11th International Equitation Science Conference
Ethical Equitation for all Equestrian Disciplines
Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges
ISES 2015 August 5-8
www.ises2015vancouver.com

ISES Principles of Training

Presenting at the 11th International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) conference, in Vancouver, ISES Honorary Fellow, Andrew McLean, PhD, Director of the Australian Equine Behaviour Centre (AEBC) introduced conference delegates to the Principles of Equitation Science and equine welfare.

Equitation Science encompasses and examines the factors that impact on the horse (and rider and therefore the horse) during handling, riding and training. In 2011 the International Society for Equitation Science developed the **ISES First Principles of Training** to encourage the use of approaches to horse training that are welfare friendly and that take into account the ability, and limitations, of the horse. Over the last decade, Equitation Science practitioners working within a wide variety of levels and disciplines have been using these training principles which are based on how the horse learns, to promote and enhance welfare of horses in their interactions with humans.

The ISES Training Principles are based on objective, evidence-based research and a thorough understanding of the horse. This approach takes into account the horse's

behaviour, and psychology, its mental abilities and its physical structure including its anatomy, physiology and biomechanics.

Equitation Science also incorporates existing and emerging knowledge and approaches from an increasing range of scientific and academic areas, such as technology, anthrozoology, philosophy, materials science, sports science and physics in order to improve the welfare of the horse in its interactions with humans.

As a progressive Society, ISES recognises that an expanding knowledge base can be used on a daily basis as new research findings emerge. As a result of this rapid expansion ISES has reviewed and expanded the initial Learning Theory based **First Principles of Training** to include an additional two Training Principles. The revised and expanded Principles of Training now explicitly emphasize the need to train within the horse's behavioural scope and mental limits [New TP: Train according to the horse's ethology and cognition]; and that trainers, riders and handlers (regardless of their discipline or overall training philosophy and/or approach i.e. whether Natural Horsemanship, British Horse Society or other methodology), be aware of the minimum levels of arousal required in order to achieve training aims and goals [New TP: "Demonstrate minimum levels of arousal sufficient for training (to ensure the absence of conflict)"] whilst bearing in mind that exceeding these minimum levels of arousal and attentiveness can rapidly lead to impaired learning and potential welfare concerns.

The ISES emphasises that Equitation Science is **not** a training method; rather it is a **method of training** that fully recognises the physical and psychological abilities and limitations of the horse regardless of breed, conformation and temperament or intended purpose and use of the horse. The ISES Training Principles provide a welfare-friendly foundation upon which to base any approach to the education of horses. The Training Principles **poster** is freely available for download from the ISES website.

Concluding his opening plenary, McLean emphasised that the ISES Training Principles are an evolving set of Training Principles that will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Andrew McLean (Australian Equine Behaviour Centre) & Paul McGreevy (University of Sydney, Australia) andrewmclean@esi-education.com

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@equitationscience.com

For more information regarding the International Society for Equitation Science contact:

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