

APRIL 2023

EQUESTRIAN HUB

magazine

Nicole Tough

Unpacking impulsion

Megan Jones

Her favourite things



Vet checks

What you should know

From racing to ring

Living the dream

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On the Cover

Clare Fedrick and OTT Most Important won the Open Large Hack at the Northern Queensland Show Horse Championships (Image by Lisa Gordon Photography).



OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Amanda Mac

As editor of *Equestrian Hub Magazine*, Amanda's two long-standing passions, one for horses the other for writing, come together perfectly. Although much of her time is spent busily editing away behind the scenes, in this issue she speaks with Clare Fedrick, a keen young show rider who's enjoying huge success with the OTT multiple Group 3 winner Most Important.



Nicole Tough

An EA Level 2 Dressage Specialist Coach and National A Level Judge, Nicole has over 30 years' experience in training, competing, judging and coaching. She enjoys presenting seminars and masterclasses, has trained in Germany, Spain and The Netherlands, and has produced nine very successful FEI horses. In this issue she unpacks her impulsion.

Megan Jones

One of Australia's top event riders, Megan burst onto the international scene at the 2003 World Cup Final before winning team bronze at the 2006 World Equestrian Games and team silver at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She now produces high performance horses for competition and sale, and in this issue explains why KER EquiShure is her go-to when it comes to her horses' hindgut health.



Dr Doug English

A veterinarian and long-time turmeric researcher, Doug completed his Bachelor of Veterinary Science at the University of Queensland in 1974. He's well-known throughout Australia for his work in the equine industry and is a long-time Equine Veterinarians Australia member. Don't miss Vet Vibes, and his informative article on what you should (and shouldn't) expect from a pre-purchase vet check.



Clare Fedrick

14-year-old Clare Fedrick has ridden since she was first able to clamber up onto a pony. Early in 2021 she teamed up with multiple Group 3 winner Most Important and the pair haven't looked back. Now with a swag of show ring successes behind them, their partnership is a wonderful example of the potential for ex-racehorses to enjoy successful OTT careers.

Michelle Terlato

Michelle grew up with horses and has always loved them. When she's not travelling the globe photographing the world's top equestrian athletes, she's home riding her own horses. It's the behind the scenes and the unexpected shots that she likes the most, and in our Behind the Shot feature, she shares her favourites and explains what makes them so special.

Dr Jennifer Stewart B.V.Sc., B.Sc., Ph.D.

With over 40 years' experience as a veterinarian in mixed and equine practice, Jennifer's special interest is equine nutrition. She was Senior Veterinary Officer with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for 10 years, and for two years was Biosecurity Veterinarian with the ACT Government. Her article on cresty neck and its implications is a must-read.



Dr. Peter Huntington B.V.Sc., M.A.C.V.Sc.

A graduate of the University of Melbourne, Peter has enjoyed a distinguished career specialising in equine nutrition. In 1999, he was appointed Director of KER Australasia. He travels widely to consult and lecture on equine nutrition and is the author of *Horse Sense – The Guide to Horse Care in Australia and New Zealand*. In this issue he discusses the problem of mild recurrent colic.





BEHIND THE SHOT

Sonja Johnson & Parkiarrup Illicit Liaison

One of Australia's top equestrian photographers, **MICHELLE TERLATO** travels the world capturing equestrian athletes in action. Each month she shares one of her favourite shots.

Rider: Sonja Johnson

Horse: Parkiarrup Illicit Liaison (Ben)

Event: 2017 Adelaide International 3 Day Event

Location: Rymil Lake, Adelaide

Camera & Settings: Canon 7D Mark II, 70-200mm, ISO 400 f 2.8 1/1000 sec.

Challenges: To capture this shot, I needed to stand on the island in the middle of Rymil Lake to get that 'down the barrel' look, even though Sonja and Ben were actually looking towards their next obstacle, a second brush and water crossing. Luckily, the course 'dog legged' to the left, so I was able to stand safely out of the way, yet still get a shot that looked as if they were coming straight for me!

Why this shot is special: I have always loved this shot of Sonja and Ben. Both horse and rider were so completely focused on their job and working together beautifully as a team. You can see the concentration in Ben's eyes and his ears are pricked towards what is coming up next. The two brush fences are so close together it's as if you can reach out and touch them, and feel Ben's legs lightly skimming them as he goes over. The colourful crowd in the background just adds to the atmosphere, reflecting the excitement and emotion of the Adelaide International 3 Day, which is a unique event and a favourite on the calendar for many eventing riders. 🐾

Michelle is available for event, commercial and private shoots. Visit [Michelle Terlato Photography](https://www.michelleterlato.com.au) to see more of her stunning work.



HANGING TOUGH

Unpacking impulsion

Unpacking impulsion, the fourth step on the Training Scale, is an easily misunderstood concept with multiple layers of complexity, writes NICOLE TOUGH.

Impulsion is a single word that encompasses four abstract components, each as difficult to understand as the other:

1. The horse's desire to move forward: means the horse is readily available to move off into an energetic gait at

the aids of the rider without hesitation, resistance or quickening before a transition.

2. The elasticity of the steps: which refers to the ability of the joints in the legs to flex and extend.

3. The suppleness of the back: referring

to the arch in the horse's topline. When this is achieved without tension, the horse's tail will swing.

4. The engagement of the hindquarters: referring to the hind legs coming more under the horse's centre of gravity, which occurs as a result of the topline arch.

An easier way to understand impulsion is to think of a spring. The more compressed the spring, the more recoil we get, which influences pushing power and air time. Compression equals engagement. The more we can compress (engage) the horse, the more propulsion (generation of force through thrust) we can achieve. Through this compression, the horse's balance is shifted more towards the hindquarters and they can propel energy into a longer, more upward thrust for medium and extended gaits.

Impulsion gives the impression of a springiness to the gaits, or in other words, increased suspension. For this reason, there can be no impulsion in



FACING PAGE: Owned by Nicole and her husband, German import Ferragamo demonstrates engagement of the hindquarters (Image by Christy Baker Photography).

ABOVE: With a tension free arch in their topline, German Riding Ponies Deveron Nintendo (L) and Dumbledore (R) move forward with freedom and energy (Images by Christy Baker Photography).

walk, because there is no moment of suspension to influence in walk. That riders can influence this phase of suspension is a wondrous thing, and indeed a game changer in terms of their development. The question is, how do we achieve this?

Impulsion is like an onion and has many layers. It should be taught in stages and is continually developed all the way to Grand Prix level.

First, balance comes before impulsion. It is a common mistake, upon reading a judge's comment 'more impulsion', to ride faster. It is easy for riders to push the horse out of balance and thus get the opposite effect of 'running'. If the horse quickens the steps, the balance shifts towards the forehand and the gaits flatten, which only hinders the development of impulsion. Once we have the horse in balance, maintaining one rhythm through the basic gaits and their transitions, on prescribed lines, and in one self-carrying contact, we can begin to add the layers of impulsion.

Adding impulsion to a balanced trot and canter begins with lengthening


and shortening the steps: on and back, repeated in every session, like an accordion instrument. The rider uses more leg to improve the energy *without speeding up*. And it must be the rider's core that prevents this speeding up. This is the hard part - keeping the horse on the hindleg (i.e. in balance) through the rider's core, and not with the reins.

To achieve this, riders must be in self-carriage as well, understanding and using the half halt aid effectively (the half halt being a moment of one stride, where the rider blocks the elbow and braces the upper body to influence the cycle of energy). An effective half halt should bring the horse more up, and in this moment, the rider uses the leg aids to create more energy. Now the horse is pushing and the rider is catching energy in the reins, in other words developing impulsion.

The next stage of developing impulsion in the trot and canter is teaching the correct reaction to the whip, used as a tap on the croup and near the tail in the right phase of the footfalls. The idea is for the horse to bounce up to the whip,

creating a longer moment in the air. Do this for four to five steps in a row in trot and canter to develop these gaits. Again, I stress the importance of the rider not using their rein aids to block energy. The end goal is to achieve more impulsion without creating negative tension. The development of the rider's core is vitally important to the success of developing more impulsion in the horse.

Many things contribute to the development of impulsion. At its heart is the understanding that it is hard, and it doesn't happen overnight or even in a month. Every training session is a gym session, and the rider is the personal trainer. The horse must be given adequate time and proper training to develop the muscles of the topline to compress and recoil without tension. Obviously, if you can only train a few times a week, it will take longer than if you can train five times a week. And we mean training not just riding! Make every step and every transition in every session count.

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VET VIBES

What you should know about vet checks

There are vet checks, and then there are vet checks. DR DOUG ENGLISH explains the difference.

A pre-purchase examination is a veterinary evaluation of a horse before it is purchased. The purpose of the presale check is to identify any health issues, lameness, or soundness concerns that could affect the horse's performance or future value. During a presale check, a veterinarian will examine the horse from head to tail, looking for any signs of illness or injury. They may also perform a range of diagnostic tests, including X-rays, blood tests, drug tests, and a physical

examination of the horse's conformation, movement, and soundness.

The results of a presale check can be used to inform the buyer's decision as to whether or not to proceed with the purchase, to negotiate the price, or to request additional testing or treatment before finalising the sale. It is an important step for any buyer considering the purchase of a horse.


However, there are various levels of a presale examination, and a full sale soundness written certificate is a legal

document that has direct ramifications for the vet who signs it. Because of its binding nature most vets will want to do x-rays of all joints that are historically subject to degeneration, order a full blood test to identify hidden health issues, conduct an endoscopic examination of airways, and observe the animal working - because if a problem emerges that has not been checked then the vet becomes liable for not effectively looking.

So the full soundness examination becomes expensive; is very technical, requiring a high degree of equipment, skill and experience; and is time consuming. Additionally, checking a horse from a seller who is one of the vet's clients can create a situation of conflict when the vet finds a problem that the seller thinks is only a minor issue.

Experienced veterinarians, me included, have become very wary of writing soundness certificates because disclaimers stating that such and such a test or examination was rejected by the owner will not hold up in court if an after purchase fault is identified that should have been checked. Many equine vets are very busy and because of the legal ramifications, have become very wary, so it may prove difficult to find a vet who's prepared to issue a full soundness certificate.

But a general health examination with a scanning blood test, heart and chest auscultation, a feel of the joints and a body condition score is easy, with a certificate saying that the horse is in good health. But, this is not a soundness or suitability certificate.

Veterinarians who do soundness exams are required to disclose to their liability insurance companies the dollar value of the horses and the number they examine, which has a significant impact on their annual insurance premium - another reason why many vets don't offer soundness certificates. 

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PODCAST



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all-round horseman
Charlie Brister

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PRODUCT REVIEW

The benefits of KER EquiShure

Olympian eventer Megan Jones is a huge fan of KER EquiShure. It's a tried and tested staple in her equine health tool box.

Megan Jones is one of Australia's top event riders. Among her many successes is a 3* win at the 2005 Melbourne International Three Day Event on Kirby Park Irish Jester; followed by a 4* win at the 2005

Adelaide Horse Trials; team bronze at the 2006 World Equestrian Games in Aachen; team silver at the 2008 Beijing Olympics; and selection for the London Olympic Games, but she was unfortunately unable to compete due to an injury to her horse.

She also held the world No.3 spot in the FEI's event rider rankings and now calls Hallmark Farm home, where they produce high performance horses for competition and sale.

Megan is a huge fan of [EquiShure](#), a KER product that promotes normal digestive function by aiding in the maintenance of an optimal hindgut environment. It has been formulated for horses suspected of suffering from, or who are at risk of developing hindgut acidosis, which many horses are prone to. The demands placed on sport horses and breeding animals necessitates significant quantities of energy-rich feed. Overconsumption of either high starch concentrates or pasture rich in fructans (sugars) is thought to cause disturbances in the normal hindgut environment, leading to hindgut acidosis. This causes a change in the hindgut's bacterial population, which in turn leads to digestive disturbances and reduced digestive efficiency.



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EH: Megan, how long have you been using EquiShure?

MJ: Years! A very long time. All of my horses are on it all of the time.

EH: Why did you first start using it?

MJ: Well, that's quite an amazing story. I had a young horse I was competing on and he was very talented. When we moved to Kirby Park, we started to stable him because it was wet and cold. And he went from being this beautiful horse to an unrideable monster. He would go so ballistic that you couldn't even get off him. He was rearing and bucking – he was crazy. He was actually a dangerous horse.

So I gave him a break, turned him back out but nothing changed. I finally started him on a product designed to treat and prevent gastric ulcers. He was really good on 6mls - I could ride him out in the paddock – but when I got him down to 4mls he reverted to crazy again, absolutely bonkers!

We then went through the process of trying to find out what was going so wrong. We had him scoped for ulcers and although there was some scaring in there, there were no fresh ulcers. So we thought the problem might be in the hindgut. We turned him out and started him on round bale, KER Equi-Jewel, and KER EquiShure as a buffer for his hind gut and he was a completely different horse. He literally turned around within days to being the perfect pony again.

By then the time had come to sell him and a young rider came from Victoria to look at him. I told her not to stable him and what to feed him, including EquiShure. I made her ride him so much that day! I wanted to get him tired, a little bit angry even; I wanted to make sure that none of that behaviour would come back out. Anyway, she bought him and went on to do dressage, show jumping and Pony Club. They competed at Boneo and although he's been sold on to someone else now, he's still a beautiful horse.

EH: So he's still on EquiShure?




MG: Yep, I told her not to change his diet in any way and he's fine. Now all of my team are on it and what I love about EquiShure is that it's a time-released buffer that targets the hindgut and helps to neutralise acid. The way it works is that the horse's feed travels from the stomach into the small intestine and then into the hindgut. If starch hasn't been properly digested in the small intestine, it can cause acidosis and other problems.

As EquiShure travels through their digestive system, it stays intact until it reaches the hindgut where it delivers sodium bicarbonate to neutralise the acid and settle down the hindgut. And that helps prevent the pain of acidosis. It makes horses so much happier.

Guhr (aka Barbie) and RLE Barina (aka the Bush Weasel), two of my great 4* horses,

have been helped tremendously by EquiShure and also [Sucralox*](#). For Barina particularly, this has been a complete game changer for her front gut. Because of the ulcer problems we've had with our horses we have them scoped regularly. Barina had a scope a couple of weeks ago, and she had the most beautifully healthy, clean stomach that we've seen so far with her.

* Note: KER Sucralox contains sucralfate, a shielding agent that binds to ulcerated areas and safeguards the lining of the stomach. Available only from your vet.

Connect with Megan on [Facebook](#) or follow the Megan Jones Eventing Team on [Instagram](#). 

PREVIOUS PAGE: With RLE Barina at the Adelaide International.

ABOVE: Guhr, another of Megan's great 4* horses.



FEATURE

Is that a cresty neck?

A well-muscled top line is wonderful, an overabundance of fat along the top of the neck is not. DR JENNIFER STEWART explains why.

Horses are not immune to the obesity epidemic. In genetically susceptible horses, the path to metabolic syndrome is paved by a diet high in sugar and starch coupled with insufficient exercise.

Metabolic syndrome is similar in horses and humans. Excess body fat and an

inability to regulate blood sugar levels lead to insulin dysregulation (insulin resistance and reduced insulin sensitivity). The problem in horses isn't too little insulin (as in human diabetes where daily insulin injections may be required), it's that cells are not sensitive enough to insulin and levels may increase a hundredfold in an

attempt to move glucose out of the blood and into the body cells.

The combination of high levels of glucose and insulin is toxic to laminae and the number one cause of laminitis, with a recurrence rate of over 34 per cent. And, it's not just ponies! Over 22 per cent of healthy Thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, Warmbloods and mixed breeds are unable to regulate their blood glucose. Feeds high in carbohydrates (more than 12 per cent) raise blood sugar and insulin levels and they stay high. These horses also have a lower threshold for non-structural carbohydrates (NSCs) and are 17 times more sensitive to carbs than other horses.

First line management includes weight reduction and preventing a rise in blood glucose by limiting exposure to carbohydrates. It's really important to know the amount of carbs (ie sugar, labelled as ESC or WSC on feed bags) and starch for each feed you use. NSC is a combination of starch and sugar, and

that's what raises blood glucose and insulin to toxic levels. Carefully read those feedbag labels, brochures and information on feed company websites. If starch plus sugar and NSC are not listed, it's usually because they are too high. Feeds containing cereal grains, oats, barley, corn or grain byproducts (bran, pollard, millrun etc) are generally not safe.

It's also important to understand and read between the lines of brochures, as well as the labels on feed bags. If the label doesn't list starch and sugar, or an NSC of less than 10 per cent, it's probably not safe. Here are some terms often used on feed bags and what they mean:

Grain-Free: No official definition, generally means no whole grains but could still include grain byproducts such as bran, pollard, millrun etc which are high in NSC.

Hominy Meal: Ground corn meal: 38-45 per cent NSC.

Low GI: The glycaemic index (GI) is determined by fasting the horse overnight then collecting blood before, and then one, two and three hours after feeding to measure ACTH, glucose and insulin. If not done, the feed cannot be claimed to be low GI. Check with the manufacturer that the research has been done on their feed. For more information see the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine's article on [carbohydrate pellets](#).

Low Sugar: If the percentage starch or total NSC are not given, it could be unsafe.

Low Starch: If the percentage sugar or total NSC are not given, it could be unsafe.

Micronised: The feed is 'cooked' making it more digestible and dramatically increasing the availability of glucose, which can cause a profound increase in insulin and glycaemic response.

Extruded: Extruded feeds may also not be a good choice for horses with metabolic syndrome. Extrusion increases starch digestibility making it easily converted to glucose and absorbed. Easy keepers often gain too much weight on

Ingredients that flag caution: NSC >10% is considered unsafe	
Barley	Average starch 60% sugar 3% = 63% NSC
Bran/Pollard (Wheat)	Average starch 23% sugar 7% = 30% NSC
Cereal byproducts	Include bran, pollard, wheat middlings and millrun = >30% NSC
Cereal coproducts	Generally corn or wheat meal, hominy feed, bran and pollard = >30% NSC
Corn	Approximately 73% starch 2% sugar = 75% NSC
Millmix	Contains wheat pollard and bran = >30% NSC
Millrun	Contains bran and pollard = >30% NSC
Molasses	Average 65% sugar = 65% NSC
Wheat	Average starch 70% sugar 3% = 73% NSC
Rice Bran (fibre <4%)	Average starch 42% sugar 4% = 46% NSC

*Feedipeadia, Dairy One

extruded feed. Horses with metabolic issues may not be able to handle the starch and sugar content of [extruded feeds](#).

Nutritional Analysis: Needs to list sugar, which may be listed as WSC or ESC, and starch or else total NSC of less than 10 per cent or it may be unsafe.


Cool Feeds: Cool feeds are described as formulated to avoid spikes of rapid energy. Unless blood glucose levels have been measured, this term is misleading - contact the manufacturer.

Starch: Recommended feed analysis less than 10 per cent.

Body weight

The ability to control insulin levels is 80 per cent lower in obese horses. While the body condition score is unreliable, the neck crest is not! The cresty neck score rates neck fat on a scale of zero to

five, with three or more a laminitis risk. Recognising a cresty neck and checking your horse's insulin levels enable early detection of impending laminitis. A second line of treatment that increases glucose excretion may be prescribed by your vet. Ertugliflozin can be helpful in horses that don't respond to diet and exercise changes or when these changes are not possible.

Click the link for help on [assessing how fat your horse is](#). And [studies](#) from the Queensland University of Technology will help you to score your horse's neck. 

Dr Jennifer Stewart BVSc BSc PhD is an equine veterinarian, CEO of [Jenquine](#) and a consultant nutritionist in Equine Clinical Nutrition.

Please note: All content provided in this editorial is for general use and information only and does not constitute advice or a veterinary opinion. It is not intended as specific medical advice or opinion and should not be relied on in place of consultation with your equine veterinarian.

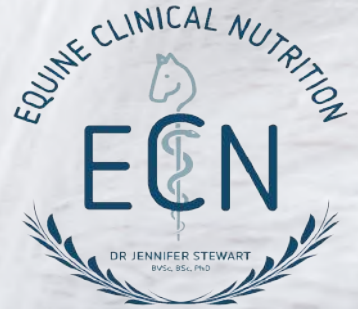


The black bar identifies an enlarged fat deposit with a cresty neck score of three (Image courtesy [PLOS One](#)).

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NUTRITION

Mild recurrent Colic

Colic refers to abdominal pain from any cause. KER's PETER HUNTINGTON B.V.Sc., M.A.C.V.Sc. explains the specifics.

Colic, loosely defined as abdominal pain from any cause, is very common in horses. It's one of the most significant disorders a horse can suffer as it's often very painful and some cases are life threatening. While the cause is often not identified impaction, overproduction of intestinal gas, infection, [hindgut acidosis](#), twists, and displacement of the colon are frequently to blame.

Most horses that suffer a bout of colic will recover, often without veterinary

treatment, and go on for years without a return of the condition. However, a smaller number of horses develop signs of colic again and again, sometimes seemingly related to changes in the weather or their feed, stabling, teeth, cribbing or weaving, or some other factor such as worming. Finding and eliminating the cause of these episodes is often difficult and frustrating for owners.

The veterinary examination of a horse with recurrent colic can involve a number of procedures, usually beginning with

obvious things like a check of dental condition, analysis of blood and faeces, and rectal palpation. A detailed history of the horse's exercise program and feeding plan may indicate the need for changes in management. Endoscopic examination of the stomach may show the presence of [gastric ulcers](#), often found in performance horses with recurrent mild colic being one of the typical signs.

Colic can also be related to organs apart from the intestines, and a more extensive examination can detect problems with the heart, lungs, or liver. Ultrasounds can be used to identify tumours, [enteroliths](#), sand accumulation, and unusual thickening of the intestinal walls. Exploratory abdominal surgery to find a cause of recurrent colic is not done without some risks to the horse, and this procedure may or may not locate a specific cause that can be treated.

Prevention of recurrent colic depends on the factors related to the horse's discomfort. In cases where no obvious cause is identified, management changes may be helpful. Based on our current knowledge of [colic prevention](#), horse owners are encouraged to maximize the health of the hindgut, where fermentation occurs.

Useful strategies include ensuring the horse always has access to clean water; maximizing turnout time; and basing the diet on ad lib good-quality forage, with grain or concentrates added only if it is necessary to support the energy demands of exercise, pregnancy, lactation or growth.

Diet changes should be made slowly to support hindgut health and feeding a research proven, time release hindgut buffer may also be beneficial for preventing hindgut acidosis and subsequent changes in the microbiome.



For more information on colic go to [Colic Episodes](#), [Colic Risk Factors](#), [Small Intestinal Colic](#), and [Large Intestinal Colic](#).



LIFE AFTER RACING

Shining in the show ring

After a successful racing career Most Important continues to shine, this time in the company of schoolgirl Clare Fedrick, writes **AMANDA MAC.**

A multiple Group 3 winner who took home over \$1 million in prize money during his illustrious track career, Most Important has now teamed up with 14-year-old Clare Fedrick to make an impressive show ring debut.

Affectionately known as Mosty and formally owned by Linda and Graham Huddy, the 10-year-old gelding by I Am Invincible out of Orange Marmalade has, Clare's mother Rebecca tells me, a delightful personality. "I've got a funny little video of Clare sitting at the front of the stable and Mosty's eating a carrot she's holding in her mouth. Like most of the good ones he's quite quirky, but so calm, relaxed, and loving at the same time."

After retiring from the track, Most

Important enjoyed a lengthy and well-deserved spell on the Huddy's Peachester Lodge property. Serendipitously, it was a conversation with Gemma Creighton, a Queensland Off-The-Track (QOTT) Acknowledged Retainer, which triggered the chain of events that ended with Most Important arriving at the Fedrick's farm just outside Gatton in Queensland, to try his luck in the show ring.

Rebecca, who had been looking for another show horse for Clare, called Gemma to see if she had any suitable OTTs in her care. At the time, Gemma was working with several of Graham and Linda's horses, but they were destined for the show jumping arena. However, Gemma offered to contact Linda and minutes later called Rebecca back to let her know she had a candidate. "I had a general chat to Gemma about what would happen with him," Rebecca explains, "and what it entails to be a show horse and she said, 'yep, let's give him a go'." Clare was just 13 when she first rode the 16hh OTT. "He's a big boy," her mother remarks, "but fortunately Clare has very, very long legs!"

And that was the start of a dream partnership. Clare, predominantly a show rider who occasionally dabbles in a bit of jumping, was entirely responsible for retraining Mosty, spending their first few weeks in the arena at the family farm where she taught him the tools of the show ring trade and worked on building his confidence. "He's a very kind horse, and she's a very kind rider, so they sort of fell into place. They just get each other. We've had plenty of off-the-tracks, but he was different. He just did whatever Clare asked. He trusted her right from the get-go," Rebecca recalls.

Nonetheless, Mosty's career change was substantial so not too much was expected of him in his first year. But apparently, Mosty had other ideas. Just eight weeks into his training, the Fedricks decided to enter him at the 2022 Stanthorpe Show, where he was named Champion Novice and Reserve




Champion Open Horse. Not bad for a beginner! "He then qualified for Sydney Royal last year, and for Grand Nationals - he'd won Champions Child Hack at about four different shows to qualify for that," Rebecca says. "He won the Champions Child Hack at EQ Childs Horse of the Year show as well, which qualified him for the Childs at Nationals."

Then there was the highly prestigious and hotly contested Pope Cup at the Melbourne Royal. "We just expected him to go round and possibly get the gate. The horses he was up against had all been around the show ring for four or five years. He went out there and actually went to sleep in the line-up because the class took over an hour to judge," Rebecca laughs.

And to the family's huge delight, Most Important was awarded Highly Commended, as well as taking third place at the Show Horse Council of Australasia Grand Nationals in a rider class. Then, not ones to rest on their laurels, Clare and Mosty became the inaugural winners of the QOTT High Point Horse Award - created to recognise the OTT horse who collects the most points across a range

of equestrian disciplines throughout the year - at the 2022 Equestrian Queensland Awards. Again, not bad for a newbie!

Back home on the farm, Clare, who has been riding since she was big enough to clamber aboard, continues Mosty's training. "It's mainly repetition now, so she will do flat work in the arena and to change it up she'll take him for swims in the dam or a ride around the property," Rebecca tells me.

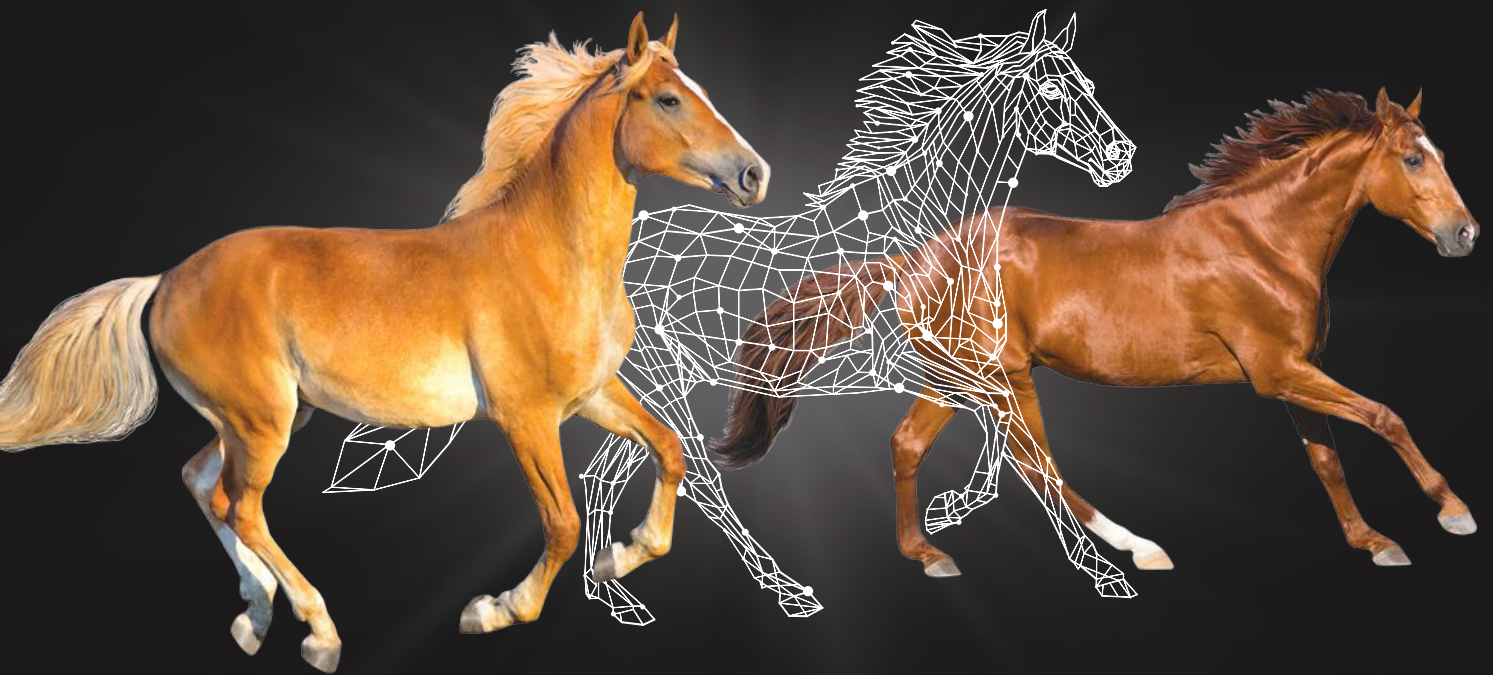
And by the time you read this, there's every possibility that Most Important will have added a few more accolades to the board at this year's Sydney Royal. A shining example of what's possible for OTT horses after their racing career is over, Rebecca reckons that he's an absolute superstar: "As I said to Clare, this is what happens when you've got people who look after their racehorses - they become good horses after the track." And you can't argue with that. 

FACING PAGE: Mosty and Clare have had a sensational start to their show ring partnership (Image by Danni Milligan Photography).

ABOVE: Most Important on the track (Image courtesy Queensland Racing).

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ADVERTORIAL

How much do you know about your horse's joints ?

Horses have three different types of joints: fibrous, cartilaginous, and synovial. Often seen as an issue for older horses, our focus should be on supporting joint health throughout a horse's life

The first type of joint is the fibrous joint. These are immobile joints found between the bones in your horse's skull and between the shafts of some long bones. They do not move and are therefore less likely to cause issues.

The second type is the cartilaginous joint. Examples of these are the joints in a horse's spine, pelvis and growth plates. They also have limited movement. The third type is the synovial joint. These make up the majority of joints in a horse's leg.

There are six different kinds of synovial joints, and a total of 18 in your horse's body. They have the most movement and are more likely to suffer from disease and injury.

But a joint is more than simply the union of two or more bones; the joint is also considered an organ. ⁽¹⁾ The synovial joint has a space in which the synovial fluid lies. This fluid bathes the joints and tendons, lubricates the joints, absorbs impact, and is like a joint 'oil'. It also provides growth

factors, oxygen, and nutrition for the joint. And don't forget the synovial membrane, the lining along the inner surface of the joint capsule.

There are 205 bones in the horse's skeleton. Twenty of these bones are in each foreleg and 20 in each hind limb. ⁽²⁾ These are connected through tendons, ligaments, and cartilage. Joints can become damaged through abnormal forces acting on normal cartilage, or normal forces acting on abnormal cartilage. ⁽¹⁾

Joint health should be a consideration for all horse owners: for performance horses; general riding horses; young, growing horses; and our oldies. Their joints are largely responsible for their general wellbeing and quality of life.

So, how can you ensure that every joint has the nutrition it needs to function optimally?

Diet and nutrition

Feeding and care for the joints is vital for horses. ⁽³⁾ It is essential that the base diet contains the right trace minerals, vitamins and fatty acids. Proper nutrition, from gestation and beyond, will ensure joints remain healthy for as long as possible.

Keeping your horse at an average ideal weight means there's less impact and demand on joints. If a horse is carrying extra weight, there will be increased stress on the joints.

Exercises for joint health

The best exercises for joint health are low-impact activities that promote range of motion, flexibility, and muscle strength without putting excessive stress on the joints. These include:

Walking (ridden or in-hand) can help to maintain joint flexibility and mobility. It's also a good warm-up exercise before more strenuous activities.

Trotting improves cardiovascular fitness and builds muscle strength.

Hill work improves muscle strength and joint mobility, and helps to strengthen the back and hindquarters.

Pole work improves balance, coordination and flexibility, and encourages the horse to move their joints through a full range of motion.

Remember to warm your horse up before any exercise and gradually increase the intensity of the workout over time.

Give your horse regular rest days and avoid overworking them, which can put unnecessary strain on their joints. Stretching exercises can also be helpful for maintaining joint flexibility and preventing stiffness.

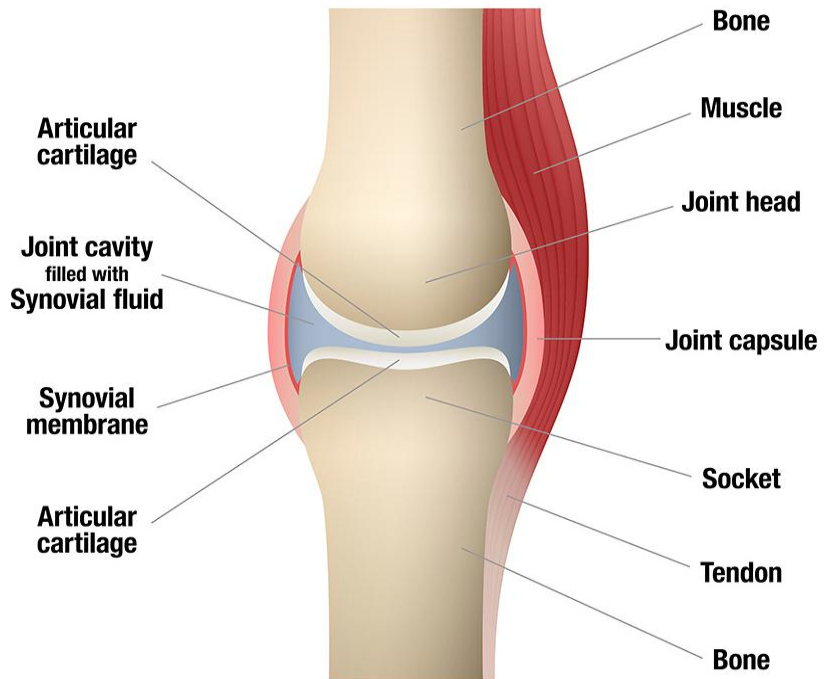
Confirmation

Poor confirmation can cause pressure on the joints and impact overall biomechanics. For example, horses with straighter hind limbs are less able to absorb shock and are more likely to suffer strain on their hocks. Horses with straight shoulders may experience more concussion and strain on their front legs, particularly the knee and fetlock joints. Proper hoof care and regular trimming is important for overall equine health and can also help reduce stress on the joints.

McDowells recommends

Most people feeding joint supplements are used to seeing artificial looking white powders. That's why McDowells formulated EquiFlex. It combines the best in herbal medicine with the best science available. Equiflex is a high potency joint formula, a combination of modern connective tissue supplements such as MSM and glucosamine with the added benefits of traditional herbal medicine. (4) EquiFlex is designed to encourage repair

Diagram of a Synovial Joint



by providing targeted nourishment to joints, tendons, ligaments and cartilage. This product is natural and has a focus on the highest quality, most effective ingredients we could source.

Ingredients

MSM (Methylsulfonylmethane): There is a lot of research to support claims that MSM reduces joint pain and acts as an anti-inflammatory. It is a rich source of organic sulphur that aids in reduced muscle damage, reducing pain and stiffness, and in boosting immunity. It is vital for soft tissue growth, and is required in the synthesis of bones to connective tissue.

Glucosamine: Used by the body to make the chemicals that build tendons, ligaments, cartilage, and the fluid that surrounds joints. Its production of GAGs (glucosaminoglycans) in synovial fluid enhances lubrication.

Equihemp: Contains both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids with a 1:3 ratio. Fatty acids are essential for the normal functioning of cells.

Turmeric: Able to reduce inflammation and the associated pain substantially when added to your horse's diet along with pepper.

Rosehips: One of the very best sources of

natural Iron and Vitamin C. Rosehips also contain biotin for optimum hoof health.

Yarrow: Counters tissue swelling and inflammation and encourages bone marrow health.

Meadowsweet: Traditionally used to reduce acids in the body including in the area around the joints.

Equiflex

With a combination of modern connective tissue supplements such as MSM and glucosamine, plus the added benefits of traditional herbal medicine, EquiFlex is designed to provide effective nourishment and nutrition to joints, tendons, ligaments and cartilage.

For more information on EquiFlex and McDowells full range of equine health products, visit their [website](#).

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- 1) [Osteoarthritis \(Degenerative Joint Disease\): An Update.](#)
- 2) [Synovial Joints and How They Work - The Horse.](#)
- 3) [Feeding Horses for Joint Health - The Horse.](#)
- 4) Plant Bioactives and Extracts as Feed Additives in Horse Nutrition, Journal of Equine Veterinary Science, Vol. 69, pp. 66-67.

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PROPERTY

A rural idyll

Set among swaying gum trees, Willow Park is a slice of rural heaven located at 50 Highview Road in Skye, Victoria.



Willow Park is an unrivalled rural estate ideal for an outdoor lifestyle with an equine focus – and with no immediate neighbours, approximately 8.04h (19.86 acres) of rich pasture create a delightfully private sanctuary.

The cottage-style home sits alongside 18 paddocks, a grassed arena, a lagoon and an brick machinery workshop that

includes a spacious office. A seven stable complex complete with tack room, double wash bay, wash room and dual entry feed shed is well set up for a variety of equestrian endeavours.

Sheltered by a wide verandah, the four bedroom two bathroom home has large open living and dining areas with polished wooden floors. Every window frames a beautiful view, and

an impressive backdrop of paddocks and willow trees adds ambience to entertaining by the pool, spa or BBQ area. At the heart of the home, a large kitchen features Westinghouse appliances, a breakfast bar and a skylight.

Perfect for a family, the master bedroom has a dedicated study nook, built-in robes and an ensuite. LPG gas ducted heating and air conditioning ensure



Seven brick stables are shaded by magnificent elm trees.



An impressive backdrop adds ambience to entertaining by the BBQ.

comfort throughout the home.

With a double carport, four garages, multiple parking areas, and spacious machinery shed, there's ample room for your car, float and trailer. The machinery and stable complex includes a large office, generous workshop and plentiful storage space. Shaded by magnificent elm trees with views across the pastures, the brick stables are orientated

towards the 70x20m (approx.) grassed arena. The paddocks, all with automatic waterers, range in size and are securely fenced.

Complete with on-site bore, ample water storage, chicken coop, dam, and abundant wildlife, this charming lifestyle property is only moments from thriving hubs and the coast, while major road and rail networks ensure easy access

to Melbourne's CBD or the Mornington Peninsula. For further information, contact Daniel Condon on 0438 866 486 or Shane Teo on 0426 277 138, or visit horseproperty.com.au. 🏠

FACING PAGE: Gum trees frame Willow Park's entrance.
TOP: The cottage-style home is spacious and welcoming.



The Power Of Light

Horses need light for far more than just vision. The constantly repeating cycles of light and dark synchronise an internal clock system that coordinates all bodily functions to a 24-h (daily) and 365-day (annual) rhythm. Blue light is the most biologically effective light responsible for regulating an animal's internal rhythms. The Equilume Performance Lighting system comprises fully automated intelligent Stable Lights and mobile Light Masks that harness the benefits of the blue wavelength light for horses.

Correct Lighting Impacts Physiology At The Cellular Level

It is hard to believe that a lighting system can impact so many aspects of a horse's health and welfare. Dr. Barbara Anne Murphy, Founder & CSO at Equilume, explains:

“Normal indoor lighting falls significantly short on providing the optimum light spectrum for horses to function well. The Equilume Stable Light and Light Mask were specifically designed to stimulate cells that drive strong, healthy rhythms throughout the horse's body.”

The goal is to provide the horse with lighting that best reflects and mimics the benefits of the natural environmental day-night cycle. This is essential to generate and maintain circadian rhythms that ensure optimum health and performance. Our research results as well as feedback from clients are very exciting; horses thrive under this system – they put on more lean muscle, increase appetites, improve behaviour and focus during training sessions, coat condition blossoms and they are healthier overall.”

Contact us today to find out more about Equilume:

- amandine@equilume.com
- max@equilume.com



Equilume Stable Lights

New Design & Features:

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Blue enriched light by day and restful red light at night, replicating the benefits of sunlight for the stabled horse.

Benefits include:

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- Promotes muscle development
- Reduces bacteria in stables
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