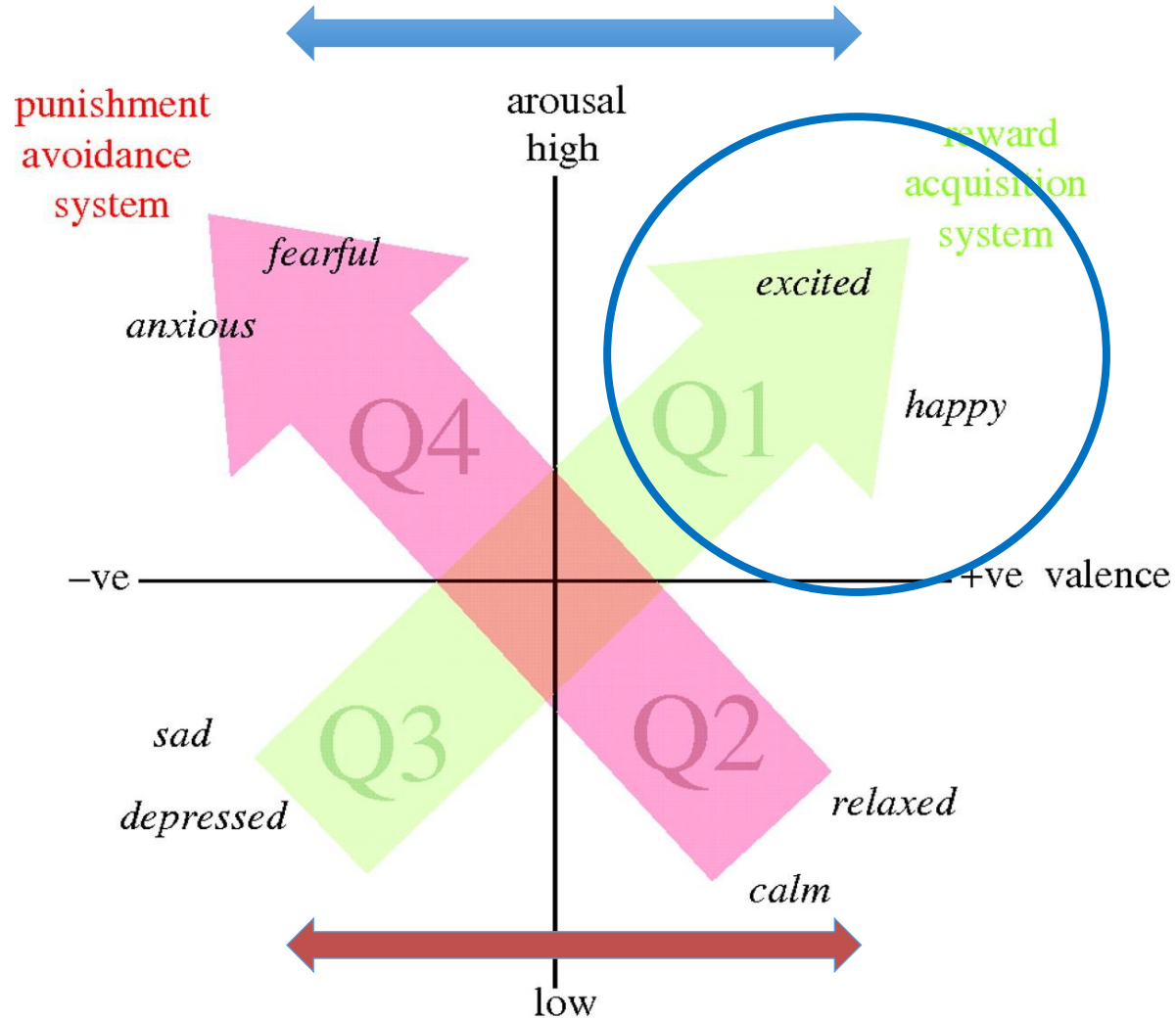
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DOMAIN	HORSE WELLBEING AIMS
<p>NUTRITION Provide ready access to safe water and a diet adjusted to the individual to ensure and maintain optimal health and fitness taking into account the physiological and behavioural needs of the horse.</p>	<p>Minimise thirst, hunger and inappropriate diets. <i>Enable eating to be a pleasurable and fulfilling experience</i></p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT Provide suitable safe, stress-free enclosures with room to move freely, roll, lie down, shade/shelter, with good air quality and comfortable resting and interacting areas. Ensure management, training and performance environments are horse centric.</p>	<p>Minimise discomfort, restriction and behavioural deprivation <i>Promote a comfortable and stress free living, training, transport and performance environment considering temperature, safety, behavioural enrichment, social interaction and positive experiences</i></p>
<p>HEALTH Provide good physical health care, prompt diagnosis, prevention and treatment of disease and injury. Provide for the normal physical development of the horse in developing and implement appropriate training and exercise and ensure there is opportunity for free exercise.</p>	<p>Minimise any negative experiences of ill-health <i>Promote good breeding for sustainable health, optimal health and veterinary care, safe working practices, appropriate fitness, and opportunity for free exercise during the lifetime of the horse</i></p>
<p>BEHAVIOUR Provide the quality and quantity of space, safe enriched facilities, social opportunities and positive human interactions to enable the horse to express and enjoy normal behaviours</p>	<p>Minimise threats and unpleasant restrictions on behaviour <i>Promote provision of horse centric facilities, engagement in rewarding activities and positive human-horse interactions from birth to death.</i></p>
<p>MENTAL (AFFECTIVE/EMOTIONAL) STATE Provide fulfilling, safe, compatible, and appropriate opportunities for horses to enjoy positive pleasurable experiences in all aspects of their lives.</p>	<p>Minimise negative states such as anxiety, fear, negative stress, frustration, exhaustion and loneliness <i>Promote opportunities for expressing positive states including those associated with comfort, pleasure, interest and confidence</i></p>

**Positive
Mental health**



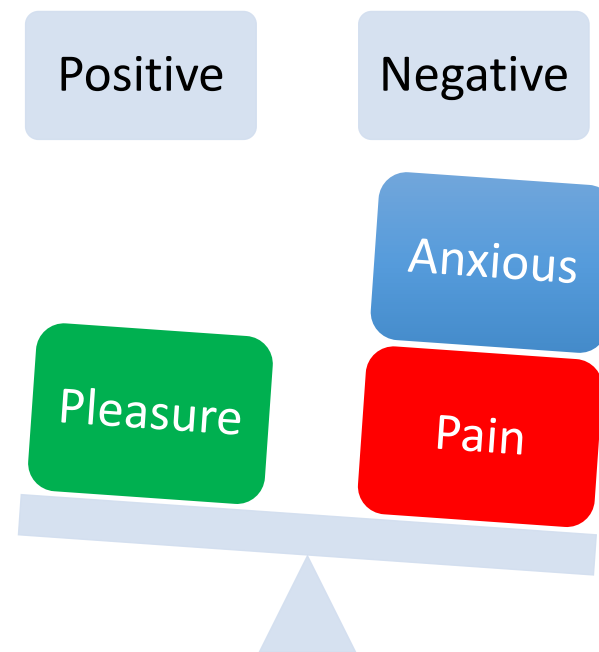
Equine Emotions



A Good Life for a Horse



The ethical justification for involving horses in sport and thus the maintenance of SLO is based on maximising positive equine welfare and minimising negative welfare impacts.



Commission's suggestion for phase 1

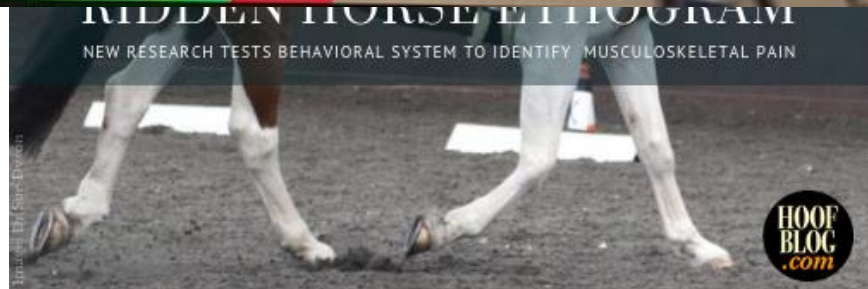
Defining and characterising a 'Good Life for Horses' in the context of horses involved in sport, through the various stages of their life, will be an important first step for clarifying expectations regarding high standards of equine welfare, and guiding policy and practice both in and outside of competition.



New Research assessing preferences/mood/motivation/Emotion



- AI applied to competition and ridden horses



Review Articles

How to Understand Them? A Review of Emotional Indicators in Horses

eticia Santos Maurício, Denise Pereira Leme, Maria José Hötzel

how more

Add to Mendeley Share Cite

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jevs.2023.104249> Get rights and content

Abstract

Stabled horses often experience negative emotions due to the inappropriate living conditions imposed by humans. However, identifying what emotions horses experience and what can trigger positive and negative emotions in stabled horses can be challenging. In this article we present a brief history of the study of emotions and models that explain emotions from a scientific point of view and the physiological bases and functions of emotions. We then review and discuss physiological and behavioral indicators and cognitive bias tests developed to assess emotions in horses. Hormone concentrations, body temperature, the position of the ears, facial expressions and behaviors, such as approach and avoidance behaviors, can provide valuable information about emotional states in horses. The cognitive bias paradigm is a recent and robust tool to assess emotions in horses. Knowing how to evaluate the intensity and frequency of an

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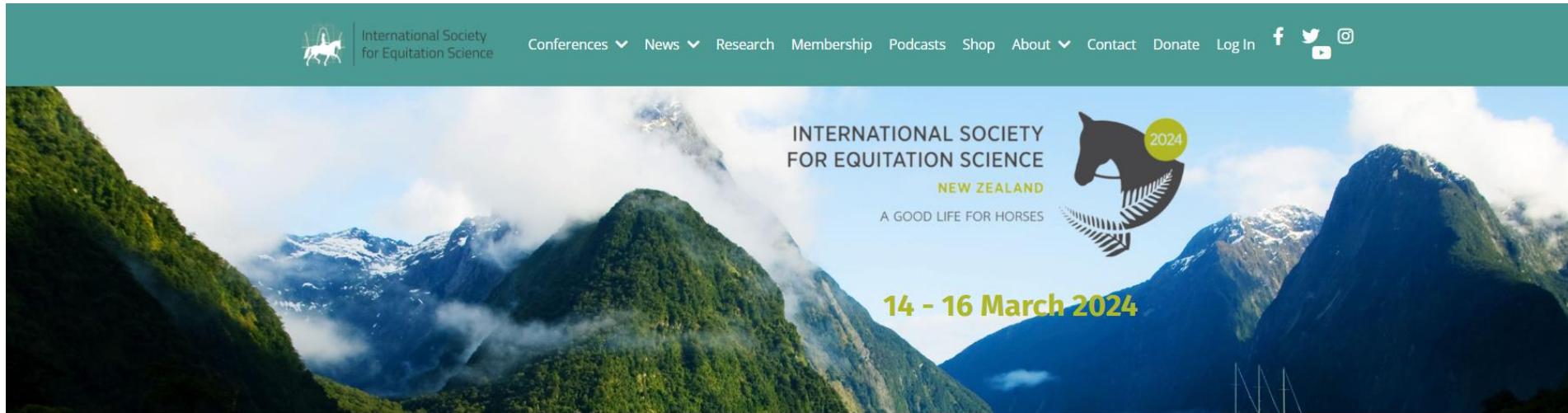
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Scientists gathering in NZ March 2024



About A Good Life for Horses

Alongside the development of animal welfare science and more specifically equitation science, is an increasing appreciation of the need to justify the use of animals, whether for research, production, therapy, sport or leisure. Surveys of public and equestrian stakeholders such as those carried out by equine sport industry groups (e.g. the Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Commission (EEWC) recently established by the FEI to address Social License to Operate related to horse involvement in sport and the Thoroughbred Racing Industry), alongside other surveys by animal welfare agencies, government advisory bodies, and equine researchers, highlight the growing unease of the public and equestrians alike, with questions regarding the ethics of horse use and concerns about equine welfare.

Evolving public views and increased knowledge about equine welfare suggest that to continue to justify equine involvement in sport and leisure and maintain a social license to operate, there is an urgent need to understand and address the changing views, equine welfare concerns, and to ensure horses involved in sport and leisure can live a Good Life.



Register now!

[Click here](#)

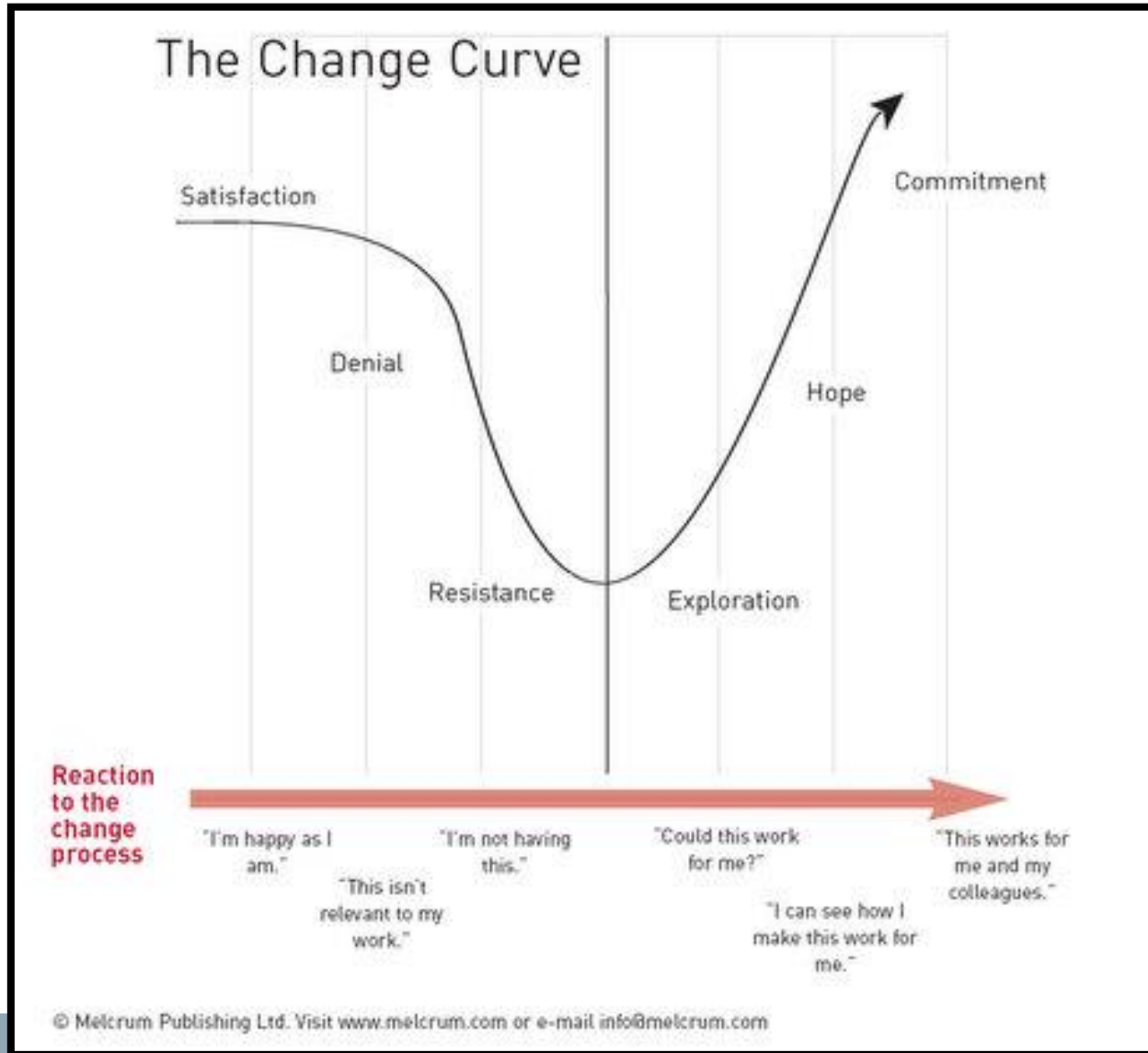


Upload your abstract

Deadline for submission of abstracts has extended to **9th November 2023**



Changing the status quo is challenging



"Change is hard because people overestimate the value of what they have and underestimate the value of what they may gain...."

James Belasco and Ralph Stayer

Evolution not Revolution – Key points

- Social Acceptability SLO **cannot be self-awarded.**
- Trust is earned through listening and engaging and remaining legitimate, credible, and accountable.
- Real commitment to prioritising equine welfare is demonstrated **“not by what is said but by what is done,”**

‘If we don’t change, others will change things for us’: chilling warning to horse sport



The modern pentathlon in Tokyo sparked outrage Credit: Getty Images

[Social licence](#) [Top stories](#) [World Horse Welfare](#)

THE horse world has to be open to new knowledge and scientific evidence when it comes to equine welfare – but a consensus may never fully be reached on

Leadership in prioritising equine welfare

Everyone is responsible for the future of equestrian sports. All equestrians need to optimize and prioritize equine welfare and be seen to be doing so

FEI
Leadership

National
Federation
Leadership

Community
Leadership

Individual
Leadership

**A Good Life
for Horses**

Thanks to my Commission colleagues and the FEI staff and Board

External



Nat Waran (Chair)



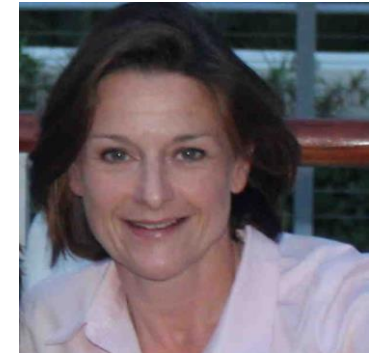
Kathalijne Visser



Camie Heleski

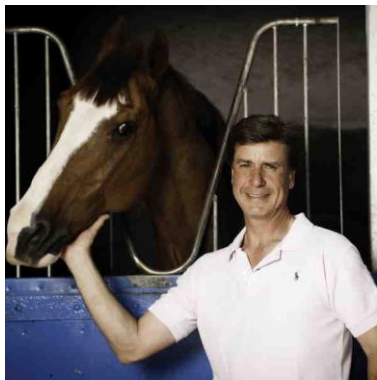


Jessica Stark



Madeleine Campbell

Internal



Cayetano Martíne de Irujo



Ken Lalo



Theo Ploegmakers



Cesar Hirsch



Sabrina Ibáñez



We are grateful to **all** who have generously provided us with support and help in carrying out the Commission's work.