



Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

23 February 2012

Our Ref

Professor Paul McGreevy
President, International Society for Equitation Science
Room 206, R.M.C. Gunn Building (B19)
Faculty of Veterinary Science
The University of Sydney NSW 2006

Dear Professor McGreevy

RE: tight nosebands on horses

The RSPCA supports calls from the International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) for changes in the use of nosebands in competitions.

We are opposed to practices that can cause suffering in competing horses, and in particular with the use of training methods which cause distress or suffering.

Society has a responsibility to protect the welfare of the equines that it uses and keeps, whether for recreational or commercial purposes, and those in charge of competitions have a particular duty to ensure the welfare of horses that compete under their rules – in the UK this was enshrined in law under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

The aim of viewing good horsemanship is undermined when artificial aids substitute or exaggerate genuine riding skills. While such tactics and aids may help individual competitors, they may not benefit the sport overall, its supporters or the horses.

The RSPCA firmly believes that the use of excessively tight nosebands should be prohibited by competition regulatory bodies. The evidence makes clear that they can cause suffering, and alteration of the rules of the required standards would be humane and proportionate. These rules should be enforced, for example by stewards objectively checking the tightness, as ISES recommends.

Yours sincerely,

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Head of Companion Animals Department, RSPCA

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