

IAABC

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ANIMAL BEHAVIOR CONSULTANTS

Prof Paul McGreevy
Faculty of Veterinary Science
The University of Sydney
Rm 206, R.M.C. Gunn Building (B19)
The University of Sydney
NSW, 2006

June 2, 2015

Dear Professor McGreevy,

Re: The use of restrictive nosebands during horse training and competition

I am writing to you on behalf of the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) Board of Directors. The IAABC strongly supports the position statement of the International Society of Equitation Science (ISES) which states that the use of an over-tightened noseband can cause both physiological and psychological distress to the horse.

The horse is a silent communicator. He expresses his inner emotional states or reactions to pain through subtle changes in facial expressions and body language instead of cries, whimpers, or yelps. Over-tightening the noseband beyond the recommended 'two fingers' guideline physically prohibits the horse from communicating these important behavioral indicators, which ethically should be considered during any horse training or competition. Restrictive nosebands also magnify pain and pressure that results from the bit, and prevent the horse from escaping overly strong rein aids given by the rider. Ignoring or masking these indicators leads to measurable physiological and psychological distress for the horse, which can further result in welfare issues, abuse, and even wastage of the horse.

The use of an overly tight noseband is not required to safely and successfully train horses up through the highest levels of equestrian achievement. In light of this, we also support the ISES recommendation that the nosebands of all horses be checked by a steward with a Noseband Taper Gauge prior to competition. If we are to use the horse for sport and pleasure, it is our duty as their stewards to ensure any suffering is minimized.

We greatly appreciate the research that you and your colleagues have done to date, bringing awareness to this serious issue within the horse industry.

Warmest regards,



Lauren Fraser, CHBC
IAABC Horse Chair