

Workshop, prepared from Th. Kaiser, NZ

The foundation of this workshop are a number of short hoof related presentations designed as a seed for discussion. The presentations are deliberately kept short in order to allow for a long and thorough discussion time. We are aiming to deliver a variety of presentations ranging from academic work to practical application of trimming techniques.

Hoof Balance

The Effects of Hoof Angles

Dealing with Bulb Contraction and Underslung Heels

Developing a Ground Parallel P3

The Scientific Approach

**A SIMPLE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM
TO REDUCE ACCIDENTS IN EQUESTRIAN SPORT**

On 31 October 2008, during the annual conference of the Certified Horsemanship Association held at the Kentucky Horse Park, Dr. Robert Cook, a veterinary researcher, gave a demonstration of relevance to the improvement of welfare and safety for horses and humans.

The demonstration took the form of a scientific experiment in front of witnesses. Four volunteers, all of whom were CHA certified riding instructors, rode four horses that were offered by owners for the purpose. A four-minute, exercise test was first completed using a bitted bridle (jointed snaffle). Immediately afterwards, the same rider/horse partnership repeated the test using the BitlessBridle. Prior to the demonstration, none of the horses had

ever been ridden in a crossunder bitless bridle. The horses' behavior and performance were evaluated and a videotape recording supplemented the 'laboratory notebook.'

An independent judge scored the tests on a scale from one to ten, for each of the 27 phases of the test. The average score when bitted was 37% and, when bitless, 64%. It was a revelation for the horse's owners, riders and spectators that such a significant improvement in performance could be achieved in four minutes by removing the bit and replacing it with a painless method of communication. The experiment also demonstrated that the transition from bitted to bitless was instantaneous.

The results provide further evidence of the need for rule change proposals to be submitted in order that the crossunder bitless bridle, a safer and more humane method of communication than the bit, is made available as an option for competition. In the past ten years, the crossunder bitless bridle has been thoroughly tested on horses of all types, temperaments and stages of schooling; by riders of all ages and ability; in nearly every discipline; and under diverse conditions, worldwide. The scientific, humanitarian and practical equestrian reasons for providing such an option are compelling. The option should not be denied on the grounds of tradition. The bit is a Bronze Age invention. Horsemen now have a better way to communicate with their horse's head.

Members of pony clubs, national equine federations, the international equine federation (FEI), and administrators of racing are urged to submit the necessary rule change proposals in order that the rules, for all disciplines, embrace this historic advance in welfare and safety for horse and rider. Much suffering, many accidents and a host of diseases could be avoided by such a simple administrative reform.

For additional evidence visit www.bitlessbridle.com or contact Robert Cook FRCVS, PhD,
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