



The Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare

An all party group for members of both houses at Westminster formed to promote and further the cause of animal welfare by all means available to the Parliaments at Westminster and in Europe

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

26th June 2012

Dear Professor McGreevy

RE: Tight Nosebands on Equines

Members of the Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW) have expressed growing concerns over the use of certain nosebands on horses in competitions which has resulted in my writing to you.

Naturally, APGAW is opposed to practices that can cause suffering in competing horses, and particularly alongside the use of training methods which cause distress or suffering. As you know, your recent study published this year explored the effect on the temperature of the eyes and facial skin of horses wearing devices that restrict jaw movements such as the 'cranked noseband'. It was suggested that these tight nosebands can compromise vascular perfusion, causing unnecessary suffering to the horse and can mask unwanted behaviour in horses during competitions, which may be reflective of the horse feeling pain and discomfort or poor training of the horse. This has been backed up by supporting evidence that horses forced to wear restrictive or tight nosebands often have a physiological stress response which can include reduced blood flow, tissue damage and nasal bone deformities.

All of this means a negative impact on the welfare of competition horses and under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, those in charge of competitions have a particular duty to ensure the welfare of horses that compete under their rules. It is with this in mind that leads APGAW to feel that the use of excessively tight nosebands should be prohibited by competition regulatory bodies. The Group fully supports the International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) recommendation that stewards should check the tightness of the noseband before each competition by placing two fingers under the noseband to determine if it has been over tightened.

The evidence makes clear to me that this practice can cause suffering, and alteration of the rules of the required standards would be humane and proportionate. Therefore, I hope that our views will be taken into account in the consideration of this matter and the upcoming Olympics.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Parish MP
Chairman of APGAW

Marisa Heath, Secretariat

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