



International Society
for Equitation Science

11th International Equitation Science Conference

Ethical Equitation for all Equestrian Disciplines

Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges

ISES 2015 August 5-8

www.ises2015vancouver.com

A Model for Understanding and Influencing Human

Behaviours towards Show Horses

In recent years there has been increased public attention to the treatment of horses and subsequent increased pressure for the horse industry to address issues related to the welfare of show horses. Various horse organizations have responded by committing to improving horse welfare by convening committees and developing guidelines to address the stewardship of horses with the aim of reducing the occurrence of compromises to horse welfare; however according to Melissa Voigt PhD., from Purdue University, “Despite this commitment, welfare compromises of varying degrees persist. To effectively reduce incidences of inhumane treatment to horses requires an understanding of the reasons for inhumane treatment”.

In her plenary address at the recent International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) conference, Voight discussed the importance of understanding why individuals may behave poorly towards show horses and outlined how these issues can be addressed.

Three research studies on the state of the welfare of stock-type show horses* formed the basis for the development of "*A Model for Understanding and Influencing Human Behaviours toward Show Horses*" by researchers from Purdue University, Oklahoma State University and the University of Georgia. A multi-strategy approach to change human perceptions and behaviours for reducing the frequency of compromises to show horse welfare was determined from the central findings of the research and included influencing behavior through promoting social norms, education, awareness, moral reasoning, investigative behaviour, empathy, de-sanitized language and conversation.

The model provides an understanding of why individuals compromise horse welfare, and can inform decisions on how best to deter the occurrence of harmful practices by humans towards horses. The model can also be used to inform the development of approaches from industry stakeholders to reduce the occurrence of compromises to show horse welfare by encouraging practices focusing on the welfare of the horse through educational intervention and behaviour change.

The model presented by Voight can be used as a practical guide for the design and development of industry efforts to effectively reduce compromises to show horse welfare and as a foundation for future research related to not only show horse welfare, but for the care and treatment of horses and other animals.

***Stock-Type Horse** includes such breed as the Quarter Horse, the Paint Horse, and the Appaloosa which are; in general, horses with a muscular build, relaxed stride, and calm disposition.

Melissa Voigt* (Purdue University), Kristina Hiney (Oklahoma State University, United States); Mark Russell (Purdue University); Jennifer Richardson (Purdue University, United States); Abigail Borron (University of Georgia, United States); Colleen Brady (Purdue University, United States)

voigt@purdue.edu

The International Society for Equitation Science conference offers an outstanding international platform for scientists and professional practitioners to present and discuss research related to the field of equitation science. For more information about the ISES 2015 conference, venue and programme: <http://www.ises2015vancouver.com/>

The International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to facilitate research into the training of horses to enhance horse welfare and improve the horse-rider relationship.

For more information regarding this media release, images and author/s of this presentation contact ISES Media Officer, Alexandria Bailey: media@equitationsscience.com

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