

## **FEI PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FEI BUREAU APPROVES NEW STEWARDS' GUIDELINES ON WARM-UP TECHNIQUES**

The FEI Bureau today gave its unanimous approval to new Stewards' guidelines on warm-up techniques produced by the Working Group formed after the round-table conference held in Lausanne on 9 February 2010.

One of the key stipulations in the Working Group's report was that all unacceptable training methods and techniques must be stopped immediately. The Working Group was also insistent that abuse of the horse should be avoided and, in particular, stressing the horse, aggressive riding and inflicting pain and/or discomfort on the horse must be prevented.

The current guidelines for FEI Stewards already include instructions covering aggressive riding, but the Working Group has created a new Annex (XIII) that includes clear instructions on action to be taken if necessary relating to flexion of the horse's neck during pre and post-competition training.

The key initiatives in the new guidelines, which will be implemented from 15 May 2010, are:

- Movements which involve having the horse's head and neck carriage in a sustained or fixed position should only be performed for periods not exceeding approximately ten minutes without change (diagrams defining the head and neck positions will be provided to the Stewards)
- No single neck position should be maintained which may lead to tiredness or stress
- The rider is not permitted to use rough, or abrupt aids or apply constant unyielding pressure on the horse's mouth through a fixed arm and hand position

The guidelines state that it is the steward's responsibility to ensure that riders respect the above procedures and intervene if required. The steward will intervene should he/she observe:

- Neck stretching achieved through forced or aggressive riding
- The use of extreme flexion if it does not comply with the above
- A rider deliberately maintaining a sustained fixed head and neck carriage longer than approximately ten minutes
- If the horse is in a state of general stress and/or fatigue

The steward may also ask the rider to walk for a certain period in situations where the rider's stress may cause undesired riding.

Only in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the Chief Steward, may a pre- competition training session exceed one hour. There should be at least one hour break between any training/warm-up periods.

Repetition of movements carried out in the practice arena, post-competition, may not exceed a period of ten minutes.

All training sessions, including pre-competition warm-up, may only be performed in the official training arena while under the supervision of stewards. Use of a training arena outside the official training period, and/or in an unsupervised arena, may at the discretion of the Ground Jury lead to the rider's disqualification.

The Chief Steward must be present in the training arena during pre-competition training and for the duration of the competition, be in a position to observe the training arena at events where numerous training arenas are in use, or appoint a suitable deputy.

The introduction of CCTV for selected events is recommended in order to provide a means for monitoring the practice arena. A new group should be established specifically for the purpose of investigating cases which occur during the course of an event but could not be dealt with, for whatever reason, during the event.

A new education and assessment system for stewards will ensure consistency and a high standard of stewarding.

National Federations will be asked to send the new guidelines to all their Stewards immediately to prepare for implementation on 15 May 2010. If modifications to the guidelines are required, these will be initiated by a Council of Horsemen, which will be set up specifically for this purpose.

'Everyone in the FEI has horse welfare at heart and these new guidelines will help the Stewards be more proactive, giving them the authority to do their job and prevent abuse in all disciplines' , Working Group Chair Frank Kemperman said. 'A huge amount of work has gone into producing these guidelines so it is pleasing that the Bureau has given them unanimous approval. The principle on which these guidelines are based is respect for the horse, but also for the Stewards, who do a difficult job with great dedication.'

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** The working group was made up of Dressage Committee Chair Frank Kemperman (Chairman), Richard Davison (GBR), Rider/Trainer; John P. Roche (IRL), FEI Director Jumping/Stewarding; Jacques Van Daele (BEL), FEI Honorary Dressage Steward General/Judge; Wolfram Wittig (GER), Trainer; and Trond Asmyr (NOR), FEI Dressage and Para Equestrian Dressage Director/Judge. Input was also received from Dr Gerd Heuschmann and Sjef Janssen and from the FEI Jumping Committee.

The full report of the Working Group can be viewed [HERE](#).

The annex, which was added to the FEI Manual for Dressage Stewards, can be viewed [HERE](#). (Annex XIII: Pre and Post Competition training techniques, position of the horse's head, stretching)

*Other decisions taken by the FEI Bureau at today's meeting are summarised in the attached document.*

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