

JUNE 2023

# EQUESTRIAN HUB

magazine

## Alanna Richards

True colours

## Nicole Tough

Working with  
crookedness

## Top comps

Badminton &  
Longines Global  
Championship

## Behaving badly?

There's likely to be  
a good reason

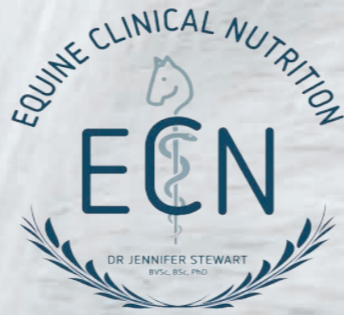
## Cellulitis

What's vital for  
you to know



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### On the Cover

Alanna Richards and OTT Royal Blu  
(Image by Lisa Gordon, [Little More Grace Photography](https://www.littlemoregrace.com.au)).



## 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 show ring success Alanna Richards to find out more about her stunning off the track Thoroughbred Royal Blu.



### 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 discusses working with crookedness.

**Leisa Hofstetter**  
Leisa is an Equine Nutritionist and founder of Hof Equine. She has a Bachelor of Equine Science, specialising in nutrition, and lives just west of Brisbane, in Queensland's beautiful Lockyer Valley. Older horses can be a challenge to feed, particularly during the colder months, but it's not impossible to keep the aged horse well-fed over winter, as Leisa explains.



**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 cellulitis, its causes, and its possible treatments.



### Alanna Richards

Alanna's credentials in the show ring include winning Royal Championships, Reserve Championships, Grand Nationals Reserves, EA Nationals Reserves, plus many Royal Show wins and placings, and HOTY titles with her heart horse France. More recently she has been enjoying huge success with Royal Blu, her stunning off the track Thoroughbred.

**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. In this issue she addresses the problem of horses behaving badly.



### Tania Huppertz

Tania combines her love of horses and travel in her successful company Snaffle Travel. She visits some of the world's major horse shows and equestrian-related locations, and enjoys sharing her experiences with the Equestrian Hub community. Don't miss her roundup from the 2023 Badminton Horse Trials and the Madrid leg of the Longines Global Champions Tour.



## BEHIND THE SHOT

# Shane Rose & Virgil

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:** Shane Rose

**Horse:** Virgil

**Event:** The 2022 FEI Eventing World Championships, where Shane and Virgil came 14th, the highest placed Australian combination.

**Location:** Pratoni, Italy.

**Camera & Settings:** Canon 1DX II 300mm Lens ISO 200 f 2.8 1/800 sec.

**Challenges:** The hardest part of capturing this image was being in the right spot around the arena. Because

this was such a huge event there were hundreds of spectators and almost as many photographers. I had to capture dressage action shots of Shane for my work, but I also knew that Shane always gives his horses a wonderful hug and ear rub when he is done with his round or test – and I needed to be in the right spot at the end of the test to capture that. This day he did not disappoint!

**Why this shot is special:** To me, this photo says so much about Shane and his love for Virgil. Shane is a wonderful

horseman as well as an experienced and dependable competitor. He admits that the relationship he has with Virgil is special and the love he has for the horse is plain to see. Their test was in Shane's words "the best we could do," so he was clearly very happy and that shines through in the photo.

In fact, his love for Virgil became a topic of conversation in the media room. Many of the photographers commented on the emotion Shane shows his horse and how much they loved it! This image has always been special to me and I recently had a large print made and framed to donate to the Adelaide Equestrian Festival's auction. Shane came in to sign it and became quite emotional as he spoke of his 'Virg'.

One of the nicest parts of this story is that Niki, Shane's wife, purchased the photo and I'm thrilled to think Shane can enjoy it every day at home, and be reminded of all he and Virgil have achieved together. 🐾

*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

## Working with crookedness

Like humans, horses have a dominant side that they prefer to use. The rider's goal is to achieve suppleness on both sides, writes **NICOLE TOUGH**.

**B**y nature, horses have a stiff side and a hollow side (picture a banana). Understanding and working with this natural crookedness is a task requiring attention in every single training session. Indeed, Carl Hester once commented that straightness is more difficult than piaffe and passage.

Just as humans have a dominant side that they prefer to use, so do horses, and if we understand why our horses function in a certain way, we can address it.

On their stiff side, horses find it more difficult to bend. This is because the muscles on the opposite side of the body are shorter, and it is harder to stretch them. On the hollow side, the shoulders want to be out and the haunches want to travel to the inside.

A horse that is naturally kinked right is more comfortable carrying their shoulders too far to the left and the haunches to the right, resulting in the tendency to fall in on one side (left); and drift on the hollow side (right). This is also the cause of the horse being heavy or dull in one rein (left) and quite light in the other (right). Of course, this is all the other way around if your horse naturally kinks left.

The rider's goal is to achieve equal suppleness on both sides, so the horse can move their neck, shoulders and haunches equally in both directions, resulting in equal contact in both reins, and equal tracking of the hind legs.

It all starts with understanding the difference between flexion and bend. Horses flex from the poll joint and they bend through the whole body. An easy to remember tip is F for face/flexion; B for body/bend. We can have flexion with no bend, such as on the straight line, but we can't have bend without flexion. Practise standing at halt, and whilst holding enough opposite rein to prevent the horse bending their neck, ask them to flex the opposite way from the poll joint. This exercise isolates the joint and develops its ability to loosen.

It is understandable to think that the stiff side is the more difficult side to train. Remember travelling down the long side with the young horse determined to look out and not where they were going? Not fun, especially in canter!

The goal is simple, make the stiff side more bendable and supple. A helpful tip involves sugar cubes or peppermints. While mounted and at the halt, encourage the horse to lengthen the stiff muscles by reaching around for the treat. Repeat this many times, and keep some treats in your pocket for later in the session. If your horse becomes convinced that they cannot possibly bend that way, return to the halt and prove to them that they can. Transfer this understanding to the walk, trot and canter. Over time and session by session, the rider can achieve a remarkable transformation.

Now on to the hollow side and the direction which seems easily bendable - and for that reason is actually the more dishonest side. The most common rider error on the hollow side involves too much flexing and bending to the inside. All the exercises that seemed easier to accomplish now require constant attention so that the shoulders don't fall, or leak out.

Without sufficient outside guarding aids to prevent their evasion through the outside rein and leg, the horse will become unbalanced and unequal in the contact, which affects the equal tracking of the hind leg and often hinders the quality of the pace. More often than not, this crookedness is the underlying cause of the four beat canter.

In the horse that naturally kinks right, any exercise with right positioning (right circles, turning right, leg yield left, shoulder-in right etc) will need careful monitoring, because the horse will always want to overposition on the hollow side. And again, it's the opposite in a horse that naturally kinks left.



**FACING PAGE:** Florenz in renvers, shoulder-in. **ABOVE:** Dumbledore in travers. Images by Christy Baker Photography


When training the hollow side, it's helpful to direct the horse's chin over the middle of their chest. Don't hold it there, just direct it there and soften whenever possible. Thus, the rider's goal on the hollow side is to make it straighter.

Correct flexion and bend are preparation for every figure and movement, and they make the horse supple. Once correct flexion and bending are confirmed, it is easier to work the horse's whole body in exercises that increase suppleness.

Achieving even contact in both reins from a naturally crooked horse is the next point. When one rein feels heavy (as if the horse is leaning on it), the rider instinctively becomes heavier on that rein, trying to 'muscle' the horse off it. But this doesn't address the problem, which is actually the empty rein. If the horse isn't even in both reins, don't keep pulling the heavy one; instead work to put the extra weight in the empty one.

Renvers is a wonderful tool to soften them up and add weight to the other rein; as is riding in the shoulder-fore position, with the 'heavy' rein on the inside and using diagonal aids to even the contact (inside leg loading the empty outside rein).

Straightness and bend go hand in hand. Straightness can only be achieved with correct suppleness training, and refers to the parallelism of the horse's spine aligned to the line of travel (spine on the line), with hind hoof prints in line with front hoof prints. Straightness applies to work on straight and curved lines, and is manipulated in lateral work, achieving greater gymnastic ability and elasticity.

There are wonderful benefits to mastering the natural crookedness of the horse, which include even wear and tear on the legs, equal suppling of the body making them more comfortable, as well as more even bit wear on their teeth. The struggle for straightness is an every day affair, and worth the struggle. Happy suppling! 



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FEATURE

## Horses behaving badly?

If a horse is misbehaving, there's likely to be a very good reason for it. **DR JENNIFER STEWART** looks at some 'bad' behaviours and their possible causes.

The horse is a strange paradox of strength and acquiescence. They can overcome pain, injury, and the instinct for self-preservation to conform to the rider's will. This represents a profound challenge for us all, and recognising that effective and humane training requires an understanding of the processes underlying your horse's behaviour is paramount.

In recent surveys, up to 29% of leisure horse owners reported problem behaviour in their horses in relation to some aspect of management and stabling. Stabling and restriction of foraging time have been associated with the development of abnormal behaviours called stereotypies. Stereotypic behaviours are repetitive behaviours with no obvious function,



**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Cribbing is an example of a stereotypic behaviour. **ABOVE:** Constant access to roughage can lessen boredom and stress. **RIGHT:** Weaving can be significantly reduced with access to horses in adjacent stables.

such as cribbing, windsucking, weaving and box walking. These activities are found in approximately 10% of horses in captivity (stabled, confined) but have never been reported in free-roaming horses.

These behaviours are occasionally seen in horses kept in paddocks. Weaving over a field gate or cribbing on fence posts can occur in older horses who have been stabled and persevere with the behaviour in the paddock. Foals who received grain-based dietary supplements before weaning are more likely to crib-bite on fence posts and rails – supporting the relationship between diet and oral stereotypy found in older stabled horses.

### Stabling and confinement

Over simplifying the definition of 'normal' behaviour risks some aspects of equine behaviour being labelled abnormal, when in fact they are normal, adaptive and have ensured the survival of horses for around 65 million years. Many behaviours considered undesirable are a result of domestication.

Confining horses imposes several stressors - restricted feeding and movement, isolation, reduced foraging and social contact. Weaving and box walking are associated with locomotor frustration; cribbing and windsucking, despite a properly formulated diet, with feeding management frustration. And all of these behaviours are related to distress.

For socially isolated/stabled horses, weaving can be significantly reduced with access to horses in adjacent stables. Mirrors can also help by reducing aggressive, threatening behaviour over the stable door. To reduce stress, provide non-toxic plants, branches and browse to encourage normal foraging, while constant access to roughage can also lessen boredom and stress. Hay nets should be placed near to, or on the ground. Nets placed any higher require the horse to raise their heads unnaturally high, predisposing them to respiratory conditions or infection due to the lessened ability of fine hairs and mucous in the windpipe to prevent dust and bacteria from reaching the lungs.

### Pain

The possibility that horses are behaving badly because of pain must always be considered. Recognising early or subtle signs of pain is a challenge, but facial expression is a good indicator. The Horse Grimace Scale is an effective and practical method of identifying painful conditions (visit [Equine Pain Face](#)).

A recent survey of over 500 sport horses in normal work and presumed to be sound, found 47% were clearly lame. Early recognition of pain is an opportunity for early diagnosis and treatment, and can prevent problems progressing to the stage where the horse is experiencing reduced welfare, or a potentially dangerous situation occurs for the rider. Learning how to identify facial expressions, posture, gait changes and tail positions that indicate pain during riding can greatly reduce the horse's (and the owner's) stress.

An important milestone in equitation is the ethogram, a species-specific catalogue of all the observed behaviours of an animal and the social, environmental and other external factors

that influence them. For our domestic horses (ridden or unriden), these external factors include management, training, and riding. The ethogram enables the detection of pain and is easy to use. Some good resources include the [Equine Discomfort Ethogram](#), [The Ridden Horse Pain Ethogram](#), and [Recognising Pain in our Ridden Horses](#).

### The quiet type

We depend on 'reading' our horse's behaviour to understand what they're feeling and experiencing, but it's not always reliable. Horses cope with stress in different ways: proactive and reactive. Proactive or active copers try to get themselves out of the situation causing them stress, often by bucking, balking, rearing, biting, kicking, weaving or with any other negative expression of energy. Reactive or passive coping includes trying to adapt to the situation, by becoming still, stubborn, lazy or compliant – even when feeling fretful. Studies using body temperature, heart rate and eye temperature have found that horses that become still or quiet in worrying or demanding situations show the same stress responses in the body ([Do Horses have a poker face?](#))

### Puzzling behaviours

Yawning and playing are puzzling behaviours because in horses they can indicate stress. A large study of domestic horses kept in sub-optimal conditions (meal feeding with limited roughage availability and social isolation) found yawning is triggered by stress and emotional discomfort. Horses showing stereotypic behaviours yawn more than non-stereotypic horses. Based on this research, yawning and adult play can reflect altered welfare states. Other behaviours like licking, chewing, and head-lowering have long been equated with submission. Licking and chewing are behavioral indicators of the switch from sympathetic (fight, flight, freeze or fawn) to parasympathetic

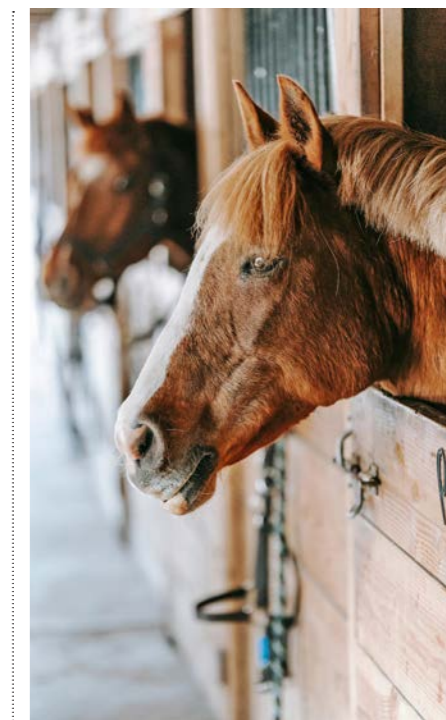
(rest and digest) nervous control and have recently been categorised as displacement and self-comforting activities in horses experiencing conflicting motivations, anxiety and adrenalin release.

### Diet's contribution

Feeding meals of concentrates reduces time spent foraging and chewing (free-range/wild horses chew around 57,600 times a day, hand-fed/domestic ones around 14,500). This leads to physical and psychological stress as reduced production of saliva diminishes the saliva buffer against gastro-intestinal acidity. Gastric acidity is the main cause of gastric ulcers and horses with ulcers - regardless of discipline - have elevated blood levels of the stress hormone cortisone. Straw bedding provides horses with one of their main mechanisms for regulating gut acidity. If adequate forage isn't always available and horses are unable to, or prevented from, engaging in bedding-chewing, they develop compensatory activities such as cribbing and wood-chewing.

Australian and overseas studies have recently shown that a combination of magnesium and thiamine reduces speed reaction tests and fear responses measured by heart rate and cortisol. Because of its calming effects in humans, tryptophan has also been studied in horses – but the response is unpredictable. Rather than a sedative effect, oral tryptophan may (under both isolation and visual contact environments) stimulate 2 to 4 hours after dosing rather than having a sedative effect. There are also breed differences in response with Arabians and Standardbreds showing greater increases in heart rate and walking/sniffing activity after tryptophan administration.

Oils can have a calming effect on excitable horses, including weanlings and those prone to tying-up. Reactions



to loud noise and visual stimuli are reduced in horses on 10% oil diets; weanlings take less time to learn handling and working horses had lower salivary cortisol levels and less startle reactions when oils provided 11% of dietary energy. Cereal grains, oils and rice bran oil are rich in omega 6 oils, whereas the natural, grazing, browsing horse has a diet based largely on grass and forage which are rich in omega 3, which helps reduce inflammation.

For modern horses many stressors are unavoidable. Some equine responses to stress are characteristic and common to all horses – others are very individual. So, knowing your horse well is important. Many performance or behaviour issues can be resolved with patience, time and a regular modification/training program. There really is no substitute for time spent working with your horse. 🏠

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

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VET VIBES

## Cellulitis: Its causes and treatment

If you suspect your horse has cellulitis, the time to act is now. **DR DOUG ENGLISH** explains what to look for and possible treatments.

**C**ellulitis is a bacterial infection that has gotten on top of the immune system, infecting the skin and underlying tissues. It can occur in all animals, including horses, and is characterised by redness, swelling, and warmth in the affected area. The pain can be so intense that your horse may quickly jerk their leg away from your touch. They're likely to be lame due to the pressure of the swelling and associated pain.

If left untreated, the horse may develop a fever as the infection becomes worse. As the infection spreads, it can affect the entire leg causing significant swelling

In horses, cellulitis usually affects the lower limbs and can be caused by various bacteria and fungi as in 'swamp cancer'. Horses can develop cellulitis through breaks in the skin (cuts, wounds, or insect bites for

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Naturally



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example) which allow bacteria to enter and infect the underlying tissues.

Treatment for cellulitis in horses typically involves a combination of medical management and supportive care. Here are some common approaches:

**Veterinary examination:** It is important to consult a veterinarian to diagnose and determine the severity of the cellulitis. The more severe and widespread the infection is, the harder and more expensive it is to treat, and the resulting scar tissue may result in a permanently distended limb and possible ongoing lameness. Your vet may perform a physical examination and will possibly take a sample for bacterial culture to identify the causative bacteria, particularly if the infection is not responding.

**Antibiotics:** Antibiotics are prescribed to combat the bacterial infection. The choice of antibiotics depends on the specific bacteria involved and the results of the sensitivity test. It is crucial to administer the antibiotics since they are the major weapon in fighting a cellulitis that has overwhelmed the immune system.

**Anti-inflammatory medications:** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) may be given to alleviate pain and to reduce inflammation. But they can also reduce the local immune response and I am not keen when owners use them without antibiotics, thinking that they are a cure for infection. They are pain medication and not a cure for bacterial infection.

**Hot compresses:** Applying hot sponging compresses or hosing the site of the infection increases circulation, brings in more healing antibodies, accelerates local healing processes, helps reduce swelling,



Correct wound care is essential. Above is an example of a properly managed leg wound with no cellulitis present. It was bandaged daily and healed within 12 days.

and provides relief. Ensure the water is not too hot! If you can't hold your hand in it then it's too hot. Repeat this treatment as often as you can and for more serious cellulitis three times a day is not too much. Additionally, topical osmotic agents (strong salt solutions) may help to draw out excess fluid.

**Bandaging:** Proper bandaging techniques, such as using clean and non-occlusive dressings, may be employed to protect the affected area and aid in reducing swelling. Unbandaged wounds are magnets for flies which carry infectious organisms.

**Possible exercise restriction:** Caution here because walking increases the circulation in all legs which is necessary. Horses with cellulitis confined to a stall and just standing about generally develop more swelling. But sometimes they need restriction and for interpretation of best practice confer with your veterinarian. Mostly I think walking is about the best option.

**Wound Care:** If there are any open wounds or sores, proper wound care is essential. Cleaning the wound with an appropriate antiseptic solution and applying topical treatments as advised by your veterinarian can facilitate healing and reduce the risk of secondary infections.

**Follow-up care:** Regular follow-up visits with your veterinarian are crucial to monitor the progress of the horse's condition and to make any necessary adjustments to the treatment plan.

**An ounce of prevention:** Paddocks with mud, stagnant water, deep sand, or thorny plants are all hazardous and best avoided if possible. Ensure your horse's legs are kept clean and dry, and treat all cuts as soon as you become aware of them. Regular exercise at what ever intensity your horse is fit enough to undertake will also help to improve their general circulation, and thus reduce the possibility of cellulitis. And finally, avoid excessive use of shampoos. These products can dry out your horse's skin, making it vulnerable to cracking.





## LIFE AFTER RACING

## True colours

It took some time for Royal Blu's true colours to shine, but once they did there was no stopping him, writes **AMANDA MAC**.

A lacklustre canter down the home straight is hardly the mark of a motivated future racing star, but in Royal Blu's case, lack of enthusiasm for the track worked to his, and to Alanna Richards very great advantage.

The then three-year-old, sired by Top Echelon out of Star of Tiarne, came to the attention of Whitmere Stud's Greg Gerry, who liked the look of the youngster and decided to buy him. After arriving at his new home in Victoria, Blu was turned out into a paddock to let down.

In early 2020, the horse arrived at Chris and Vicki Lawrie's Oakbank Farm to further his education. Alanna, an accomplished show rider whose relationship with the Lawrie's goes back many years, started working on Blu and fell in love with him. "I just knew he needed to be mine," she says. After some discussion, Alanna's father funded Blu's purchase, something for which she will be forever grateful. "Dad supported me with my dreams and without him none of this would be possible," she adds.

And that was the start of a remarkable journey – and it certainly has been a journey! Initially Royal Blu had contact issues, among other problems, and Alanna wisely decided to turn him out for nine months. "I wanted to let him forget about me, forget about everyone else, and let me forget about him for a little while too," she tells me.

After bringing him back into work in June last year, Alanna took Blu to the Adelaide Royal where he won Best Novice and Champion Off the Track, as well as his Open class. However, when later riding in a class at a Canberra show, there was a problem. "I wasn't overly happy with how he was handling it all, so I decided to take him home, work with him some more, and then see how we'd go at Grand Nationals and the Sydney Royal."

Chris Lawrie thought Royal Blu had the looks and movement to impress the show judges. However, because Blu was relatively new to the ring Alanna confesses that she wasn't particularly optimistic about their chances.

But she needn't have been concerned. Blu surpassed himself - and in so doing justified the faith she had always had in him, while at the same time making three of her childhood dreams come true. "He was absolutely perfect," she says. "At the Nationals we won Champion Large Open Hack, and in Sydney we won the A. V. Pope Cup and Australian National Hack. My first National Champion, first Pope Cup and first Champion Hack at a Royal Show - I still can't quite believe it! I have Blu's ribbons and garlands sitting on my dining room table, and I have to look at them every day just to make sure that it all actually did happen!"

It's fair to say that Alanna and Blu have gone through difficulties on what has been at times a rocky road, but she never gave in. "There was a part of me that just couldn't give up. I thought no, we're going to keep going, we're going to keep trying. I knew he had a good heart and he wanted to do the right thing. I'd had people wanting to purchase him, but I felt very strongly that I was meant to have him and finish the journey with him. I'm so glad the Universe looked after us and kept us together." Now enjoying a break until early June, Alanna plans to bring Blu back into work in time to take him to Adelaide and the Royals.

And for those of you who might be wondering where Alanna's much loved France is these days (see our [Nov/Dec 2022](#) issue), I can report that he's enjoying partial retirement. "I still like to hop on him and ride him around. He's my heart horse," Alanna says. "I don't think I could ever fully retire him, and I don't think he'd like it either. To be honest, if it wasn't for France, I wouldn't be where I am today. I'm very thankful and grateful to have him in my life." 🐾



LEFT & TOP: Alanna and Royal Blu triumphant at the 2023 Sydney Royal Easter Show. ABOVE: Royal Blu claimed Champion Large Open Hack at the Grand Nationals. Images by Lisa Gordon, Little More Grace Photographics



ADVERTORIAL

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## The Stallion Handler

Mitchell Ralph arrived as a super enthusiastic, slightly 'rough around the edges' boy from Morrinsville, New Zealand, with the work ethic and full-immersion background of a family of farmers, horse breeders and trainers. Mitchell's high level equine skills soon earned him a place on the Arrowfield stallion team and he became a familiar

figure at stallion parades, video and photo shoots, and at yearling sales. But that was just the start of Mitch's career with Arrowfield: earlier this year he took up an exciting role with Arrowfield's Bloodstock and Sales team.

## The Arrowfield Legends

Jess Hood and Adam Shankley have both celebrated their 20-year anniversaries at Arrowfield and were very popular recipients of the 2022 Australian Stud and Stable Staff Awards for Horsemanship and Administrative Services.

A grandfather who liked to punt was Adam's only family link with racing, but his natural empathy with horses was evident early in life. It led him to work first with yearlings, then racehorses and, two years after he arrived at Arrowfield in 2001, he was entrusted with accompanying leading sire Hussonet to the United States.

After eight years as Stallion Manager,

Adam took up a valuable utility role, sharing his knowledge with younger staff while handling broodmares, stallions, weanlings and yearlings. In 2022 he took on a fresh challenge as Arrowfield's Assistant Operations Manager, ensuring all farm activities are carried out safely and efficiently.

Jess grew up in rural Victoria and began riding at the age of three. Formal training at Marcus Oldham College was followed by a decade of stud and yearling work before moving to Arrowfield in 1999, where she was soon given the role of Yearling Manager. Ten years' managing staff and horses in the yearling barn, and dealing with buyers at sales gave Jess a strong base of knowledge and experience for her 2010 move to Arrowfield's Office Administration team. She now processes all essential paperwork and is the first point of contact for job applicants, staff support and most visitors to the farm.

## The Mover and Shaker

Vicky Leonard hails from the small New Zealand city of Timaru and grew up horse-mad, thinking she would become an equine vet.

After completing a degree in zoology at Otago University and working with leading studs in the uni holidays, she changed tack, eventually winning a place on the prestigious two-year Godolphin Flying Start Management Training Program. Vicky graduated at the head of her class and in 2011 made a beeline for Arrowfield where she took up the Marketing Manager's role, creating a series of campaigns and initiatives that raised the global profile of the stud's brand.

With the support and mentorship of John Messara AM, Chair of the Arrowfield Group, Vicky added an MBA to her qualifications and in 2018 founded her own marketing business Kick Collective, as well as the successful industry publication *TDN Australia & NZ*. In 2022



Mitchell Ralph and Showtime

she launched [KickUp](#) to counter false claims made about horse racing.

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- Inglis Classic, Sydney - February
- Inglis Easter, Sydney - April
- Magic Millions National, Gold Coast - May/June

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Adam Shankley and Jess Hood



FEATURE

# International roundup

May was a busy month on the international competition calendar. **TANIA HUPPATZ** reports on Badminton and the Longines Global Champions tour.

It was a wet and muddy affair at the 2023 Badminton Horse Trials, this year presented by Mars Equestrian. Thanks to bad weather causing eventing competitions to be cancelled in the lead up to Badminton, many combinations struggled to qualify under the new FEI rules. Most years there are

85 starters and those who withdraw prior to the event are replaced from a wait list that can be as many as 120 entries. This year's entries started at 83 combinations, which were whittled down to just 64 starters.

To avoid the cross country phase clashing with The King and The Queen

Consort's coronation, Badminton was moved back a day so that the dressage started on a Friday rather than Thursday. The first day went well, but the dressage leader board changed dramatically on Saturday when Rosalind Canter (GBR) rode Michele Saul's 11-year-old Lordships Graffalo into the lead with a stunning 22.1 test - giving Ros, the former 2018 World Champion, a 0.2 penalty advantage over Kitty King and Vendredi Biats.

On Sunday, wet weather and the Eric Winter cross country course created problems aplenty for over half the field. Despite changes to the course to suit the conditions, there were six withdrawals, and out of the 58 starters only 30 finished. At the end of a gruelling day, and after collecting 11.6 cross country penalties, Ros Canter and Lordships Graffalo managed to hold top spot with a total of 33.7 penalties.

Tim Price was the best of the Kiwis. Aboard Vitali, he added 24 penalties to his tally, to slot into fourth place with 51.1

penalties. It was good to see a strong Kiwi contingent this year with six riders.

Australian rider Sarah Clark and LV Balou Jeanz withdrew on Thursday night, leaving only one Australian rider, William Leggett with his horse Huberthus AC. It was Bill's eighth Badminton but his first 5\* with Huberthus. Sadly, it was not their day on the cross country and he retired on course.

Tom Crisp (GBR) riding Liberty and Glory had an unexpected fall in the lake and he will be forever remembered for demonstrating his swimming skills, causing spectators to cheer loudly as he made the most of his soggy situation.

The going around the cross country proved heavy for most horses and there were a few falls. With 11 combinations retired and another 17 eliminated, only 30 competitors completed the course. Fortunately, at Monday morning's trot up all of them passed inspection.

There were mixed results for World Number Four Oliver Townend (GBR) this year. His horse Swallow Springs was eliminated during the cross country (Oliver has since been issued with an FEI Recorded Warning). However, he came second on Ballaghmor Class, which placed 5th at Badminton in 2022 and 2nd in 2019, as well as notching up wins at both Lexington and Burghley.

Irish rider Austin O'Connor on Colorado Blue climbed the leader board after cross country, moving from 34th after dressage to 2nd. But two rails plus time penalties on the last day moved him back to finish in 3rd position on 51.9 penalties.

Rosalind and Lordships Graffalo held their lead to the very end and were crowned winners of Badminton 2023 in what had been very challenging conditions. Ironically, just as she was presented with her trophy the heavens opened up ... again! The diminutive Ros and 17.1hh Lordships Gruffalo have built a wonderful partnership, with



**FACING PAGE:** Hector Payne with his Dutch-bred KWPN Dynasty. **ABOVE:** Seasoned campaigner William Fox-Pitt and Grafennacht. **BELOW:** Rosalind Canter battled through gruelling conditions to win Badminton 2023. *Images by Tania Huppertz*

the combination previously claiming individual 4th at the 2022 World Championships in Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy.

### Hot competition in Madrid

The Longines Global Champions Tour was held in Madrid over three days at the exclusive Club de Campo Villa de Madrid – and the atmosphere was electric. It was the 10th time the event,

which has become one of the most popular sporting competitions in the world, has visited Madrid. Every year, the Tour attracts thousands of spectators who flock to watch the world's best horses and riders in action.

The highlight in Madrid was Sunday's Grand Prix, with the 1.60 metre class and a prize purse of €500,000 (over AU\$800,000). Current World Number



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One Henrik Von Eckermann (SWE) on Iliana finished 6th with a rail down. World Number Two, Julien Epailard (FRA) on Dubai Du Cedre took two rails and finished in 19th position.

The course proved to be extremely challenging with technical jumps and tricky lines testing the skills of all the riders. The rails kept falling with German rider Katrin Elkerman taking a tumble and four riders retired out of a field of 40.

Australian Edwina Tops-Alexander aboard Fellow Castlefield (by Je t'Aime Flamenco), took top honours. Edwina was the only rider out of the entire field to jump clear, staying within a hair's breadth of the 78 second time limit with a round of 77.25 seconds. Denmark's Andreas Schou jumped clear but was three hundredths of a second off the time with Darc de Lux. Jur Vrieling (FRA) and Long John Silver 3 N.O.P. also collected a time fault.

It was a tough course, and in the end no jump-off was required. As rail upon rail kept dropping, it was an epic victory for Edwina when she emerged as the eventual winner. The Australian national anthem played as she was awarded first place, a prize that included €165,000.00 (just on AD\$271,500) out of the Grand Prix 1.60m prize pool.

Speaking to GCTV after her nail-biting win, she commented on the atmosphere at the event: "It's just amazing, it's electric. It's so exciting, and the crowd is just incredible. I would like to thank Fellow's owner Anthina Onassis. His last Grand Prix was at Valkenswagen in August last year. He then had a little setback and I needed to give him a little bit of time to build up his fitness. He's not a particularly fast horse so I was quite worried. He spooked to number one ... and then I was worried about my time. I had to stay really, really focused, and on top of it try to jump clear and be slick."



**ABOVE: Edwina Tops-Alexander and Fellow Castlefield on the way to victory. BELOW: Edwina with Andreas Schou (L) in 2nd place and Jur Vrieling (R) in 3rd. Images by Tania Huppertz**

Commenting on her Championship campaign she added: "The season is going really fast, but we take it show by show. Now we have a plan and we will try to stick to the plan, stay positive and try to get it done. So, let's hope it goes in the right direction."

Edwina has also collected her pass to the Longines Global Champions Tour Super Grand Prix in Prague in

November. She will be hoping to repeat history when she won the first ever Longines Super Grand Prix back in 2018.

The fifth leg of this prestigious global circuit was held from 1st to 3rd June in Ramatuelle, Saint Tropez, on the glamorous French Riviera. 

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## NUTRITION

# Weathering winter

Aged horses can be a challenge to feed correctly, particularly during winter. Equine nutritionist **LEISA HOFSTETTER** has some suggestions.

Often you will notice a loss of condition as your horse gets older, or starts to lose the functionality of their teeth – and frequently these two issues go hand in hand. While there may be the need for a more intensive feed regime, it is not impossible to keep the aged horse well-fed over winter with the right energy and nutrient intake.

There are several factors to consider here, such as whether your horse's

teeth are in good order, and whether the horse needs increased calories and/or nutrients to keep warm, or to counteract the changing nutrient composition of grasses in the colder months.

### Age related weight loss

The general consensus is that there is a tendency for horses to lose weight as they age, despite eating the same diet they did well on as younger horses. Contrary to popular belief, and

provided they have healthy teeth, this is not due to a decrease in their ability to digest feeds. Studies have shown that aged horses with healthy, functioning teeth have similar rates of digestive ability with high fibre, fat and fibre, and cereal diets as do younger adult horses with good dentition.

So why do horses seem to lose weight as they get older? The answer may be in their body composition. Horses tend to lose muscle mass as they age, even if they are still actively using muscles. Staying active can certainly help retain muscle mass, but there will most likely still be a slight decline as your horse moves on in years.

### Dental health

Another contributing factor is that older horses (or even younger adult horses) with poor teeth or lack of teeth can lose weight quite quickly. This is because digestion essentially begins with the mouth, or more particularly, with chewing. Unlike dogs and humans, horses do not salivate when they see food. Instead, saliva is released in the

mouth in response to chewing. Horses who have fewer or no teeth may produce less saliva than those with all their teeth. This can lead to an increased risk of stomach ulcers because saliva is a natural buffer for stomach acid, which is being produced continuously.

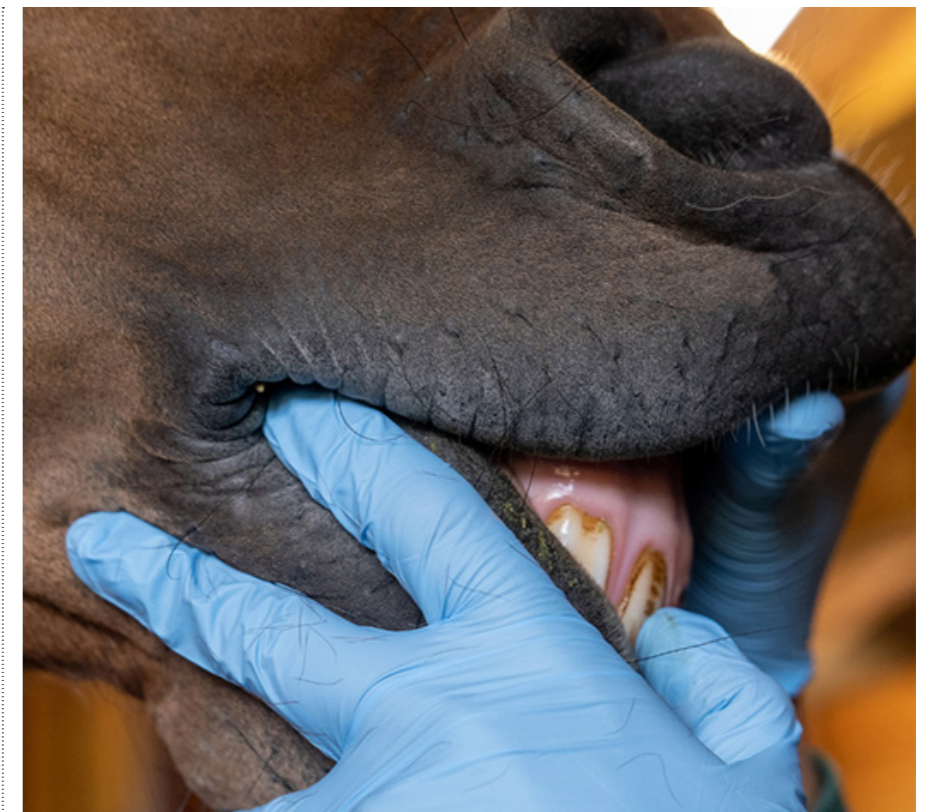
Chewing is also important for the later stage of digestion which occurs in the large intestine with the help of a diverse range of microflora. The microflora digest the fibre in feed to provide energy and other nutrients for the horse. It is because of the microflora that a horse can readily digest forages like grass, while humans can't.

In order to digest the fibre in feed efficiently, the microflora need a good surface area-to-volume ratio. The higher the surface area, the more microflora can colonise on pieces of chewed fibre, and the more energy and nutrients the horse will gain from the feed. So, if a horse is having trouble chewing properly, the feed provided to the intestinal microflora may have a lower surface area-to-volume ratio, and digestion efficiency is therefore reduced, meaning less energy and nutrients for the horse.

### Reduced digestive efficiency

To combat the reduced digestive efficiency associated with improperly chewed food, it may help to feed pre-cut forages such as chaff or hay cubes. These should be fed more frequently, around two to three times per day, and in smaller portions. In addition, fresh forages such as grass are chewed more easily than dried forages. It may help the toothless or poorly-toothed aged horse to maintain weight if they have 24/7 access to fresh grass.

A complete feed designed for older horses may help too, as these are often processed to be able to be eaten with minimal chewing. Aged horses may also benefit from feeds which contain around 4% to 7% fat



**FACING PAGE:** Keeping your horse in good condition over winter can be a challenge, particularly if they're a senior citizen.

**ABOVE:** All horses require regular dental care, but this becomes even more important as they age.

and 12% to 14% protein. High sugar and/or high starch feeds should be reduced as there is a tendency for horses to be more susceptible to insulin

“ ... hyperlipaemia, or fatty liver, a condition in which the liver is not able to properly process fat, leading to a complication that presents itself similarly to colic. ”

resistance as they age, which can lead to laminitis and other health problems.

Winter poses other challenges in regards to maintaining a horse's body condition. With this season comes colder weather. Aged horses have more difficulty regulating their body

temperature than younger adult horses, so it is important to reduce their exposure to temperature extremes.

Colder winter weather can increase any horse's energy requirements, as the body expends energy to create heat and keep warm. In terms of digestion, fibre tends to produce the most heat, while fat metabolism also produces considerable heat. This is another benefit of a high-fibre diet, as well as the reasoning behind including up to 7% fat in an aged horse's diet. However, care should be taken when feeding fats to a horse that has a reduced feed intake due to quidding their food (likely caused by improper chewing). In this instance, a diet proportionally high in fat can result in hyperlipaemia, or fatty liver, a condition in which the liver is not able to properly process fat, leading to a complication that presents itself similarly to colic.

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The growth of warm season pasture grasses slows right down as temperatures cool. Often this follows their mature, seeding stage, and the grasses may start to die off or become brown and dry like hay.

### Seasonal grasses

Another potential problem in feeding any horse during winter arises in regions where warm season grasses are abundant. In these locations, the majority of pasture grasses grow fast in the warmer months, but their growth slows right down as temperatures cool.

Often this follows the mature seeding stage of warm season grasses, which may start to die off or become brown and dry like hay. Additionally, mature grasses that have finished seeding are very likely to be high in lignin, a type of vegetative fibre that is not easily digestible, even for the microflora in the horse's large intestine. This means your horse may not do as well on mature grass compared to less mature grass, and unfortunately this is right around the time when the temperature starts to get colder and your horse needs more energy to keep warm!

### The importance of B6

Also important to keep in mind is that during winter pastures tend to become overgrazed because the growth rate is slower than the grazing rate. Overgrazed pasture may have

“ A Vitamin B6 deficiency can result in reduced capacity to metabolise these energy sources, which may decrease your horse's ability to maintain weight. ”

significantly lower amounts of certain vitamins, such as B6. This particular vitamin is involved in the metabolism of fats, proteins and carbohydrates. A Vitamin B6 deficiency can result in a reduced capacity to metabolise these energy sources, which may decrease

your horse's ability to maintain weight. Talk to your equine nutritionist about feeding a Vitamin B6 supplement - brewer's yeast is an excellent option.

Due to the many and varied contributing factors affecting your aged horse's ability to maintain good condition (the functionality of their teeth; the ambient temperatures; the maturity of grasses in your pasture and whether or not they are overgrazed), there is no one right way to feed them. Armed with the information in this article, you will hopefully now be able to make more informed decisions regarding feeding frequency, calorie type and nutrient composition of your horse's diet. Your equine nutritionist would be happy to help you choose the right feeds with the proper balance for your particular horse.

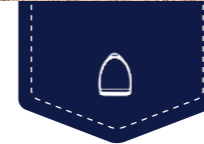
*Leisa Hofstetter is an equine nutritionist offering ration analysis, designer diets and customised mineral supplements. She can be found at [HofEquine](http://HofEquine), or email [hofequine@gmail.com](mailto:hofequine@gmail.com).*

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## PRODUCT REVIEW

# So, what's the scoop on Scoot Boots?

Equestrian and business owner Lynne Murray is a Scoot Boot convert, and for several very good reasons.

Lynne Murray has been riding since she was five years old. Fifty years later, although she no longer rides so much due to an injury, her passion for horses is undiminished.

Lynne owns and operates Merton Park, a delightful getaway for horses and their humans in Boho, North East Victoria, where you can participate in a clinic, go for a trail ride, or test your skills around the property's extensive mountain trail obstacle course.

An advocate for the benefits of barefoot, Lynne stopped shoeing her horses over 25 years ago. "The horses I had at the time had good, hard feet, so I made the decision to go barefoot. I found that there were more issues with shoeing a horse than there were with not shoeing them," she explains.

As her horses changed over the years – some with feet less hard than others – when equine boots arrived on the scene, Lynne decided to try them out. She bought a set, but was rather

disappointed with the results. "I noticed that stones would get into the boots and because of the boot's design, your horse had no way of expelling the stone. So, I stopped using them for riding and kept them for veterinary purposes only."

But around five years ago, she noticed a lot of her clients' horses were wearing [Scoot Boots](#), a brand that had been designed and earlier launched in Australia. After watching how horses performed in the boots, Lynne decided to once again take the plunge: "And I fell in love with them! The Scoot Boots I use have slits in the sides and I've never once had a problem with stones or stone bruises. They're very easy to put on and take off and my horses do really well in them. I've also used them for treating abscesses and other conditions. I really do love them. I think they're great."

In Lynne's opinion, Scoot Boots are a boon for any horse and rider, and for a number of very good reasons. "Especially today," she says. "To get a horse shod costs an absolute fortune! And if you look at it from the point of view of a horse's overall wellbeing, all the research I've done suggests that if your horse's frog doesn't come into contact with the ground, they're not getting proper and appropriate blood flow. Scoot Boots are actually quite pliable underneath, so if your horse's hooves are trimmed regularly, which they should be anyway, the boots allow for improved contact with the ground while still protecting the foot."

And when it comes to budget, Lynne says the boots are exceptionally cost effective: "Scoot Boots are a one-off purchase because they'll pretty much last your horse for years." 🐾

*Fancy riding that mountain trail obstacle course? Visit [Merton Park](#) to learn more.*

**ABOVE:** Kitted out in Scoot Boots, Lynne's homebred Million Dollar Chip was brought under saddle by Allan Collett of Allan Collett Horsemanship.

*Image by Lynne Murray*



Horses from the estate have won a string of awards.



PROPERTY

# The ultimate in luxury

This international class equestrian centre has to be seen to be believed. Located in Queensland, Hanoverian Estate presents a rare opportunity.

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Hamptons decor and Versace glamour creates a fusion of timeless old-world charm and new age style.

The five acre property boasts state-of-the-art facilities, including a covered 70x30m dressage arena surfaced in sand and fibre. The arena is equipped with mirrors, sound and video recorders, lights and sprinklers. The facilities include eight



Everything about this superb home speaks of luxury and elegance.

large stables, seven walkout yards, a Priefert six horse walker and treadmill, an under cover hot/cold wash bay, four large paddocks (Sir Walter Grass) and one sand paddock. The new white post fencing is electrified and was built with safety in mind. Geohex, with granite or concrete walkways to all facilities, ensures year-round protection from the elements.

Camelot House, the property's original colonial home, has been transformed into a majestic architectural hybrid. From the Buckingham Palace style entry gates, landscaped gardens, statues, and fountains, to a stunning outdoor terrace and Versace pool, the residence has unmistakable grandeur.

Inside the home you'll find 600sqm of pure luxury: Italian marble, polished



The exceptional equine facilities represent the very best in quality.

hardwood floorboards, stunning chandeliers, imported British wallpapers, intricate mosaics and Versace inspired gold designer styling offer unsurpassed opulence and elegance. The open plan dining area and kitchen allow easy access for indoor and outdoor entertaining, plus a dazzling array of top-of-the-line appliances. The bathrooms

feature marble flooring, an Aztec brass bathtub and a claw foot bathtub, skylights, and exquisite chandeliers.

With easy access to shopping centres, motorways and Brisbane Airport, this truly is a once only opportunity. 🏠

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