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SIR PATRICK HOGAN KNZM CBE

Sir Patrick Hogan, who passed away in early January, has had a huge influence on Thoroughbred racing and breeding in the last 4-5 decades as a world-renowned breeder and leading owner of racehorses. Sir Patrick has also had significant influence in many other fields. One of those was as Patron of the NZ Equine Research Foundation for over 35 years.



As well as contributing considerably financially, in our early days Sir Patrick's vision and ideas significantly enhanced the activities of the NZERF. He recognised the need to encourage final year Bachelor of Veterinary

Science students to enter into equine practice and in 1997, in association with the NZERF, he established and for many years funded Scholarships for final year veterinary students with a particular interest in horses. The Scholarship still exists today, now funded by the NZERF.

Sir Patrick also understood the need to support equine research. In the foreword to "A History of the NZERF" released in 2017 Sir Patrick commented: "Using controlled scientifically based research is imperative if goals are to be achieved. It is particularly important that we learn about and understand what makes the New Zealand horse tick and the effect our unique environment has on their growth and development. As well as this it is imperative that we encourage scientists and researchers to take a long-term interest in the horse so they have consistency of funding for approved research and are available as a resource to the industry."

We are all saddened by his passing and the loss of a very powerful and influential thinker.

Website Update

The need for better communications and access to resources

During 2022 the NZERF Board took time to review the relevance of the NZERF, bearing in mind that since its inception close to 50 years ago a number of new organisations have evolved which perform similar functions. This review was led by Board Member Dr Paul Fraser, who produced a thought-provoking paper questioning what the NZERF core aims are, what we need to change to achieve these aims, where the NZERF sees itself in the bigger picture and how we maintain a vibrant group with a strong succession pathway.

There is still much to do in defining priorities for NZERF activities but the Board believes that NZERF still has an important role to play as an independent, stand alone organization serving the New Zealand equine community.

The Board also acknowledged that NZERF did not have enough online presence and no real social media footprint. To gain traction with the younger members of the equine community this vital channel of connectivity must be utilised. As a first step the current website is being upgraded and more content will be put on our Facebook page. We are very fortunate to have veterinarian Shaan Mocke of Marton leading this project.

Our new website is expected to be up and running very soon and will contain far more content and will be far more user friendly. The NZERF website and Facebook page can be accessed here:

www.nzerf.co.nz/ www.facebook.com/nzerf/



Progesterone is a hormone required for the maintenance of pregnancy in all species including the mare. It has become common practice for equine reproduction clinicians to supplement mares with synthetic progestins (progesterone), such as 'Regumate®', soon after breeding in an attempt to prevent the loss of a pregnancy and/ or to 'rescue' a pregnancy in a problem mare. Continuing mares on progesterone supplementation after pregnancy diagnosis is also a common practice to prevent foetal loss from occurring during later stages of gestation. However, there are some serious concerns regarding the supplementation of mares with progesterone which include i) the cost of synthetic progesterone drugs, ii) the potential health risks to humans when administering progesterone and iii) causing immunosuppression and negatively affecting mare fertility and the establishment of pregnancy. Therefore, the questions we need to consider are: 'Should we be supplementing mares with exogenous progesterone after ovulation and before pregnancy is diagnosed and/or after a positive diagnosis is made to maintain

The Correlation of Progesterone Concentration with Early Pregnancy Rate in Thoroughbred Mares

Dr Fiona Hollinshead for the late Dr Dave Hanlon

pregnancy?' and more importantly, 'Is progesterone supplementation after ovulation/breeding and during pregnancy beneficial?'

It is also important to highlight that there are many well-documented and known causes of embryonic and foetal death in the mare and that subsequent to embryonic or foetal death the mare's progesterone concentrations will drop. Therefore, it is very difficult to determine whether a low progesterone concentration in a previously pregnant mare was the cause or the result of embryo/foetal death. However, in a hallmark study done in 1990 by Dr Cliff Irvine from Canterbury, NZ, serial blood progesterone measurements were made in 179 mares between day 17 and 42 of pregnancy and found that all the mares except for one produced the progesterone concentration required to maintain their pregnancy. This was one of the key factors that led to Dr Dave Hanlon's study to investigate the relationship between progesterone concentration in mares very early i.e., after breeding/ovulation, and its association with an ensuing potential pregnancy. This was something that had never been investigated previously despite the common practice of progesterone supplementation after breeding.

Dr Hanlon undertook a clinical study which involved measuring blood progesterone concentration on Day 5 after ovulation in 275 mares that were bred naturally at 5 different stud farms in the Waikato, NZ, to determine if progesterone supplementation soon after breeding might be beneficial to pregnancy rate (determined at day 14 by transrectal ultrasound). There were two main findings from this study. Firstly, he found that increasing mare age was significantly associated with a decline in pregnancy rate. This was

also demonstrated in the large-scale epidemiological study Dr Hanlon performed from 2006-2008 involving 1,482 Thoroughbred broodmares located on stud farms in the Waikato, NZ, (Hanlon et al., Part 1 and 2 NZVJ 2012). Secondly, this study established that progesterone concentration on day 5 after ovulation was higher in mares that were pregnant at Day 14 compared to mares that were not pregnant. However, it is important to acknowledge that the progesterone concentration measured at Day 5 was not predictive of pregnancy outcome. Therefore, the findings in this study don't support the practice of blanket administration of progesterone to all broodmares after breeding but instead encourages clinicians to first address the list of treatable causes of embryo death with implementation of optimal breeding



management tools and strategies. In addition, this study re-iterates the need to educate horse owners about the importance of considering the age at which to breed a mare. Future studies are now needed to investigate if supplementation with progesterone to mares just after ovulation might rescue pregnancies that may be problematic.

NZERF Video Library

Currently there are three videos available:

- Learn about Strangles – presented by Dr Paul Fraser: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbbXQ347LbU
- Learn about Laminitis – presented by Dr Paul Fraser: www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKZQs2d7Tx4&t=16s
- Learn about Gastric Ulcers - presented by Professor Ben Sykes: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQT-2_wij4M

Two new videos are due to be released in the near future on Equine Dentistry and Equine Metabolic Syndrome respectively.

All videos produced by NZERF are available to view on its YouTube site.

NZERF wishes to thank the Rodmor Charitable Trust for supporting the establishment of the Video Library.



Injuries Reported in Racehorses on Race Day



Drs Michaela Gibson, Kylie Legg, Erica Gee and Chris Rogers

As part of the regulatory process of race day reporting, any injuries that occur during racing are centrally recorded by the Racing Integrity Unit and New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing. In the 2019/2020 racing season an online app-based system was introduced for the recording of race day events and injuries, which is similar to the system already in place in Australia.

Using the data recorded in the online system, we collated and examined the injuries reported during the 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 racing seasons. During the 3 seasons there were 70,720 race day starts by 7,954 different horses. There were 1,703 veterinary examinations of horses on race day. The majority of these (n=1,508, 88.5%) were routine screenings of horses as part of the regulatory process of racing.

Veterinary examination associated with incidents (n=195) were for the following reasons: pulled up (16%), horse fell (13%), "fractious behaviours" (playing up in the starting gates etc) (12%), galloped on (10%), kicked (6%) rider fell (3%). In just over half these examinations, the horse was reported to have NOAD (no obvious abnormality detected), i.e. the horse did not appear to be injured. The most common abnormal clinical finding was laceration/abrasion (25%). In 9% of cases, a fracture was detected or suspected.

Incidence rates (per 1,000 starts) for the different categories of veterinary findings during the 2019/20-2021/22 racing seasons (195 examinations)

Description	IR (95% CI)	% of incidence examinations
Total reports	2.76 [2.40-3.17]	
No obvious abnormality	1.39 [1.14-1.69]	50.3
Laceration/abrasion	0.69 [0.52-0.92]	25.1
Musculoskeletal fracture	0.24 [0.15-0.39]	8.7
Other musculoskeletal issues	0.21 [0.13-0.35]	7.7
Blood at nostril	0.13 [0.06-0.25]	4.6
Cardiovascular	0.02 [0.00-0.11]	1.0
Cardiac failure	0.01 [0.00-0.01]	0.5
Poor recovery	0.01 [0.00-0.09]	0.5
Respiratory issues	0.07 [0.02-0.20]	0.0
Miscellaneous	0.01 [0.00-0.09]	0.5

There was a subtle decrease in the total number of incident examinations from 2019/20 to 2021/22. There was also a subtle trend for fewer veterinary examinations required when horses raced on tracks rated as slow. The advantage of recording all veterinary examinations using the online system is the structured recording of any injuries and clinical findings, meaning we can compare what happens in New Zealand racing with what is reported overseas, especially in Australia given the similarity of reporting systems.

New Zealand Equine Research Foundation Scholarships and Grants

Valachi Downs 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/valachi_downs_young_achiever
 Closes 31st January annually

Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarship

\$10,000 available annually 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.
www.nzerf.co.nz/hope_scholarship
 Closing date 31st January annually

Travel Awards

For any travel relating to research and development in the NZ horse industry.
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.
www.nzerf.co.nz/research_grants
 Closes 30th April 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.
www.nzerf.co.nz/vet_farrier_scholarship
 Closing date 30 November annually

Applicants should apply in writing / email to: The Secretary, NZ Equine Research Foundation. PO Box 52, Palmerston North 4440. Email: nzerf@xtra.co.nz

A Non-strangulating Obstructive Pedunculated Lipoma as a cause of Colic in a Clydesdale Gelding

Tatjana Wagner, 2022 Massey Veterinarian Student Scholarship Recipient

History and Clinical Findings

An 18-year-old Clydesdale gelding was examined in the field for sudden colic (apparent abdominal pain) signs. On presentation he was lying down but would stand when approached. From a distance there was no evidence of physical trauma. The gelding was mildly obese, with a body condition score of 6/9. His physical examination revealed a normal rectal temperature, heart rate and respiratory rate. However, his oral mucous membranes were pale and gastrointestinal sounds were reduced.

The horse was sedated and given anti-inflammatory pain relief, as well as an antispasmodic drug. A rectal examination was performed with no abnormalities identified. Passing a nasogastric tube was attempted but was unsuccessful. The gelding still showed colic signs despite pain relief; therefore, it was decided to admit him to the hospital for further evaluation and management. On admission the horse's heart rate fluctuated between 48-52 beats/min, his mucous membranes remained pale and there were now no gastrointestinal sounds on abdominal auscultation. He continued to show colic signs so he was re-sedated and further diagnostic investigations were performed.

Further Diagnostics

A venous blood sample was taken for analysis. The results showed mild abnormalities consistent with colic signs and not indicative of any specific disease process. A sample of peritoneal (abdominal) fluid collected for analysis appeared normal as a clear pale straw-coloured fluid. Peritoneal lactate, an indicator of colic severity, was measured and was within the normal range indicating a strangulating intestinal lesion was unlikely.

Abdominal ultrasound revealed multiple abnormally distended, fluid-filled loops of small intestine that were not moving. There was also mild free fluid and the stomach appeared distended. An exploratory surgery was deemed appropriate due to recurrent colic signs despite administering pain relief, absent gastrointestinal sounds and abnormal ultrasound findings.

Surgery

Exploratory laparotomy revealed a pedunculated lipoma (a benign fatty tumour on a stalk) that was entrapping part of the small intestine (Figure 1). The entire length of the small intestine and caecum were distended and not motile.

The entrapping tissue was cut, and the lipoma was removed. The contents of the small intestine was manually squeezed into the caecum, after which the motility of the small intestine improved. Multiple lipomas were also found on the mesentery (tissue

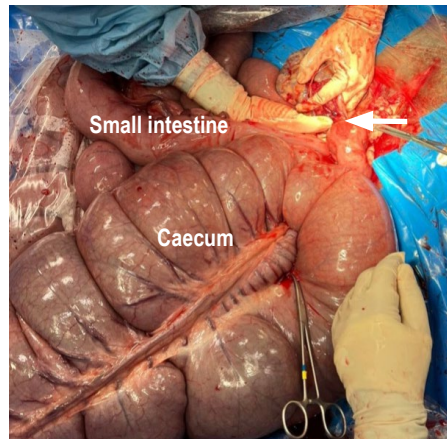


Figure 1: Pedunculated lipoma (held in surgeon's hand) entrapping the ileum (white arrow). The small intestine and caecum are both markedly distended.

that suspends the intestines in the abdomen) of the small intestine, caecum, and small colon (Figure 2). The larger lipomas were removed.

Post-operative Management

The gelding made an uneventful recovery from general anaesthesia. He was started on intravenous fluid therapy, pain relief and antibiotics. Abdominal ultrasound examination was performed in the days following surgery and showed a return of normal intestinal motility and function. No further signs of abdominal pain were seen following gradual reintroduction of a normal feed ration. His food allowance was slowly increased over his time in the hospital, back to normal levels before discharge, 5 days post-surgery, with no post-operative complications.



Figure 2: Left: Multiple lipomas found on the mesentery of the small intestine, caecum, and small colon. Bottom right: excised pedunculated lipoma that obstructed the ileum.

Discussion

Abdominal lipomas are benign growths of fat cells and can be solitary or multiple, broad-based or pedunculated (Garcia-Secco et al. 2005). Lipomas may be incidental intraoperative findings; however, these masses can cause a strangulating or non-strangulating obstruction if they wrap around the intestine and mesentery. Intestinal obstruction by a pedunculated lipoma is a relatively common cause of colic requiring surgical intervention in older horses.

Early identification and referral of a colicking horse with a surgical lesion is critical to obtaining a successful outcome. Early referral allows general anaesthesia and surgery to occur while the horse is still systemically stable and intestinal damage is mild, and this decreases postoperative morbidity and mortality (Cook and Hassel 2014). In this case early referral was essential for the successful outcome achieved.

Signs of pain and the response to pain relief are the most valuable parameters for assessing the need for surgical intervention. Patients demonstrating unrelenting pain or recurrent pain after administration of pain relief are considered surgical candidates (Divers and Orsini 2008). The diligent identification of a lack of response to pain relief in this case resulted in prompt referral for further diagnostics and timely exploratory laparotomy. If the decision for surgery had been delayed it is highly likely that strangulation would have occurred, requiring removal of segments of intestine which would have impacted on the overall prognosis, amount of post-operative care required and cost of treatment.

Equine Performance Medicine and Rehabilitation

Dr Melissa Sim, 2019 Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarship Recipient

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend a 7-month certification course in equine performance medicine and rehabilitation conducted by the Integrative Veterinary Medicine Institute in the United States. This would not have been possible without the NZERF and Jonathan Hope Scholarship. Thanks to this scholarship opportunity, I have learned much more comprehensive techniques to treat and prevent injuries in horses.



The course emphasized the importance of soundness exams. Most lameness is the result of 10,000 bad steps rather than a single misstep. If we can identify the habitual gait patterns that lead to wear and tear on the tissues before it results in a lameness we can not only prevent injuries, but keep horses performing at the peak of their capability.

It is the veterinarian's job to determine whether a horse is moving a certain way because of pain and, if so, to treat it. Before it turns into a noticeable lameness, pain can manifest itself as behavioral issues, muscle weakness or an uneven gait. Pain should always be identified and treated, as simply giving the horse time off work often does not resolve the underlying issue and thus the pain will persist. Muscle weakness is most often the result of chronic inhibition of that muscle and not due to a lack of strength or training. This presents as muscles that don't seem to get stronger despite an increase in training and should be an indication to get your horse examined.

Before working on training strength, a full range of motion and good control of that range must first be established. The first step of working on range of motion is to remove any pain or restrictions. After that, it is helpful to perform stretches for 30 seconds per stretch after the horse has been worked. Once the horse has a full range of motion, good control over the full range of motion should be trained. Working on simple exercises to train the nervous system on the ground (eg. balance exercises) is important for preventing injury when the horse is in work. Early strength gains during training are due to the nervous system adapting better, rather than an actual increase in muscle, tendon or bone. It takes a few weeks for muscle to show gains, and a few months for tendons or bones to get stronger. It is only once the horse has full range of motion and control that strength training will be beneficial.

For horses that are injured, there is more that can be done during the rehabilitation process than box rest and controlled return to exercise. It is important to identify and treat the habitual gait patterns that likely resulted in the injury. Otherwise, the horse is likely to reinjure itself once it returns to work. Performing passive range of motion exercises is helpful while the horse is rehabilitating and adding core exercises such as carrot stretches and balance exercises can help your horse maintain muscle and fast-track their return to work. Doing exercises to train the opposite limb to the one that is injured can result in up to 40% strength gain in the limb that is not exercised, and this effect can be used to help with rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation in the equine world is a much more involved process than was traditionally thought, and requires the veterinarian, owner and horse to work together as a team to accomplish results.

2023 NZERF Massey Veterinary Student Scholarship Recipients

The 2023 NZERF Scholarships for final year Massey Veterinary students have been awarded to Robyn Chadwick, Nicole Johnston & Siobhan Waters.



Robyn Chadwick

Growing up in the UK Robyn attended a riding school but then chose a career completely unrelated to horses. However, after shifting to New Zealand she was able to pursue her dream of working with horses. Whilst working at Abderry Equine, a sport horse training facility located in Karaka, South Auckland, Robyn decided she would like to become an equine vet and applied to Massey University. She is now looking to a future in the equine veterinary industry.



Nicole Johnston

Nicole started riding horses at a young age and has competed in multiple areas including dressage, eventing, show jumping, show hunter and showing on a range of different horses from big warmbloods to Thoroughbreds. At age 12 she decided she wanted to be a vet and since then has focussed all her spare time and holidays on gaining experience in Veterinary Practice.



Siobhan Waters

The third recipient, Siobhan Waters, has also been involved with horses from a young age competing in Pony Club Championships and at the Horse of the Year. Whilst at Massey, Siobhan has worked part-time as a stable hand and track rider and also volunteers her time at Manawatu Riding for Disabled.

NZERF Vet-Farrier Scholarship Report

Dr Rabbecca McKenzie, Taranaki Equine Vet Services and Laine Cameron, Taranaki Forge



In 2020 Laine Cameron and I were fortunate to receive the NZERF Vet-Farrier Scholarship to travel to Kentucky, USA, to complete foot-related continued professional development. Ten days later Covid-19 brought international travel to a virtual halt and New Zealand went into its first lockdown.

So it was very exciting that the NZEVA conference this year included a VetPD course on Equine podiatry and we were fortunate enough to attend this together in June, 2022. The first day consisted of pre-recorded presentations from Dr Andrew Parkes on the functional anatomy and biomechanics of the foot, the structure and function of horse shoes and their effect on foot function and biomechanical applications. Then Dr Steve O'Grady presented an overview of equine hoof capsule distortions. The functional anatomy presentation was detailed at a cellular level including macroscopic and microscope slides to visualise tissues and diagrams to describe lever arms and the associated pressures within the hoof capsule on the structures involved. It was really good to have a visual representation of the dynamics of ground reaction force and its direction as a vector, the associated centre of pressure and the forces on individual structures. It helped when assessing conformation and hoof balance as to how these forces are represented in an individual foot and subsequently how to trim and shoe the foot. Because we were attending together, we were able to discuss cases that we have assessed as a Vet-Farrier team, radiographed and then adjusted the shoeing to improve biomechanics. While watching the presentations we could (quietly) talk about the physical applications being presented and this really was invaluable.

The practical day had three excellent presenters; Dr Andrew van Eps, Dr Greg Quinn and Dr Leigh DeClifford, and consisted of visual assessment of several cases, foot casting, clog application for laminitis cases, nerve blocks and joint injections, ultrasound of the foot/distal limb and associated structures and foot balance radiographic technique and assessment. Again, moving through these tutorials as a Vet-Farrier team was excellent as it was very easy to exchange ideas and interpretation of information relative to the procedure going on and it was also not a 'clinical' setting therefore free conversation occurred.

The topics that Laine felt he gained the most information from included the laminitis practical with Dr van Eps; there was great discussion in our group around what constitutes laminitis, the normal concussive forces within the hoof capsule, how the diseased laminae respond to these and how that correlates with what the public perceive as laminitis. This discussion helped to integrate the lecture from the day before. Laine found it really helpful that both veterinary and farriery language was being used to describe the conditions that were being discussed and that there was considerable time allocated to 'moments' and 'pressures' associated with the trim and shoeing. The casting practical was also invaluable and has given Laine a lot more confidence to do this out in the field. It provided information on multiple uses of casting which he can use within his everyday caseload. He is also very excited to have more education around spider bar shoes and pads and has already ordered more to use on certain cases where he feels they are applicable.



Overall, it has been an excellent educational opportunity and I feel that it would be awesome to see this kind of clinic run again with greater availability to vet-farriery collaborations within

New Zealand. It's very motivating to listen to great speakers talk about something we deal with so frequently, and as the saying goes: 'no foot no horse'.

2023 Vet-Farrier Scholarship recipients

The Gisborne team of veterinarian Andrew Cribb and farrier John Hawthorne have been awarded this year's Vet-Farrier Scholarship. Andrew, a Massey University graduate, is currently an owner/Director of East Coast Farm Vets, having been a Vet in the area since 2006.

Farrier John Hawthorne is the current President of the New Zealand Farriers Association. After completing his farrier apprenticeship John started his farrier business in Gisborne in 2003. He spent time as farrier for the Singapore Turf Club (2009 until 2012) before returning to Gisborne and resuming his farrier business.

Gisborne is an area with a very large sport horse population and the demands for veterinary and farrier services is high. Andrew and John hope to use the Scholarship to travel to USA later this year and believe the Scholarship will enable them to further develop their skills to better serve the Gisborne equine community.

NZERF acknowledges & appreciates the financial support and assistance with the selection process provided by both the NZEVA and NZ Farriers Association.

The closing date of applications for the next Vet-Farrier Scholarship is 30 November 2023.



Farrier John Hawthorne (left) with veterinarian Dr Andrew Cribb (right)

2022 Valachi Downs Young Achiever Award Recipient Update

Eleanor Thompson

Since having the privilege of receiving the Valachi Downs Young Achiever Award in March 2022 I have been busy gathering information and data on how to best utilise my grant.

In May 2022 I organised an evening of continuing professional development (CPD) accredited by the NZ Veterinary Nurses Association (NZVNA) for equine nurses in my local area, the Waikato. The aim of the evening was to gather qualified equine veterinary nurses and nursing assistants for an evening of networking, socialising and of course, learning. The evening was held at Matamata

Veterinary Services Equine Hospital where I am currently employed. My colleagues and I discussed potential topics that may interest a wide range of nurses to maximise attendance. The topics chosen were nursing the recumbent foal, radiation and nuclear medicine safety, dystocia's at the clinic and we finished off the evening with a practical session on how to put in over-the-wire catheters. One of my colleagues was very creative and made up some fake veins for us to use; they were made from bicycle inner tubes filed with water and red food dye to make the experience all that more real. We also added in a quick tour of the hospital for anyone that was interested, showing how we set up for foal

admissions and emergency dystocias. The evening closed with pizzas and drinks, giving everyone a chance to socialise. I was very pleased that we managed to attract nurses from all around the Waikato and even South Auckland. In total we had representation from 4 major equine practices and 32 attendees and the evening was a great success.

I have since had feedback from other mixed and smaller practices that they would like to be involved in the next equine nurse CPD evening. It has been really inspiring to hear that so many nurses are keen to expand their knowledge and learn new skills. I hope to continue with this and provide a source of accredited CPD for equine nurses in the future. Alongside creating a source of CPD for equine nurses I am working with Steph Mann from Otago University to gather information and data on the utilisation of equine nurses in practice, how equine nursing teams are structured and in what areas equine nurses would like to upskill. Steph is also an executive member on the NZVNA Board. I have created a survey that has been pushed out to the equine veterinary industry via word of mouth and social media to get a picture of how equine nurses are being utilised in NZ and in what areas we can focus CPD opportunities. I added an incentive for participants by putting them into a prize draw for 2 tickets to Equifest 2022. If we get enough data the plan is to host a focus group with participants to gain further insight and focus on target areas of interest.

I am also working on creating a short video to promote equine nursing as a career path. Early 2023 will see the release of the new Veterinary Nursing qualification with an equine pathway, the first in New Zealand, I hope to work with the NZVNA to time the release of the video to coincide with the qualification.



New Zealand Equine Health Association Report

Dr Trish Pearce

You may not realize it but the NZ Covid response strategy mirrored the equine sector's strategy that has kept equine influenza and 40 other exotic equine diseases out of NZ for the last 100 years. Yet despite all the border testing and quarantining of travelers we did see the Covid virus get out into the public realm.

The exact same thing can occur with equine diseases. The pre-border testing and quarantine system works 99% of the time but no test is 100% accurate and sometimes people slip up, so you need an emergency plan for those worse case scenarios. We DO have an equine disease outbreak emergency plan in NZ but for it to work we need a much better system for knowing how many horses there are, where they are and how to get hold of their owners in an emergency.

Establishing a national equine identification and traceability (ID) system is not being bureaucratic, it is being smart. It has been shown that for every \$1 we spend on an ID system we will save ourselves \$60¹. The main focus of the NZEHA since the last Bulletin has been to progress the design of the ID system. Hillary Milne, Sarah Rosanowski, Trish Pearce and Ivan Bridge manned stands at Equifest Taupo and Christchurch to reach out to horse owners and explain the importance of the system and get horse owners' feedback on what is important to them.

The goal is for the system to link to the existing equine breed registers and also be simple and easy-to-use for owners whose horses are not already registered on an existing data base or who need to do changes of ownership for example.

Many horse owners do not realise that the system will be owned by the NZ equine sector and that we are doing it to protect our biggest asset, our relative disease-free status, which keeps our horses healthy and protects our ability to trade internationally. The alternative is to do what Iceland does and have a closed border. Currently between 1-2,000 horses enter NZ every year and go on to mingle freely with other horses throughout the country. Knowing where horses are located and being able to contact owners easily and efficiently not only saves time and money but, far more importantly, saves more horses from getting sick and gives us a shot at disease eradication.

For those who have concerns about using this system I urge you to put them aside and remember that preventing the entire NZ equine population from being exposed to a new disease is the biggest welfare benefit you can give your horse, so let's pull together and make this happen.

¹ Hafi, A., Gomboso, J., Hean, R., Scott, F., Arthur, T., & Rahman, N. (2020). Estimating the value of Australian biosecurity arrangements for equine influenza since the 2007 outbreak. Research report, Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. doi:<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/biosecurity/biosecurity-economics/equine-influenza>

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The equine industry recently lost one of its great leaders with the passing of Sir Patrick Hogan early in January. The NZ Equine Research Foundation was honoured to have had Sir Patrick as its Patron and has benefitted hugely both from his financial support and from his vision and ideas. We are all saddened by his passing and the loss of a very powerful and influential thinker. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family.

On a brighter note we have recently received a summary of some excellent work carried out by the late Dr Dave Hanlon. A huge thank you to Dave's wife Dr Fiona Hollinshead for getting the work written up and published in what could only be described as difficult circumstances after losing Dave in a traffic accident in the USA in 2020 – thank you Fiona. This paper obviously will lead to a better understanding of the role of progesterone in early pregnancy in horses.

In October and December 2022, the NZ Equine Research Foundation shared a booth at Equifest in Taupo and Christchurch with our sister organisation the NZ Equine Health Association. Both events were great to be a part of and our presence there was very helpful to remind people of our roles in the equine community. Taupo sadly was affected by heavy rain; however the first 2 days were very busy. This was a great opportunity to see a wide range of main-

stream equestrians and many of the pleasure rider community. We distributed a large number of booklets, spoke to dozens of people and showcased our excellent videos. There were many other interesting exhibitors at both venues and it was great to show our group's ability to contribute from a science-based perspective. Thank you to all the people who took the time to stop and say hello. We hope to repeat such live activities in the future.

Greatly heartening is the response we have had for the Valachi Downs Young Achiever Award and the Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinary Scholarship. The numerous applications received are of a very high standard which will make selecting the recipients a tough job for the Selection Committee.

Finally, we are on the cusp of 3 more research projects reaching completion, with Babich Heil having collected all her data on mare uterine infections, and Dr Barbara Hunter and Dr Tracey Kerr analysing data on foals' early immunity. Finally, Professor Ben Sykes looks to have sufficient data on his foal scours study and is ready to push on with his work. Watch this space.

Dr Tim Pearce, NZERF Chairman

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CONTACT INFORMATION

The current Board Members are:

Chairman	Dr Tim Pearce	Bulls	027 440 7091
Vice Chairman	Dr Margaret Evans	Christchurch	027 447 7358
Secretary	Mr Allan Fenwick	Marton	021 555 954

Representing:

Equine Researchers	Dr Margaret Evans	Christchurch	027 447 7358
ESNZ	Heidi Bulfin	Blenheim	021 544 576
HRNZ	Mrs Natalie Gameson	Christchurch	021 936 155
Massey University	Dr Erica Gee	Palmerston North	027 604 0095
NZEVA	Dr Alex Fowler	Karaka	027 364 2277
NZPCA	Mrs Geraldine Rae	Kaiapoi	027 250 0350
NZSBA	Dr Megan Reidie	Invercargill	027 283 3758
NZTBA	Mrs Justine Slater	Cambridge	021 433 107
NZTR	Mr Colin Hall	Wellington	027 563 9526

THE SECRETARY

New Zealand Equine Research Foundation Inc.
c/o Manawatu Racing Centre
P O Box 52, Palmerston North 4440

Phone: **06 356 4940**.
Email: nzerf@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.nzerf.co.nz

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