

# How fit are jockeys and how do we measure race riding fitness

**Professor Chris Rogers, Massey University**

Thoroughbred racing jockeys compete at the highest levels of physical demand, navigating a sport known for its significant risk of falls and injuries. Understanding the physical factors that influence jockey performance is essential to establishing minimum physical performance standards and designing interventions that can enhance jockey fitness, improve performance, and reduce injuries for both jockeys and the horses they ride.

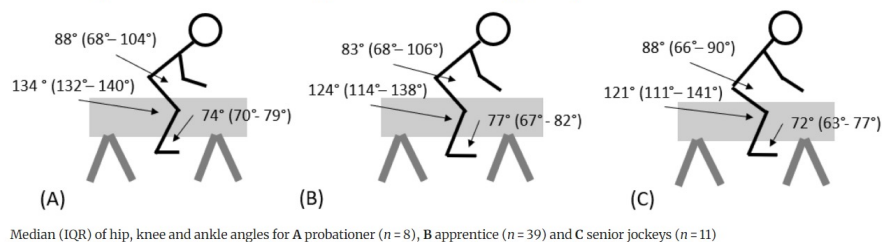
As part of a programme developing education and physical fitness programmes for apprentice jockeys at Massey University, Dr Kylie Legg has been measuring the fitness of apprentice jockeys as they progress through the training programme as well as obtaining data on elite



jockeys in New Zealand. In a recent article published in the Journal of Science in Sport and Exercise, Kylie reported on the physical fitness and reaction time test data between different experience levels of jockeys. In this study, groups of apprentice jockeys and professional jockeys were tested using a battery of conventional fitness tests, reaction time tests and a recently developed "saddle test" that mimics the position and activity of race riding.

More experienced jockeys had greater lower body strength and better balance compared to less experienced jockeys. This physical edge is crucial for maintaining control and stability whilst riding races. Elite jockeys had faster reaction times and greater core strength than others. Quick reactions and core stability are vital for adapting to sudden changes during a race and maintaining optimal riding posture. Most of the conventional exercise tests used were not specific enough to provide differentiation between jockey levels. However, the "saddle test" identified obvious differences between groups, with elite/experienced jockeys able to maintain the race position for longer and in a position that reflected race riding. This bespoke test may provide an effective summative tool for measuring the physical fitness and race riding progress of apprentice jockeys.

From: **Physical Fitness of Thoroughbred Horse Racing Jockeys**



The findings from this study can help establish minimum physical standards for jockeys and guide the development of fitness programs tailored to the needs of riders at different stages of their careers. By enhancing the physical fitness of jockeys, the risks of falls and injuries can be minimised, leading to safer and more successful performances on the racetrack. These insights will be integral to refining training protocols within the Apprentice Jockey Training Program, ensuring that jockeys are prepared to meet the demands of their sport while maintaining the highest standards of safety and performance.

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## Update: Tetanus vaccination guidelines for New Zealand

Tetanus is a painful and usually fatal disease unless treated early and aggressively. Horses are highly susceptible to tetanus; however, it is easily preventable with correct vaccination. But what vaccination protocol should be used, given that recommendations from around the world differ and data on our New Zealand vaccine is limited?

Tetanus is caused by *Clostridium tetani* bacteria, which are found commonly in the environment all over the world. The bacteria usually enter the horse's body through wounds and proliferate in low oxygen (anaerobic) environments, such as occurs with bruising or an infection. They produce a powerful toxin which blocks nerve function and results in painful tetanic spasms and eventual death if not treated.

Vaccination with tetanus toxoid (TT) generates an effective, reliable immune response but three separate vaccine doses are required for long-lasting immunity. The first two doses, when administered 4-6 weeks apart, induce immunity against tetanus that lasts at least 12 months. However, antibodies against tetanus produced by the horse in response to the vaccine begin to wane after 12 months; hence, to achieve long lasting immunity, a third TT dose within 12 months of the second dose is required. Most horses maintain anti-tetanus antibody concentrations in the blood above the 'protective' level for many years following this vaccination program. As with all biological systems, vaccination does not guarantee an adequate immune response in every individual, and in New Zealand there is no test to measure anti-tetanus antibodies. Therefore, if there is increased risk of tetanus (e.g. when a horse sustains a wound or hoof abscess or has surgery), or vaccination history is unknown or incomplete, further doses of TT can be given.

The TT vaccine should not be confused with Tetanus Anti-Toxin (TAT) which is a biological product that provides a temporary increase in anti-tetanus antibodies which neutralise tetanus toxin. TAT is not a vaccine and does not stimulate the horse to manufacture its own antibodies; it only provides short term passive protection. Active immunity through vaccination with TT is required to provide superior and long-lasting protection against tetanus.

In 2023, a group of equine specialists examined the literature, with the aim of generating guidelines to help NZ veterinarians and horse owners provide effective vaccination for all horses in many different scenarios. The complete article, entailing nine guidelines, was published this year in the New Zealand Veterinary Journal, titled: Tetanus prophylaxis in horses: guidelines

for New Zealand and Australia based on a critical appraisal of the evidence (AL Lovett, CB Riley, V Chapman, B Bell, B Bishop, A Grierson, LJ Johnstone & BW Sykes). The most common scenarios for vaccination are summarised below.

1. All horses, regardless of their use, should undergo the primary TT vaccination protocol, followed by TT booster doses to maintain active immunity. The primary TT vaccination protocol for horses  $\geq 6$  months of age consists of three doses; the first two doses are given 4-6 weeks apart, followed by a third dose 12 months after the second. In foals between 3 and 6 months of age, four doses should be given, with the first three doses 4-6 weeks apart and the timing of the third dose not before six months of age. The fourth dose should be given 12 months after the third. Following the completion of the primary protocol, a TT booster dose should be administered within 5 years, and every 5 years thereafter.
2. When a correctly vaccinated horse experiences a risk event, such as a wound, hoof abscess or surgery, pre-existing immunity should provide sufficient protection against tetanus and a TAT should not be required. If it has been  $\leq 12$  months since the last TT, a TT booster is not required. If it has been  $\geq 5$  years since the last TT, administer a TT booster dose. If it has been  $> 12$  months but  $< 5$  years since the last TT, administration of a TT booster dose is at the attending veterinarian's discretion depending on the perceived risk.
3. When an unvaccinated horse or one with unknown vaccination status experiences a risk event, both a TT and TAT should be administered simultaneously at separate sites, and the primary TT vaccination protocol should then be completed as above. A second TAT may be warranted 7 days after the first, if ongoing risk is suspected.
4. In previously immunised pregnant broodmares, a TT booster dose administered

4-8 weeks prior to foaling optimises the transfer of passive immunity against tetanus to the newborn foal via the colostrum. Provided passive transfer of antibodies has occurred (post-natal serum IgG concentration is  $> 800$  mg/dL (8 g/L)), the foal should be protected against tetanus up to 6 months of age. These foals do not need a TAT at birth and primary TT vaccination may start from 3-6 months as above.

5. In foals that may not have received adequate colostrum or are born to unvaccinated mares TT vaccination can commence at any age; however, foals  $< 3$  months old may not develop a reliable response to the TT. A more reliable response is likely from 3 months of age so if TT vaccination is commenced at  $< 3$  months of age a TT should be administered every 4-6 weeks until 6 months. The final TT dose of the primary protocol should be administered within 12 months of the TT dose administered at 6 months. In foals  $< 3$  months old, passive immunity from a TAT or plasma from a TT-immunised donor might offer better protection against tetanus, although the duration of protection using these forms of prophylaxis is variable between individual foals.

6. Unvaccinated horses that have survived tetanus must still be vaccinated as the actual infection does not confer immunity. They should receive the 3-dose program (2 vaccinations 4-6 weeks apart followed by a third 12 months later), and for long-lasting immunity, booster doses of TT should be given within 5 years and every 5 years thereafter

It is worth remembering that successful active immunisation and duration of protection from vaccination is not absolute and are dependent on several key factors: the individual horse's response to the vaccine, the product preparation (including product storage), and protocol of administration. Should any of these factors be in doubt, additional TT doses at more frequent intervals might be beneficial.





## Allan Fenwick retires from NZERF Board

Allan Fenwick has retired from the NZERF Board after an involvement of just over 30 years.

Allan attended his first NZERF Board meeting in 1994 as Chief Executive of NZ Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR) and continued in this capacity until his retirement from NZTR in 2005. At the request of the Board Allan then continued as a co-opted Board Member. When David Jewell retired in 2009 Allan agreed to become the Secretary of the NZERF and has continued in that role since. NZERF is further indebted to Allan's generosity as he mentors a new secretary into the role.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my involvement with the Foundation over the years. With representatives from all equine codes as well as academia and the veterinary profession it has been stimulating to work together to encourage research and further study via scholarships and then to distribute the findings and reports via seminars, publications, websites and social media" Allan said. "Every Board member during my time has enthusiastically contributed to advancing the objectives of the Foundation. I have also had the pleasure of working with 4 outstanding Chairs of the Foundation. Dr Brian Goulden was a driving force in getting the Foundation established on a sound financial basis and his enthusiasm has carried on through Dr John O'Flaherty, Dr Margaret Evans and the current Chair, Dr Tim Peace. Investment in Research and Education does not always get the financial support that it should, meaning the Board has had to work hard to raise funds for its activities. The support of our sponsors and equine sector groups has been much appreciated and is critical to fund the Foundation's activities."

"NZERF has been the recipient of a substantial contribution from Allan" commented current Chairman, Dr Tim Pearce. "His knowledge of the equine industry is very significant, and he is passionate about the need for research and education in the equine sector. We have all benefited from this."

Allan has always been an encyclopedia of Thoroughbred racing knowledge and remains an enthusiastic participant through ownership. We wish him continuing success with his horses in the future.



Allan Fenwick (right) receiving a token of appreciation from Chairman Dr Tim Pearce

## New NZERF Secretary: Hillary Milne

NZERF is pleased to welcome Hillary Milne as the new Secretary, taking over from Allan Fenwick who is retiring after 30 years of service.

Hillary lives on a sheep and beef farm with her husband Dave and 3 children, Annabelle, Sarah and Hamish, who all ride and attend Ranch Horse and other local events. Hillary has been involved in the equine industry her whole life, through involvement in the family's Clydesdale stud, attending pony club, show jumping, stewarding, judging and organising shows.

After leaving a career in Primary Health Care Nursing to pursue opportunities in the equine industry, Hillary completed a Bachelor of

Equine Science (Hons) at Massey University. During this time, she worked for Thoroughbred studs in the Manawatu.

Hillary also works for the NZ Equine Health Association (NZEHA) on the National Equine Identification and Traceability (NEIT) project, and as administrator for the Equine Welfare and Ethics (EqWE) subcommittee. She has attended 3 Equifest events promoting both NZEHA and NZERF.

Hillary is looking forward to being involved in the NZERF, especially promoting scientific knowledge about horses and exploring latest developments in the equine industry.

## New sponsor of the Young Achiever Award!

The NZERF are very pleased to announce the Salient Equine Trust as the new sponsor of the Young Achiever Award. The Salient Trust is the brainchild of Jenny Kain from Cambridge. Named after Salient, one of Jenny's favourite racehorses, the Trust contributes to horse welfare initiatives and the education of equine owners, hence she saw the NZERF Young Achiever Award as a good fit.

The NZERF would like to express its gratitude to Jenny for her future involvement, as well as sincere thanks to Valachi Downs and the Hickman family for their generous sponsorship of this award over recent years.

Jenny Kain (left) with 2023 Special Salient Trust Award recipient Ike Baker ►





## Repair of a Recto-vaginal Fistula in a Maiden Thoroughbred Broodmare

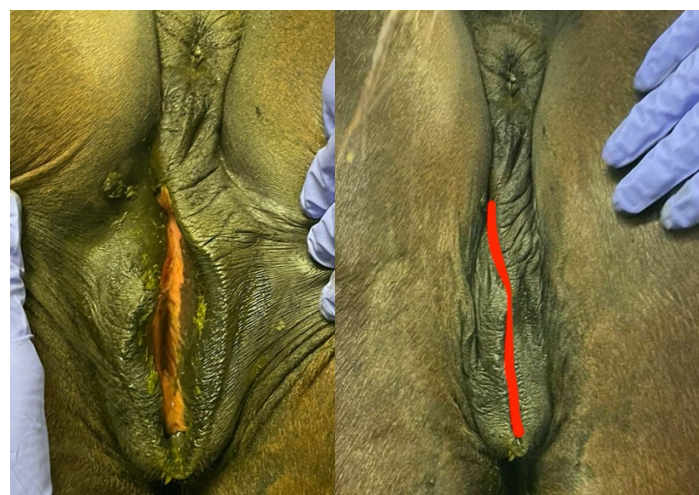
**Siobhan Waters, 2023 Massey Veterinary Student Scholarship Recipient**

### History

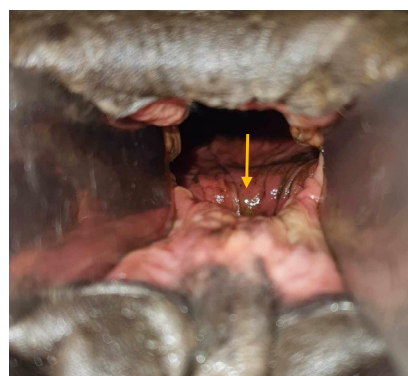
An 11-year-old Thoroughbred broodmare presented in July 2023 with a recto-vaginal fistula (an opening between the rectum and the vagina) that was sustained whilst birthing her first foal in October 2022. The injury occurred because the foaling alarm failed, resulting in an unassisted delivery. When the owner discovered the mare trying to foal, the foal's front feet had pierced through the roof of the vagina into the rectum. Fortunately, the owner was able to manually replace the legs back into their normal position and the foaling proceeded normally. The mare subsequently passed the fetal membranes but developed a uterine infection which was treated appropriately and resolved, but the fistula remained. The owner intended to breed the mare again in the coming breeding season and wanted the fistula repaired. The mare presented up to date with worming, tetanus and strangles vaccinations.

### Clinical findings

The mare was systemically healthy. She had an abnormally conformed vulva due to an external tear that occurred during foaling (Figure 1). Soft formed faeces was present within the vagina. There was a large (6cm by 4cm) oval-shaped fistula between the vaginal vault and the rectum, relatively deep within the pelvic canal (Figure 2). The mare urinated more frequently than normal and each time she urinated a small amount of soft formed faeces was passed as well.



**Figure 1:** Abnormally conformed vulva. Left: vulval lips parted; Right: red line shows where the left and right vulval lips joined.

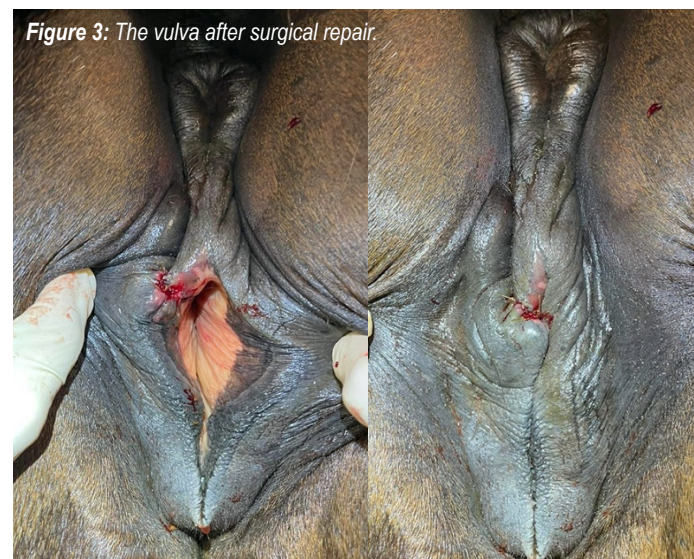


**Figure 2:** View through the rectum showing the 6cm by 4cm recto-vaginal fistula (arrow).

### Treatment

It is imperative that mares undergoing recto-vaginal fistula repair have a low bulk diet of fresh lush grass (no hay) for 3-4 weeks prior to surgery to ensure that their faeces is soft and doesn't irritate the surgical site post-operatively. The mare was sedated and epidural anaesthesia was performed. The rectum was packed to prevent faecal contamination

of the surgical site. The recto-vaginal fistula was repaired through the rectum. Because the rectal and vaginal mucosal layers had healed to each other the edges of the fistula had to be cut to separate the rectal and vaginal mucosal layers around the edges of the fistula. The fistula was then closed in two layers. After repairing the fistula the top part of the vulva was then anaesthetised with local anesthetic solution, trimmed with scissors and sutured back into its correct anatomical position (Figure 3). The mare was given injectable antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs for 5 days post operatively. At discharge she was switched to oral antibiotics for another 7 days.



**Figure 3:** The vulva after surgical repair.

### Discussion

Recto-vaginal fistulas commonly occur in maiden broodmares due to a combination of hymen remnants and a tight vestibulo-vaginal sphincter. The theory is that the foal's front hoof gets caught on a fold of tissue in the roof of the vagina as it passes through the birth canal, and the foot then pierces through the roof of the vagina into the rectum. If the birth is unassisted and the foal doesn't retract the foot on its own then the mare's forceful abdominal contractions will propel the foal outwards and rip the recto-vaginal shelf all the way to the skin (third-degree recto-vaginal laceration). This emphasizes the importance of having working foaling alarms, as an assisted birth greatly reduces the incidence of either of these complications.

Small recto-vaginal fistulas can sometimes heal on their own but large ones need to be repaired to prevent chronic endometritis and infertility. The injury was repaired in winter to allow time for the fistula to heal before the start of the Thoroughbred breeding season. A study of 28 non-Thoroughbred mares with recto-vaginal fistulas showed that it is possible and even beneficial for fertility to inseminate the mare in the same cycle as the surgical repair is done, using artificial insemination rather than live breeding. Inseminating mares <48 hours prior to the surgery and treating them with intrauterine antibiotics within 24 hours of ovulation yielded 100% pregnancy rates, with 80% of mares giving birth to a live foal. Other mares were bred or inseminated after the rectovaginal fistula repair, either in the next cycle or the following season, with a total pregnancy rate of 87%.

### Conclusion

Unassisted foaling of maiden mares can result in development of recto-vaginal fistulas or third-degree lacerations, which can be surgically repaired. The prognosis for future fertility of mares after fistula repair is excellent.



## 2024 Salient Equine Trust Scholarship awarded to Devon Tretheway-Koppers

Devon Tretheway-Koppers, the therapeutic programme lead for EquiPotential Equine Assisted Services in Hamilton, has been awarded a Salient Equine Trust Scholarship which enabled her to attend the Horses in Education and Therapy International congress (HETI) in Budapest, Hungary, from 18-22 June 2024 to bring her knowledge up to an international standard.

The most common therapeutic riding service in NZ consists of the “riding for the disabled” organisations, which limit intake to those with physical or mental disabilities. Four years ago, four of these organisations converted to “EquiPotential”, an organisation that also accepts individuals with mental welfare concerns, and it is in this field that so much additional advantage can be gained. Intake has increased from 150 people per 10-week block to 200, and many are people coming from psychiatric institutions, people with depression, people who have self-harmed and people who have trouble with communication.

Trained coaches design, develop and deliver specialised programmes enabling people to build their capabilities through the interaction with horses and to allow them to find strength and improve wellbeing and independence. Follow-up has revealed that many people improved after interactions with horses.

NZERF appreciates the financial support of the Salient Trust and Jenny Kain for this Scholarship.

*Devon Tretheway-Koppers, recipient of the 2024 Salient Equine Trust Scholarship* ▶



## International Symposium on Equine Reproduction 2023

### Dr Lee Morris

Once every four years the world cup of equine reproduction, the International Symposium on Equine Reproduction (ISER), is held in some corner of the world, and in 2023 it was in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. There was much anticipation for this event after the delays of Covid, and finally 300 of the world's best equine reproductive research scientists gathered to celebrate their work. So, it was an honour for me to present work that was funded by the NZ Equine Trust using a travel grant provided by the NZERF.

Our study on embryo metabolism and its relationship with embryo quality was selected for an oral presentation. This work was the product of a collaborative effort between EquiBreed NZ and Dr Zamira Gibb's group from the University of Newcastle. During this study, a simplified embryo grading system was developed for both in vivo- and in vitro-derived embryos, which proved to be significantly associated with both embryo metabolism and survival rates following transfer into a recipient mare. This enables us to provide clients with realistic probabilities for the establishment of pregnancy after freezing, thawing and transferring their valuable embryos. The work also established a baseline from which other embryo studies can be launched, which will contribute to our understanding of embryo development and early pregnancy loss in the mare.

I was also the convenor for the session on the non-pregnant mare. This session was dominated by research in the field of endometritis. Old and new non-antibiotic alternative treatments for endometritis were critically evaluated, including the use of mesenchymal stem cells, ozonated oils, intra-uterine vitamins, and platelet rich plasma. It concluded that some treatments are promising, and others failed. There is a lot of interest in the equine endometrial microbiome and its relationship with fertility, and Babiche Heil (formerly from Matamata Veterinary Services Equine) presented her work on the microbiome in anoestrous mares. So, New Zealand was well represented!

In the stallion sessions there was much excitement about the development of new microfluidic devices that can select a population of fertile semen without the need for centrifugation. New developments in the embryo field included improvements in sexing embryos before freezing and the evaluation of nutritional supplements and their beneficial effects on oocyte/egg quality. There was also a lot of research involving genetic analysis of oocytes



*Dr Babiche Heil (left) & Dr Lee Morris at ISER 2023*

and embryos to improve our understanding of embryo development and early pregnancy loss in mares.

By the end of the weeklong symposium, I was proud to reflect that the research being undertaken in the field of equine reproduction in New Zealand is in line with topics of international interest and significance. Our team at EquiBreed ART is very grateful to the NZERF and the Equine Trust for supporting the work that we do for our breeders.

## 2024 Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarships awarded to Dr Caroline Thompson and Dr Stephanie Brooks

Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarships have been awarded to Dr Caroline Thompson and Dr Stephanie Brooks, both equine veterinarians from Matamata Veterinary Services.

Caroline has a special interest in equine anaesthesia, especially that involving neonates. She currently mentors Massey University equine-tracking final year veterinary students that spend time at the Matamata Veterinary Services Equine Hospital in anaesthesia, as well as teaching anaesthesia to new interns at the practice. While very experienced, Caroline has no specialist qualification in anaesthesia. To address this, she used her Scholarship to travel to the UK in May 2024 to visit with anaesthetists in practice at Rosssdales Equine Hospital, Rainbow Equine and Liverpool University.

Stephanie Brooks has excelled as a neonatal clinician and has also played an important role in educating visiting Massey University equine-tracking final year veterinary students in this field. Her long-term goal is to become a specialist in Equine Internal Medicine and improve her teaching skills so that she can more effectively pass her knowledge on to students. Steph is thrilled to have been accepted into a residency in Equine Internal Medicine at Purdue University in Indiana, USA. She will use her Scholarship to help her move to the USA, where she will spend the next three years studying. Her aim is to return to NZ as an expert in equine neonatology and transfer this knowledge to her peers.

The NZERF is very much indebted to Dr Hope for offering this unique Scholarship which enables our equine veterinarians to travel and pursue educational goals either in NZ or around the world.



Caroline Thompson (left) & Stephanie Brooks, recipients of 2024 Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarships

## 2024 Valachi Downs Young Achiever Award recipient: Carter Dalgety

The recipient of the 2024 Valachi Downs Young Achiever Award is Canterbury harness racing driver Carter Dalgety. Carter is an individual who always seeks to better both his personal standards and those of the industry he cherishes, and he has excelled as a racing driver.

While working full time in racing and travelling throughout the country to drive, Carter is studying for a Bachelor's in Commerce with a double major, which he will complete this year. He has also developed and is running his own clothing company.

Carter realises there are different styles of Standardbred rearing, training and racing internationally, and will be using the scholarship money to spend six weeks in the USA this year, where horses race younger and only over a mile. He then wants to go to Sweden for another six weeks in 2025, where racehorses are older and race over far longer distances. Armed with this knowledge, Carter wants to bring some innovative ideas back to NZ to contribute to advancing the Standardbred industry here. With his excellent work ethic and enquiring mind, Carter is the ideal recipient of this prestigious award.

The NZERF acknowledges the recent passing of Kevin Hickman, a long-time supporter of our activities. In particular, the Hickman Family and Valachi Downs have generously sponsored the Valachi Downs Young Achiever Award for the last 10 years, which has enabled 10 young New Zealanders to undertake further study, often internationally, in their chosen equine career. Without this support, we would not have been able to offer this opportunity to these high achieving individuals. The NZERF is truly grateful to the Hickman family for having made this award possible.



## NZERF Video Library



The NZERF is proud to add two new videos to its video library, a resource designed to provide science-based information for all horse owners. The videos run for around seven minutes each and are presented in easy-to-understand language.

Last month, Dr Stephanie Brooks from Matamata Veterinary Services, in conjunction with Eclare Productions, created two wonderful videos on Equine Herpes Virus infections (EHV1) in horses. The first video covers respiratory conditions whilst the second deals with neonatal foal infections, abortions in mares and the neurologic form of EHV1. The videos provide a well-delivered narrative from Stephanie, accompanied by clear pictorial and diagrammatic material to illustrate relevant points. They join our video library which now includes:

- EHV1 (part A)
- EHV1 (part B)
- Equine Dentistry
- Equine Metabolic Syndrome
- Laminitis
- Strangles
- Gastric Ulcers in horses

NZERF appreciates the time and effort all the presenters have put into these videos and wishes to thank the Rodmor Charitable Trust for generously supporting the establishment of the Video Library. All videos are freely available on the NZERF website and official NZERF YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@nzerf5754>



## NZ Equine Health Association Update

1. The NZEHA has been granted Charitable status. This means it is no longer required to pay tax on the fund it was required to establish for biosecurity readiness and response by MPI, our Government Industry Agreement partner. The EHA receives income for this fund from the border levy on horses and equine germplasm and the sales of Equine Influenza vaccine.

2. The Code of Practice allowing the use of selected Restricted Veterinary Medicines by suitably qualified lay people when accompanying horses travelling by air has been updated and converted to the now required Veterinary Operating Instruction. This has been done largely through the efforts of the Chairman, Dr Ivan Bridge. Concurrently, the MPI Guidance Document for transport of horses by air is finally almost completed and has had huge input from the NZEHA.

3. Last year NZEHA consulted with MPI as they undertook an updated risk analysis for imported horses, which was then used to draft a new Equine Import Health Standard (IHS). This lists all the disease testing and biosecurity procedures which must be followed when importing horses to New Zealand. However, NZEHA was extremely surprised and concerned that MPI is proposing to allow the importation of zoo equids from many countries around the world without requiring any of the same disease testing or biosecurity related procedures as had been agreed was necessary for all other equines. NZEHA has submitted strenuous arguments to MPI on behalf of the equine sector and will engage further if MPI fails to recognise the risk such imports pose to New Zealand horses if allowed under their proposed regime.

4. The Chairman of NZEHA is playing a central role in the establishment of an equine crematorium. This will address the increasing difficulties being experienced with the disposal of dead horses.

5. Welfare discussions have centred largely around social licence to operate (SLO), and the need to drive consistent messaging across different equine organisations for the purpose of maintaining the social licence to operate in equine activities. Whilst there is agreement that there is a need to keep the public informed of the efforts being made to provide horses with the best possible life, it is felt that the information should be more carefully selected and its dissemination better coordinated and managed. To that end NZEHA has convened an Equine Welfare and Ethics (EqWE) Advisory Committee. The inaugural chair of this group is Dr Tony Parsons and it includes representation from across the equine community.

6. National Equine Identification and Traceability (NEIT) project. For some time now the NZEHA has promoted the benefit of a national centralised equine database to the equine sector. After lengthy investigation it appears that the best way of doing this is through section 50 of the Biosecurity Act, which provides the authority to introduce an animal identification system for various purposes, one of which is to enable biosecurity activities for animals.

NZEHA approached MPI to set up the system as a joint disease readiness project, which would see MPI funding half of the costs. Unfortunately, MPI did not have sufficient funds to partner in the project. NZEHA then approached Companion Animal New Zealand (CANZ), a not-for-profit organisation which maintains a database for companion animals. NZEHA, in partnership with CANZ, will further develop the fields and functionality of their existing registry, enabling it to have a separate interface managed by NZEHA for biosecurity purposes.

At the same time, NZEHA is working with MPI to draft supporting legislation that details the regulations surrounding the identification and registration of horses. It is likely the legislation will make it compulsory for horse owners to microchip foals born from a specified date as well as all imported horses, and register them on the national database, providing contact details of the person in charge and the horse's physical home location information. While it will take many years before the entire horse population is captured, owners of older non-microchipped horses are encouraged to have them microchipped and added into CANZ's NZ Companion Animal Register (NZCAR) and participate in the many other benefits of doing so. Should the NEIT biosecurity database become mandated, NZCAR-registered horse owners will have the option of joining the NEIT free of charge and without any further action required from horse owners.

Integration of existing breed registers with the national system is encouraged and work will soon commence to link Thoroughbred and Standardbred registries with the developing National register.



## New Zealand Equine Research Foundation Scholarships and Grants

### Salient Trust Young Achiever Award

\$15,000 available annually to assist an individual under the age of 35 in their career in the equine industry

[www.nzerf.co.nz/salienttrustyoungachiever](http://www.nzerf.co.nz/salienttrustyoungachiever)

Closes 31st January annually

### Travel Awards

For any travel relating to research and development in the NZ horse industry.

[www.nzerf.co.nz/travel\\_awards](http://www.nzerf.co.nz/travel_awards)

Applications received any time

### Equine Research Grants

Applications from interested people for funding for projects in the field of equine research.

<https://nzerf.org.nz/research-grants>

Closes 30th April annually

### Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarship

\$10,000 available to help a "young at heart" New Zealand-based veterinarian gain practical skills that will be valuable in supporting his or her work within the NZ horse industry.

<https://nzerf.org.nz/jonathan-hope-equine-veterinary-scholarship>

Closes 31st January annually

### Massey Veterinary Student Scholarships

Up to \$3000 awarded to final year students studying full time in the Bachelor of Veterinary Science degree at Massey University who plan to work primarily in the equine industry.

[scholarships@massey.ac.nz](mailto:scholarships@massey.ac.nz)

Closes 30th September annually

### Veterinarian – Farrier Scholarships

\$3,000 each for a veterinarian and a farrier from the same geographic location to attend a suitable course or symposium and/or spend time with colleagues in the USA.

<https://nzerf.org.nz/vet-farrier-scholarship>

Closes 30 November annually

Applicants should apply in writing/  
email to The Secretary:

Email: [info@nzerf.org.nz](mailto:info@nzerf.org.nz)

## Chairman's Corner

At the time of writing spring is approaching and the Olympics are catching our attention once more. Despite our eventers not bringing home a medal I believe we can be very proud of how they presented themselves and their horses in Paris. In a world full of ever-growing challenges for equine sport in general, the whole Olympic event looked amazing with some very beautiful and talented horses competing. The standard of preparation of both horses and riders just keeps getting better and it's wonderful to see these international athletes perform. Sadly, images of isolated 'training' incidents circulating on social media undermine the exceptionally high standard of care and welfare most horses in sport receive. As the challenges around social licence grow the need for quality research to help us better manage and improve outcomes for our horses becomes even more important.

This year the NZERF has committed to another research project by Dr Lee Morris around reproductive performance in mares. Lee has a great record with the NZERF, getting some excellent projects completed, and has encouraged many new people into equine research. Funding for such research is hard to secure and producing an application for a worthwhile project is difficult. We are grateful to people like Lee who are so committed to this process.

As a "stop press" to this issue the NZERF are very excited to welcome Hillary Milne as the new secretary. Hillary is an animal science graduate, active horsewoman, mother and wife. She has had extensive experience with the NZ Equine Health Association and has large shoes to fill, with Allan Fenwick retiring. Allan has been a NZERF board member,

representing NZTR, for 30 years, and has been secretary since 2009. He has done an outstanding job and promises to provide support especially with the financials for the next wee while.

The other change in the NZERF board is the stepping down of Dr Alex Fowler, who has represented NZEVA for the last 3-4 years. Alex has had a great input to the board and convened our Vet/Farrier selection panel but now has growing commitments with a young family. Alex's role will be filled by Dr Lucy Russell, who is the new president of NZEVA and a past recipient of our Young Achiever Award. Welcome Lucy!

**Dr Tim Pearce, NZERF Chairman**

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

### The current Board Members are:

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### THE SECRETARY

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