

SEPTEMBER 2023

EQUESSTRIAN

Magazine

HOUB

Off the track
Shining at
the Ekka

Nicole Tough
It's all in the
transition

Social licence
What it is, why
it matters

Hoof health
And the long, hot
days of summer





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Editor
 Amanda McWhinnie
amanda@equestrianhub.com.au

Advertising Enquiries
 Fiona Todd
 0414 760 067
fiona@equestrianhub.com.au

Website
equestrianhub.com.au

Published by Equestrian Hub
 PO Box 13, Tintenbar NSW 2478
 0414 760 067
info@equestrianhub.com.au
equestrianhub.com.au

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On the Cover
 Emily Patterson and Libertarian winning the inaugural Queensland Off-The-Track Program Showjumping Showcase (Image courtesy Racing QLD).



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 editing away behind the scenes, this month she takes a look at the concept of social licence to operate. Often considered an issue for the racing industry alone, it's becoming something that may well impact all equestrian sports.



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, Nicole explains the importance of good transitions.

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 with many years standing as an Equine Veterinarians Australia member. In this issue, Doug tackles the topic of vaccinations. They're a vital part of your horse's health care for a number of very good reasons.



David Nash
Director of Nutrition Technology at KER, David is an equine nutrition professional with many years' experience. He advises on feeding and managing horses across all disciplines, and has been instrumental in quality control, laboratory management and analysis, and pasture research. There's little doubt that feed bills are on the rise, so ensuring you maximise your feeding dollar is a must, and David's here to help.



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 issue of hot weather hoof health.

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.

Caroline Bonney
Caroline started riding as a child. Over the years there were several breaks from the sport, but she eventually came back to it with a love for dressage. Partnered by her champion Grand Prix horse Battlestar Galactica, twice nominated for Queensland HOTY, the pair have picked up a number of top awards. In our product review, Caroline explains why she's sold on McDowells Herbal.



Fiona Todd

Fiona is the publisher of *Equestrian Hub Magazine*. Her love of horses has been life-long, and driven by a desire to support equestrians from all disciplines, she launched the magazine and its [sister website](#) to inspire and inform all riders, and for the enjoyment of everyone who loves horses, no matter whether they once owned a horse but no longer do, or have never had that wonderful opportunity.



BEHIND THE SHOT

Charlotte Fry

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: Charlotte (Lottie) Fry

Horse: Glamourdale

Event: 2022 FEI World Championships Grand Prix Freestyle to Music

Location: Herning, Denmark

Camera & Settings: Canon EOS-1D X Mark II, Canon EF 300mm, f/2.8, ISO 800, 1/1000 sec.

Challenges: I was concerned that the combination of night time and a black stallion were not ideal when taking a shot that would likely need a fast shutter speed. Fortunately, Lottie was one of the last to compete at close to midnight, so I had been in the area for a while and was able to gauge the camera settings I'd need. Also, with freestyle tests you

do not know the movements or where they will be executed, so where to stand becomes a little bit of an educated guess! I made sure I was as close as I could be to the edge of the arena and used my 300mm lens to get even closer.

As it turned out it wasn't an issue as the lighting in the stadium was brilliant for competitors and the media, and I had no problems at all. The images almost look as if it was daylight and despite the ISO set at 800, they are sharp and clear, showing grains of flying sand and dribbles of foam and sweat.

Why this shot is special: This photo is one of a series I took during Lottie and

Glamourdale's freestyle test. I actually love them all, and it was hard to choose just one! It's special to me because there was such electricity in the arena with 11,000 spectators, much excitement, and great anticipation. *God Save the Queen* got us underway as the pair passed to halt, then it was off again in perfect synchronicity with Queen's *Another One Bites the Dust*, by which time everyone was mesmerised.

The stallion is magnificent and was ridden to perfection by Lottie who held her nerve until the applause. She said she had fun and so did 'Glammy' and it showed with a whopping score of 90.654% and a total of twenty-four 10s. Glamourdale is known for his canter and I feel this image captures that movement; the propulsion, the strength and all of the atmosphere that was the World Championships Dressage Freestyle to Music. I know I witnessed something special! And if you haven't already, be sure to watch [Charlotte and Glamourdale's winning test](#). 🐾

Michelle is available for event, commercial and private shoots. Visit [Michelle Terlato Photography](#).



HANGING TOUGH

It's all in the transition

Never underestimate the importance of transitions.

NICOLE TOUGH explains how to get the best out of each and every one.

In the first year of dressage training, the basic transitions to master include the walk-halt-walk, followed by trot-walk-trot, and then the canter-trot-canter, which is the hardest transition to organise and balance

Once these transitions are established,

we can introduce transitions within the trot and canter paces by lengthening and shortening them. This gradual development of the paces culminates at the Grand Prix level, where we will need multiple gears within the paces: three in walk, six in trot, and five in canter, not to

mention all the transitions between the gears.

As we move up the levels, we will also need more difficult transitions, trot-halt-trot, walk-canter-walk, canter-halt-trot, rein-back into trot and canter, passage into canter, and walk into piaffe/passage.

There are two reasons why transitions matter. Firstly, they are the tools for developing the carrying and pushing power that enhance the paces; and secondly, they are judged in competition against the Training Scale, making up a huge part of a final score.

Every *good* downward transition, even the most basic from trot to walk, trains the horse's sitting muscles, which are needed for engagement and for improving carrying capacity - so that one day they can carry out canter pirouettes and piaffe. Meanwhile every *good* upward transition, even the most basic from walk-trot, trains the horse's pushing muscles, which are needed for forward thrust - so that one day they can

carry out extended trot and passage. The more engagement we achieve, the more push we achieve, and that results in increased impulsion. As trainers, we want to train both sets of muscles - the carrying and the pushing - to develop impulsion. Adding impulsion (time in the air) is the game changer in dressage training. In essence, the transitions are gym machines, and our means of developing our horse's strength.

With all transitions the key word is 'good'. Because our aim is to develop muscle memory, only good transitions count in terms of training the muscular development of our horses.

If we, as the horse's personal trainer, accept a transition where something went wrong (perhaps they leant on the bit, hollowed in the back, hesitated, shuffled before the transition, stepped to the side, swung the quarters and so on), then we have allowed our horse to step off the gym machine and we have failed in our task of training the horse's muscles so they are able to score well at our current level or progress to Grand Prix.

Instead, we should aim to achieve what Steffen Peters recommends: to turn every mistake into a training opportunity. But what does this mean?

Every transition has a start, middle and end phase, and the rider should abort in the phase where the mistake occurred. For example, if we start from a walk that is crooked and leaning on the rein for balance, then a transition to trot has no chance of being a success. But if we start from our best walk, the success rate increases.

However, if we start with our best walk but our horse then either takes a few longer steps in walk before they trot; or they lean on the hand; or drop their sternum lifting their neck; or they step sideways to achieve the transition, we should abort in this middle phase. And in the final phase, the first step has to be like the second and the third; if you don't



LEFT: Ferragamo demonstrating the sitting muscles required at FEI level.

ABOVE: 6-year-old Dumbledore lengthening to develop the pushing muscles needed for forward thrust (Images by Christy Baker Photography).

love the first step of the new gait, start again.


In every transition we must ask ourselves, could we have done it better? And if the answer is yes - do it again, and again, until we're satisfied that we can't do it any better today. Horses learn through repetition, and for us to accept is to approve. So, what muscle memories do we want to accept and train? The good, or the not so good?

To successfully train horses, we must learn to think like a horse. Why do they evade? Because going to the gym is hard! All horses like to use their necks to balance when they should use their hindleg; and they use their necks by becoming long in the transitions, thereby evading the sitting and pushing degree of difficulty. If horses can, they will use the transition to train the rider when it should be a partnership where the rider uses the transitions to train the horse.

We should aim to compress them in the transition, which will result in thrust.

A horse that is able to maintain compression through transitions is said to be in self-carriage. These horses will have a 'U' shape under the gullet, and our goal should be to maintain this in all the work and every transition. Think haunches first rather than nose first in transitions.

A good training session involves hundreds of transitions, from one gait to another as well as transitions within gaits. We should make every transition we ride count.

Horses improve at what they regularly do, so we should endeavour to practise more of what we know to be helpful to their development, and less of what we know is detrimental. The better we get at recognising and correcting evasions in the transitions, the more we develop our equine athlete. 



FEATURE

Happy feet

As the seasons change, so do your horses hooves. **DR JENNIFER STEWART** discusses strategies to help your horse's feet during the long, hot days of summer.

Every season affects horses' hooves differently - and summer can be especially challenging for feet. Hot, dry summer days can impact your horse enough to make you rethink your hoof care strategy.

Dry hooves

Even though the hoof wall appears hard and rigid to us, it is actually quite flexible! This allows the wall to expand

and contract when the hoof hits the ground, dissipating the shock from landing. A flexible hoof is an essential part of healthy hoof dynamics, absorbing some of the concussion that would otherwise shoot straight up the leg and cause jarring in the tendons, joints and bones.

The hot and dry days of summer typically lead to dry hooves that can

become contracted as the frog, bulb and the white line, which contain large amounts of water, dry out too. As the wall becomes brittle it loses the all-important flexibility, hoof expansion is compromised, shock absorption is reduced and stress through the lower leg increases.

Loss of elasticity in the wall changes the foot shape, how it impacts the ground and its ability to absorb shock. As the healthy tissue shrinks, open spaces develop, enabling infections to enter. Once elasticity is reduced, chips, splits and cracks can quickly appear and expand rapidly, destabilising the hoof wall. Added to this equation is the summer heat that bakes and compacts the ground so that it becomes rock-hard.

Cracks

Even small cracks greatly increase the chances of both drying and moisture absorption, and provide a pathway of entry for infection. They can stem from a variety of causes, including laminitis, trauma, repetitive concussion on a hard

surface, or unbalanced feet. Vertical hoof cracks are common in horses with poor hoof care or those with excessively dry, shelly hooves. Maintaining the correct hydration level in the hoof and sole is vital, as a dry hoof wall is prone to shrinking and cracking, both of which can result in lost shoes, splits and lameness. Cracks are more common during dry weather and frequent changes from wet to dry conditions, if the toes are long or trimming too infrequent. Treatment depends on the cause and severity, but usually involves good nutrition and proper care by a farrier.

Bruises

In summertime, bruising to the hoof and frog commonly occur in horses working on hard, dry and stony ground, or from repeated leg stamping in response to flies. A horse with foot bruising is likely to be footsore or lame - especially on firm ground, and may start taking shorter strides or will be reluctant to walk on certain surfaces. If the hoof capsule has cracks, bacteria can enter and a bruise can turn into an abscess. When this happens, the horse will become acutely lame and may not weight bear on the affected foot. Whether your horse is shod or barefoot, regularly check his soles for bruising over the summer. Catching and helping to heal a sole bruise early on can head off a painful, slow-to-heal abscess.

Compacted soles

Day length plays a role in the growth of hooves and soles, which tend to grow faster in spring and summer, especially if the pasture is lush. The sole can begin to compact and look hard and shiny, especially if it can't shed. Lack of hoof wear in soft, grassy pastures can result in the sole not shedding and your horse may look flat-footed if the sole becomes compacted. Compacted soles can increase the pressure in the hoof which may lead to bruising, abscessing and lameness.



FACING PAGE: Hard ground during the heat of summer can increase the dangers of repetitive concussion.

ABOVE: In response to hard, dry ground, soles and frogs build up a solid covering to protect from bruising.

Flaking soles and frogs

Most horses shed the frog at least twice a year. In response to hard, dry ground, soles and frogs build up a solid covering to protect from bruising, leading to taller hoof walls. When the excess sole tissue starts peeling and flaking in dry weather,

“Loss of elasticity in the wall changes the foot shape, how it impacts the ground and its ability to absorb shock. As the healthy tissue shrinks, open spaces develop, enabling infections to enter.”

the taller hoof becomes unprotected and unstable.

Hooves usually get plenty of moisture in spring and the hoof horn is supple

and relatively soft. In summer, drier conditions stimulate harder, more dense horn. At the junction between the soft and hard horn, the frogs and soles can crack and peel. Increased frequency of farrier visits and trimming can help prevent horses from getting into trouble – speak with your farrier about ways to soften the tissue build up so it's easier for them to remove.

Wet/dry cycles

When conditions fluctuate between wet and dry, hooves become stressed. Like a sponge, the hoof wall absorbs moisture quickly - and dries out quickly. Summer thunderstorms and rain, and moist, dew-soaked pasture during the night allow the hooves to soften and swell, but during the day when the ground is dry and hot, they dry out. Hosing horses down adds moisture to the hooves, riding on sand dries them out, and the type of stable bedding can also affect the hoof moisture balance.



Increased frequency of farrier visits and trimming can help prevent horses from getting into trouble.

This cycle can cause nails to loosen as their holes in the wall enlarge, and suddenly you've got a horse who can't keep shoes on.

Hard ground

This isn't just a problem for hooves - concussive stress and strain from hard, compacted ground can cause a range of tendon, ligament and joint problems. Although the hoof-ground interaction is affected by many factors, including speed, keeping arenas damp and well-worked; avoiding hard, stony ground; hoof boots for barefoot horses; keeping the hoof balance correct; and more frequent farrier visits can all offer some protection from concussive forces.

Healthy hooves can better adapt to changing conditions. The impact of summer on hooves is always more profound than other seasons and horses that move nicely on soft winter ground can become uneven as the ground hardens in summer. Some horses with poor, thin soles or flat feet go well on moist, clay-based soils, but may go lame on sandy soils because of the pressure the sand puts on the sole.

Nutrition

Hoof condition is a reflection of nutrition. Slow growth, chipping, cracking, white-line crumbling and inability to hold shoes are not uncommon problems and although genetics and inadequate farrier care are often involved, improper diet can change a potential hoof issue into one that becomes a problem.

Diet imbalances or deficiencies aren't the only factor in hoof abnormalities or problems - but they are a major cause. However, no single vitamin or mineral accounts for all these abnormalities. Nutrients required for optimum hoof health include essential amino acids, essential fatty acids, biotin, calcium, copper, lysine, manganese, phosphorus and zinc. Horses with access to pasture usually get enough essential fatty acids in their diet if they are not in work. Older horses and those with arthritis, or skin and hoof problems often benefit from supplementation with flaxseed or flax, canola, or other oils rich in omega 3 fatty acids.

If you spot a hoof problem, don't assume the trouble lies just in the hoof and

immediately reach for an over-the-counter supplement. No supplement can make up for a sub-standard diet and any supplement should be used wisely. Adding a scoop of this and that vitamin or mineral, or picking supplements that make claims to improve hoof quality may not provide all the nutrients needed to balance the diet and feed the feet.

And beware the overlapping that can occur when several feeds and supplements are used. This is especially important for zinc excesses, which are toxic to the gut flora and disrupt the biome. Keep it simple with good quality hay/pasture, clean water and a correctly formulated supplement, plus extra farriery care to maintain soundness, hoof health and integrity throughout the summer months.

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

Vital vaccinations

Vaccinations are a vital part of your horse's health care - and there are many good reasons to keep them up to date, as **DR DOUG ENGLISH** explains.

Equine vaccines play a critical role in protecting horses from various infectious diseases. The biochemistry of each vaccine can vary based on the type of pathogen being targeted and the vaccine technology used – but the goal of all vaccines is to

stimulate the horse's immune system to recognise and remember the pathogen, providing protection against future infections.

While vaccines can produce a fever and some malaise which may be detected or pass unobserved, they nonetheless

protect against diseases which have high morbidity and fatality.

Horses die every day for many reasons and sometimes there is an opinion that if a vaccine was recently given, then that was the cause. I have never in my 50 years of practice seen a death that I considered was related to a vaccine. However, I have seen a few horses that got a bit sicker than is normal from a vaccine reaction, and their frightened owners have mistakenly thought it was a near death situation!

Inactivated vaccines

Inactivated vaccines, also known as killed vaccines, are created by inactivating the pathogen (virus or bacteria) using chemicals, heat, or radiation. The inactivated pathogen retains its structure but is no longer capable of causing disease. These vaccines usually contain the whole or fragmented pathogen and are often combined with an adjuvant, an important component of many vaccines added to enhance and modulate the immune response generated by the vaccine's antigens.

Adjuvants, which improve the effectiveness of the immune response, resulting in a stronger, longer-lasting, and more robust immunity, are carefully regulated and studied to ensure both safety and effectiveness.

Biochemistry: Inactivated vaccines contain proteins and other molecules present on the surface of the pathogen, including antigens that can trigger an immune response by stimulating the immune system to produce antibodies against the pathogen. When the horse encounters the actual pathogen, the antibodies can recognise and neutralise it. Examples of inactivated vaccines include:

• Duvaxyn EHV 1,4

A herpes virus vaccine recommended for healthy horses and ponies from five months of age to reduce the clinical signs of the respiratory diseases caused by EHV-1 and EHV-4.

Primary course: A single dose of Duvaxyn EHV1,4 should be administered from five months of age followed by a second injection after an interval of 4-6 weeks.

Boosting immunity: After the primary course, a single dose of Duvaxyn EHV1,4 should be administered every six months.

Control of abortion: To aid in the control of EHV-1 abortion (when used in conjunction with appropriate management practices) pregnant mares that have been previously primed should be vaccinated during the 5th, 7th and 9th months of pregnancy with a single dose on each occasion. Note: Pregnant mares vaccinated with this product may still abort, but significantly fewer.

• Duvaxyn R (Rotavirus)

An adjuvanted vaccine for pregnant mares designed to stimulate the production of Equine Rotavirus antibodies. The passive transfer of these antibodies in colostrum and milk helps to reduce the foal's risk of diarrhoea caused by Equine Rotavirus.

Dose: Administer 1 mL intramuscularly in the 8th, 9th and 10th months of pregnancy using an [aseptic technique](#). A yearly booster dose should be given one month prior to foaling for each subsequent pregnancy.

• Equivac EST (Salmonella) Vaccine

An inactivated adjuvanted vaccine for the immunisation of mares and foals to aid in the control of diseases caused by the bacteria *Salmonella typhimurium*, which are disorders such as diarrhoea, septicaemia and polyarthritis.

Dose: Two doses of the vaccine four weeks apart are required to produce an adequate response, and annual boosters to brood mares to provide passive protection for foals.

• Rabies Vaccine

Because rabies is not in Australia, the vaccine is not generally available here. Rabies is a viral disease that affects mammals, including horses.



Vaccinating pregnant mares with Duvaxyn R stimulates the production of Equine Rotavirus antibodies, which are then passed on to the foal through colostrum and milk.

• Eastern/Western Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE, WEE) Vaccine

Commonly vaccinated against in the USA but currently not in Australia

Live Attenuated Vaccines

These vaccines use weakened forms of the pathogen that have been cultured under conditions that reduce their capacity to cause disease, while maintaining their ability to stimulate an immune response.

Biochemistry: Live attenuated vaccines contain pathogenic organisms that have undergone genetic mutations or adaptations. These changes might affect critical genes required for the pathogen's virulence. The horse's immune system responds to these attenuated pathogens, generating both cellular and [humoral immune responses](#). These vaccines often provide strong and long-lasting immunity. Examples include:

• Equine Influenza Vaccine

Caused by influenza viruses, the disease

is not now in Australia and vaccination is neither available nor allowed. Either an inactivated or Modified Live Vaccine (MLV) type, both provide protection against this respiratory disease.

Subunit Vaccines

Rather than the entire organism, subunit vaccines contain only specific antigens from the pathogen, such as proteins, polysaccharides, or other molecules critical for the pathogen's ability to infect the host.

Biochemistry: Composed of purified antigens selected to stimulate a targeted immune response, these antigens are often produced through recombinant DNA technology, protein expression, or other biochemical processes. The immune system recognises the antigens and produces antibodies against them, providing immunity without the risk of causing disease. Examples include:

• Equine Strangles Vaccine

Vaccines such as Equivac S stimulate

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the immune system to produce antibodies intended to provide protection against *Streptococcus equi* bacteria. Equivac S vaccinates against strangles alone, Equivac 2 in 1 vaccinates against both tetanus and strangles.

Dose: As an example, the primary vaccination program may include a first dose of Equivac 2 in 1, a second dose of Equivac S, and a third dose of Equivac 2 in 1, where the interval between each dose is not less than 2 weeks.

An optimal strangles vaccination booster program for young susceptible horses involves boosters given every 6 months. Equivac 2 in 1 could be administered annually, with Equivac S administered mid-way between annual Equivac 2 in 1 doses. Older horses are not as susceptible, but an annual (or at the least biannual) booster for both tetanus and strangles is good practice.

• **Equivac HEV (Hendra) Vaccine**

An adjuvanted vaccine that contains 100g/mL of recombinant Hendra virus G glycoprotein as the only active constituent, and recommended for all horses four months of age and older.

Dose: Two primary doses 3 to 6 weeks apart. A 3rd dose 6 months after the second primary dose is required, with further boosters administered every 12 months after the 3rd dose. All doses must be entered into an [online registry](#) within two days of administration. Foals born to vaccinated mares should commence vaccination at 6 months of age. Pregnant mares are not to be vaccinated during the first 6 weeks after conception or 2 weeks prior to the expected foaling date.

• **Recombinant Vaccines**

These involve genetic engineering techniques to produce pathogen-specific proteins, which can then be used as antigens to stimulate an immune response.

Biochemistry: Using DNA technology, specific genes from the pathogen are inserted into a harmless vector (like a virus) or host cell. The host cell

produces the antigenic proteins, which are harvested and purified for use in vaccines. The immune response generated by these vaccines is similar to that of subunit vaccines. An example of a recombinant vaccine is:

• **West Nile virus/Kunjin Disease Vaccine**

Found in parts of Australia, particularly the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia, and detected in regional Victoria. However, it is considered rare with 43 cases reported throughout Australia since 1991 and only two cases reported in Victoria since 2010. This vaccine is rarely used in Australia and difficult to get, although commonly used in parts of the USA.

“ Tetanus prone wounds are deep, dirty and penetrating, like stake wounds or dog bites. ”

• **Toxoid Vaccines**

These vaccines target toxins produced by certain bacteria.

Biochemistry: Toxoid vaccines involve the chemical treatment (usually formalin) of bacterial toxins to eliminate their harmful effects while preserving their antigenic properties and maintaining their ability to stimulate an immune response. The immune system generates antibodies against these toxoids, providing immunity against diseases caused by toxin-producing bacteria. Examples include:

• **Tetanus Toxoid (eg Equivac T) Vaccine**

A vaccine containing the formalinised toxin of *Clostridium tetani* with an aluminium salt adjuvant. Thiomersal is added as a necessary preservative at 0.1 mg/ml. It contains ethylmercury, which, although concerns have been raised

due to its toxicity, is less of a threat than the more toxic methylmercury found in certain seafood. Thiomersal has been used in vaccines for decades. Regulatory agencies such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organisation monitor and set guidelines for the use of thiomersal in vaccines. They assess the risks and benefits of using such preservatives and continually evaluate the safety of vaccines.

Tetanus toxoid is very effective against tetanus, and is often combined with strangles vaccine (as in Equivac 2 in 1) and administered as an intramuscular injection.

Dose: Tetanus prone wounds are deep, dirty, and penetrating, like stake wounds or dog bites. However, a single dose of Equivac T given to an unimmunised horse at the time of wounding or surgery may not prevent tetanus because it takes weeks for the body to react and produce enough antibodies. But if the horse has had a shot within the previous 5 to 10 years, the production of antibodies is instant. If unsure of the horse's status, active-passive protection with a combined dose of tetanus antitoxin and tetanus toxoid is useful. A separate needle and syringe should be used for each product and administration should be on opposite sides of the body. If initiating a primary course, the second dose of tetanus toxoid should be administered four to six weeks later.

Tetanus antitoxin is not really a vaccine. It's the actual antibodies to tetanus toxin taken from the blood serum of immunised horses and purified and concentrated. It has an instant protective effect but a transient lifetime of only a few weeks.

Interestingly, infection with tetanus bacteria does not produce an antibody response to the toxin, which has to be modified to enable the immune system to recognise it. It's always important to give a toxoid vaccination in all tetanus cases, as well as antitoxin. 🏠



FEATURE

There's an elephant in the room

Social licence to operate: What is it? What do we need to know? And as equestrians, do we even have reason to be interested? **AMANDA MAC** investigates

Social licence is a strange animal. It's the elephant in the room that despite its ever-increasing size, seems all too easy to ignore and a little too difficult to define. But difficult or not, as equestrians we should be aware of its implications for our sport, and understand how it might apply to us

both as individuals and collectively. To give it its full title, 'social licence to operate' is a phrase thought to have been coined in 1996, when the then President of the American Forest and Paper Association was talking about the American paper industry's pro-active environmental policies. If their environmental achievements were

independently verified, he argued, then the public would give the industry their trust, and embedded within that trust was what he termed a 'social licence to operate'.

Since then, social licence has gained plenty of attention. However, when all is said and done, it exists as a concept only: [academics are still debating](#) what it means, it's not legislated for, and it's not a topic you regularly hear discussed. However, broadly speaking it refers to a society's willingness to accept the way in which any organisation conducts business – and when it comes to sports that include animals, that willingness has much to do with public perceptions around the wellbeing of those animals and the way in which they're being treated.

At this point you may be thinking, well, obviously this applies to the racing industry – and yes, it does, and the industry is well aware of that fact.

In 2020, Racing Australia appointed Karen Day (previously in a similar role at

Racing NSW) as the organisation's first National Equine Welfare and Traceability Executive. In a recent [Equestrian Hub podcast](#), Karen commented that in her opinion, social licence could be seen as a negotiation tool with the community: "... when you're improving things you're giving communities that might not necessarily understand your industry, the chance to engage with you ... communities that perhaps think that we don't necessarily deserve social licence."

If you take into account the 'Nup to the Cup' anti-Melbourne Cup social media campaigns, and the responses given to [a survey on the Cup](#) (some loved the event, some didn't, others wanted changes: "I won't be watching until the whips are banned or severely curtailed"), ongoing community negotiation is clearly important. And having put in place a number of proactive programs designed to transition retired racehorses into secure and fruitful new careers, the Australian racing industry now has some positive news to bring to the negotiation table.

But can public opinion also influence other equestrian sports?

Referring to the outlawing of whips in endurance sport, Dr Peter Kerkenezov BM, a veterinary surgeon of many years standing, pointed out some time ago that: "Public perception and pressure and welfare organisations have forced some change over the years, but there is still a long way to go."

Fast forward a few years to the very legitimate public outrage (which fuelled headlines such as 'The Olympics Are Anything But Games to Abused Horses') that erupted after the assault on a horse during the Tokyo Olympics pentathlon. Following the infamous Pentathlon Punch, as it became known, the sport's international governing body voted to remove horse riding from the event. There were also reports at the time that the International Olympic Committee was being sued by an animal welfare



ABOVE: Bits have come in for their fair share of criticism.

FACING PAGE: Overall, the general public has a negative perception of whips and spurs.

organisation in relation to the incident.

And there's more. In an [opinion piece](#) written for the influential Horse & Hound magazine and blog, Adam Cromarty, an equestrian commentator, broadcaster and British Show Jumping/FEI judge explained why he thinks social licence has significant implications for equestrian sport: "I believe within 10 years, whips and spurs will no longer exist in competition. There's no point in giving an opinion on whether I believe this to be a positive thing. In fact, I believe the views of those within our sport will be inconsequential. Social licence is the biggest challenge we have ever faced."

To be clear, Adam wasn't basing his opinions on vague assumptions, he was referring to the results of an independent survey conducted by YouGov, a professional polling firm headquartered in the UK. The survey was commissioned by the international charity [World Horse Welfare](#), which for

some time has been monitoring the equestrian world's social licence to use horses in sport, and the shifting public attitudes in that space. Released in May this year, the survey showed that despite high-profile initiatives in the equestrian world, public perception of horses in sport hadn't appreciably changed since the previous year's survey: 20% of respondents did not support the continued involvement of horses in sport under any circumstances, while 40% would only support their involvement if welfare was improved. Now, that's not to say that those opinions were educated (and we'll take a closer look at what that might mean below), but it's public opinion nonetheless.

In our [Sept/Oct 2020](#) issue, we featured an article by Roly Owers, World Horse Welfare's Chief Executive, in which he defined social licence to operate as the public perception that an industry is operating in a socially acceptable or



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The loving care most riders lavish on their equine companions usually doesn't rate a mention.

legitimate way, adding that “to do this within the horse sport industry, it must do right by its horses – and be seen to be doing this by always putting the health and welfare of the horse first.”

To say he’s an expert on the subject is an understatement. Roly, who was recently awarded an OBE for services to equine welfare, is an advisor to the FEI, the International Horse Sports Confederation, and the British Horseracing Authority on matters relating to horse wellbeing.

As keynote speaker at a recent World Horse Welfare hosted event for equestrian leaders and the media, Roly commented that in relation to equine welfare and social licence, equestrian sport was heading in the right direction, but turning negative perceptions around will “... take time and it is vital to be brave and proactive and to challenge the status quo. The horse world is taking fundamental steps down the path to ensure all horses in sport are able to live a good life, and we need to take our colleagues, fellow equestrians, and the general public with us when we show how horses can thrive in equestrianism.”

Two of the event’s main takeaways were that: a) there’s an urgent need to find new ways in which horse welfare in horse sport can be further improved; and b) the equestrian world needs to be more proactive in spreading the word about the existing exemplary levels of horse care.

And that brings us back to the idea of an ‘educated opinion’. If social licence to operate hinges on the public’s perception that we’re doing the right thing by our horses, we need to consider the way in which we’re being perceived. It’s understandable that to someone outside the sport, whips, bits, spurs, nosebands and other assorted pieces of equipment may appear cruel. And let’s be honest here, their effect may very well be painful for the horse if in the wrong hands or used incorrectly - but that doesn’t apply to the majority of equestrians. To add fuel to the fire, the media (mainstream and social) tends to gravitate towards bad news because it sells and makes for great clickbait. The end result is that unfortunately, the close bond between many horses and their owners, the loving care that most riders lavish on their equine companions, and

the time and money spent on improving our skills and knowledge usually don’t rate a mention. Is it surprising then, that a largely uninformed general public have such a dim view of equestrian sport? To quote Adam Cromarity, it’s time for us to be proactive to protect our sport - and that includes always, and in all ways, making the health and welfare of our horses our number one priority.

So, is social licence a thing? Yes, it is. Does it have the potential to impact equestrian sports? Yes, it does. Should we be concerned? Well, we most definitely shouldn’t be ignoring the elephant in the room!

Which poses another question: what can be done to help improve and maintain the general public’s trust, and in the process ensure that the social licence to operate our sport is not withdrawn. In part, the answer may well lie in the Five Domains Model, a scientifically based benchmark for assessing animal welfare - and in our October issue, we’ll be taking a closer look at the Five Domains, what they are, and what they might mean for us and our horses. 🐾



LIFE AFTER RACING

Showcasing success

A recent show jumping showcase is just another example of how the careers of off the track racehorses are being supported, writes **AMANDA MAC**.

If you've been reading our *Life After Racing* articles for any length of time, you'll have gathered that the horse racing industry, both at State and national level, has been working hard to ensure that the lives of off the track racehorses are safe, secure and fulfilling. You'll also have noticed that many of these horses shine in their new careers, with Shenae Lowings' eventer [Bold Venture](#), and Alanna Richard's show ring success [Royal Blu](#) immediately springing to mind.

And how do they fair as show jumpers? If the inaugural Queensland Off-The-Track (QOTT) Program Showjumping Showcase, held at last month's Royal Queensland Show, is anything to go by, very nicely, thank you!

With \$50,000 in QOTT-funded prize money up for grabs, the new competition offered what is currently Australia's largest purse for a show jumping class exclusive to retired racehorses. First place attracted a prize of \$10,000, while, in a move designed to acknowledge all competitors and support every OTT horse competing, the balance of the pool was payed down to the very last place getter.

Kim Duffy, Racing Queensland's Senior Animal Care Manager, is delighted to see the competition up and running. "As an industry, we need to be much more proactive in educating the general public about our fantastic aftercare programs and the support available to retired racehorses," she says. "Unless you are connected to racing, many people are unaware of the wonderful work being done to support our horses as they transition into second careers, and that's why events like this are so important."

The event, open to any registered Thoroughbred or Standardbred in Australia (as per Racing Australia or Harness Racing Australia records), is one of a number of new QOTT initiatives. "It's vitally important that QOTT supports retired racehorses, as well as the owners who look after them for the duration of their post-racing lives," Kim says.

When QOTT approached the Queensland branch of the RNA with the idea of running the Showcase at the Ekka, the Association couldn't have been more supportive - and this year's event was a spectacular success.

Held in the main arena before a capacity crowd, Queensland's Emily Patterson made history as the inaugural Showcase winner. Emily, an experienced show jumper, partnered with retired racehorse Libertarian (a galloper who raced as Liberty Shopper) in what was a hotly contested 30-strong field that included a number of former Group race runners.



TOP: Maleah Lang-McMahon and Royal Talisman on their way to securing 3rd place. **ABOVE:** Emily Patterson and Libertarian lead out the field in front of an enthusiastic crowd. **FACING PAGE:** Eyes on the prize - Emily and Libertarian jumping into 1st place. *All images courtesy Racing Queensland.*

With Wayne Crompton riding the Gerry Harvey bred Double Impact, who scored over \$520,000 in prize money during a 75-race career, and Olympian Ron Easey aboard Prince of Darkness (who raced as Smart Devil) in the running, the competition was always going to be fierce. Nevertheless, the ladies held their own with second and third place

going to Maleah Lang-McMahon, riding Ned O'Reilly for second and Royal Talisman for the third in a nail-biting contest that kept spectators on the edge of their seats

In a strange twist, it was a chance conversation that prompted the Showcase winner to enter Libertarian into Australia's most lucrative show

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After a hotly contested competition Emily was delighted to be awarded the first place prize of \$10,000.

jumping event for retired racehorses. "I honestly didn't know about the event straight up, but he's the only Thoroughbred in Australia jumping World Cups at the moment, which is the highest you can jump," Emily explained.

Given that Emily is passionate about Thoroughbreds, she was immediately on board and wanting to support the Showcase. She believes that this and other similar events play an important role in showing that Thoroughbreds are just as talented in the show jumping arena as Warmbloods.

Emily is understandably delighted with her win. "I'm absolutely ecstatic, I can't believe it. We only ride as a hobby but he's taken me around two World Cups, he's literally just the best horse ever. His original racing owners from Victoria are here watching him today and it's just amazing for him to win this class. He's quite mischievous, he likes getting

into anything but he gallops up to me in the paddock and we just have the best bond and I love him so much."

“ It's vitally important that QOTT supports retired racehorses, as well as the owners who look after them for the duration of their post-racing lives. ”

Victory for the Queensland-bred son of Statue of Liberty and Bonnie Shopper came ten years after his last race in a 21-start career that netted three wins.

Kim Duffy hailed the Showcase a huge success. "We knew the quality of show jumping would be high, and

this inaugural event certainly did not disappoint. A huge congratulations goes to Emily and Libertarian, as well as to all of our competitors who made it a memorable afternoon in the Main Arena. I also want to thank Racing Minister Grace Grace who was in attendance and had a fantastic afternoon cheering on the competition."

Earlier in the day, nearly 200 retired racehorses had competed in a range of led and ridden classes for Thoroughbred and Standardbred Day. "It was fantastic to see so many retired racehorses thriving in their lives post-racing," Kim added, "and we cannot wait to bring the event to life again in 2024!"

And if this has you thinking about the 2024 competition, or wondering whether an OTT horse might be the right choice for you, you can find out more about the QOTT program at [Queensland Off the Track](https://www.queenslandoffthetrack.com.au).



NUTRITION

Costing out your feed bill

There's little doubt that feed bills are on the rise. Fortunately, **DAVID NASH**, Director of Nutrition Technology at KER, has some money saving ideas.

With steadily rising prices affecting our supermarket shop, as equestrians we're also feeling the pinch when it comes to our stable grocery bill. Inflation, weather events, and other global influences have hit the equestrian industry hard; from

saddlery and fuel, to fodder, feed and supplements. So, now is a perfect time to look at our horses' diets and conduct a 'spring clean' audit on what we're feeding them. And knowing exact quantities is extremely important; dippers, biscuits, handfuls, jam

jars and pinches do not count. Grams and kilograms are what matters - you don't buy feed or hay in dippers or biscuits! If you aren't already, I would suggest weighing all the components of your horse's daily diet and make a list for each horse, maybe in an Excel spreadsheet. Then calculate the per day cost of each ingredient and add this to the sheet. You will now have a basic idea of what you are spending on each horse each day. Perhaps do not share this information with your partner!

Now that you know what you're feeding your horses, it would be a perfect opportunity for you to consult a nutritionist to take stock of their current diet and match this to each horse's nutrient requirements. The information you provide to the nutritionist should include:

- Horse's weight: if you do not have scales, and most of us don't, use a weight tape or a measuring tape (you'll then need to estimate their weight using a [simple equation](#)).
- Current condition: body condition score your horse with a [BCS Chart](#).

There are two types, the one most commonly used in Australia scales from 0-5

- Desired condition
- Breed
- Height
- Activity level: or if growing or pregnant, the stage of growth or pregnancy
- Any issues: this can help the nutritional consultant assess the reason for certain supplements in your horse's diet. They can also ascertain whether you are giving your horse an effective dose of the product, and whether that product is the right one for your horse.

I also like to know about pasture quality, quantity and turn out time on pasture. The gold standard is to take pasture samples for nutritional analysis and measure pasture availability. There are many good articles on how to approximate pasture availability on the web. If it is not possible for you to do this, some good assumptions can be made by experienced nutritionists if you provide:

- Your address
- Photos of the pasture (with a ruler next to the pasture if you can)
- Pasture species (if known)

For tech savvy people, apps are available that use satellite imagery to estimate pasture density and offer some nutrient predictions.

A guide to a horse's pasture consumption is that they generally graze around 65% of their turn out time and consume between 0.45kg and 0.65kg of dry matter per hour if sufficient pasture is available. Horses with vices such as windsucking or walking the fence will have a lower intake. Conversely, highly motivated individuals (the hairy, short legged ones) have been known to eat two to three kilograms of dry matter in an hour.

Now that you have sufficient information to investigate your horse's diet and



FACING PAGE: Nutritional content and value for money are both important factors when it comes to feeding your horse.

ABOVE: A nutritionist can evaluate your horse's diet and recommend what supplements they do or don't need (All images by Shelley Paulson).

evaluate its cost and nutritional value, I would suggest booking a consultation either virtually or in person. In my experience, more realistic information tends to be drawn out during a conversation rather than when details are sent by email. So, an 'in person' approach is probably more valuable.

“Now is a perfect time to look at our horses' diets and conduct a 'spring clean' audit on what we're feeding them.”

Your nutritionist of choice will go through the information you've provided and then ask more questions as they go along. The first point of call will be to assess your horse's current diet, make some comments, and suggest potential minor adjustments. If, like many diets, there are

several supplements in the equation, the discussion can then turn to whether these supplements are necessary for your horse. Many times, I find that people add a supplement for a particular reason, but fail to remove a supplement of similar ilk. For example, someone sent me the details of a diet in which there were four supplements that provided calcium, as well as a feed fortified with calcium.

The term 'to supplement' means to provide when you have a deficiency. If you do not have a deficiency, there is no need to supplement!

Your nutritionist will be able to evaluate your horse's diet and recommend what supplements they do and do not need, or in the case of some supplements, suggest ways to be strategic in their use rather than feed them as a daily additive. This will offer you an insight into savings you may be able to make, as well as giving you the information you need to assess the value of your current feeding program.



Horses will generally graze around 65% of their turn out time and consume between 0.45kg and 0.65kg of dry matter per hour.

Of course, your nutritionist may recommend other products including their own – but you should always investigate the value of such products and consider several key factors:

- Has the manufacturer researched their product's ingredients, or have they adapted someone else's published research?
- Are the ingredients they've used exactly the same as those that were researched?
- Is the supplement dose similar to the dose used in the research?
- Has the efficacy of the product been proven?
- Do their ingredients comply with Australian quality standards?

With respect to effective dosage, I commonly see products that have been formulated based on another company's research findings, but only 10% of the effective dose has been used yet claims are made regarding benefits that relate to the full dose of the ingredient. This does nobody any good. It reduces people's faith in the efficacy of the ingredient, and,

most importantly, it does not benefit your horse.

Once you have established that a product is reputable, calculate the active constituent value of an effective dose compared to other products. For example, 5gms of Product A may have the same active constituents as 30gms of Product B. However, while a bag of Product B may cost less to buy than a similarly sized bag of Product A, when you calculate the cost per effective dose, you may find that Product A is actually saving you money.

If you are feeding a significant number of horses, you can also look at purchasing in bulk, either in bulka bags, silos, or in recent years, mini silos. These are often a more economical way of buying large quantities of feed. They are also a way of reducing the packaging required, and therefore the volume of packaging going into landfill. Some feed companies also offer an interest free loan for a silo as long as you stay on their feed, which is something you might like to consider.

If you need to purchase hay, another expensive commodity these days, consider whether you might be able to source it directly from a farm, which in the longer term may save you a lot of money. However, before going ahead with this, calculate how much hay you need for a specific period, say six months. Do you have storage for this quantity? And can you work the up-front cost into your budget? Then consider whether you need to purchase that prime lucerne, or if sourcing a good quality pasture hay may be more ideal for your circumstances. These days, hay producers send their hay off for testing. Ask to see the test results and you may be pleasantly surprised. Additionally, if you have a choice between various parcels of hay, you will be able to select the hay that offers the greatest value.

In summary, with the costs of feeding your horse increasing, it's the right time to assess that feed from the perspective of both nutrition and cost. You may find that with advice, you are able to save significantly on your feed bill by rationalising or simplifying their diet. 🐾



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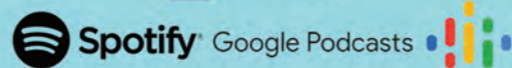


“ The mouth opening thing happens for a variety of reasons, it's the horse's barometer for something being wrong. Any sort of pain, any sort of discomfort, any sort of confusion, comes out in the mouth. ”

Anna Minogue

We speak to Anna Minogue, an equine dentist and independent bit fitter with a strong focus on horse welfare and ethical practices.

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Horses go well on herbs

We spoke to dressage rider Caroline Bonney about McDowell's Herbal supplements to find out why she wouldn't use anything else.

Caroline Bonney started riding when she was just two years old. “Mum would take me for lessons in Nerang. Then after I turned four, I had a big break until I was 13, when I would just hop on a horse and go trail riding.”

Later, marriage and children intervened, but eventually horses came back into Caroline's life in the shape of the off the track Thoroughbreds that she and her husband trained - although she didn't get into “competition mode” until around eight years ago, when

she began showing with some of the Thoroughbreds.

But then she bought her first Warmblood and the dressage bug bit deep. “I was hooked on the challenge of learning a whole lot more, training the horse, working up the levels - I love it!”

Next came her very successful partnership with Battlestar Galactica, more commonly known as Isa. “Isa and I were one of only two partnerships that made the FEI squad for Queensland this year. Last year we were also on the squad, and we won the Medium Tour Horse of the Year, and the Brisbane CDI Medium Tour Horse Open. The year before that we won the Small Tour Horse of the Year, and for the past two years we've been nominated for Queensland Horse of the Year,” Caroline says.



PREVIOUS PAGE: Caroline's Champions Feinsteins Grand Prix horse Battle Star Galatica (Image by Rodney's Photography).

ABOVE: The now very much calmer Bluefields Florencia going through her paces.

But while Isa might have been her champion Grand Prix horse, he did have a few quirks, one of which was an unholy terror of indoor arenas. "In the beginning he was so scared he couldn't get through a test. I even had to reverse him into indoor arenas just to get him in," Caroline laughs. "It took me some time to build his confidence and trust, but in the last couple of years he shone at dressage and retired this year as the champion he deserved to be."

And then there were the physical problems. "I bought him as an older schoolmaster and he had spurs, a lot of arthritis, and ringbone. It was hard work keeping him sound at the higher levels, and obviously Bute was out of the question because I was competing."

Fortunately, Caroline found the answer she was looking for in the McDowell Herbal range, and began regularly

dosing Isa with either [Alleviate](#) or [Alleviate Compete](#). "I was using Alleviate most of the time. It's actually like a natural Bute and offers natural relief of pain. It was amazing. But you have to back off that a week before a competition because one of the ingredients is Devils Claw, which would give you a positive swab result. So, I'd then switch to Alleviate Compete, which is very similar to Alleviate but without the Devils Claw. You can use that every day and compete on it. It's just a liquid that you put on their food and it made a huge difference to Isa, helping him with his arthritis and movement. I love that product and I use it on all my horses."

And even though Isa has now retired from competition and has become a treasured 'paddock ornament', the 21-year-old 18hh Warmblood still gets his daily dose of Alleviate. "He's still

sore unfortunately, and he can't live on Bute. He was such a stressor that he was always a bit ulcery going into comps and coming out. So, I don't have the option of giving him Bute – Alleviate is my Bute."

Caroline, meanwhile, is working with her new 'project', the very beautiful mare Bluefields Florencia. "When I bought her 18 months ago, we thought she may have been a headshaker. She had lots of allergy problems and her skin was so sensitive to touch that if a fly touched her, she would flick her front legs."

Once again, Caroline turned to McDowells: this time to the calming formulation [MAG-A-GG](#). "It's got magnesium which calms her and relaxes all the muscles as well. So, she now doesn't headshake and is totally concentrated in the Training System. She's just so smart and I've seen such a huge difference with her since we started her on MAG-A-GG."

The 16hh mare is also on Alleviate Compete, as well as McDowells [Sneeze-A-GG](#), which Caroline says is a great remedy for seasonal allergies and the snorting and sneezing that accompany them.

Many of Caroline's equestrian friends also use McDowells remedies, and of course Caroline swears by them. "I love them because they're natural. I've been an ambassador for McDowells for four years now, only because I totally believe in them. I've met Cath McDowell, who's such a knowledgeable and talented woman, and I've also been around their production facility, and it's just amazing what they do and how they work – it's just brilliant." 🐾

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Room to move

There's plenty to please on this magnificent Wisemans Ferry Road property at Somersby in New South Wales.



The sand arena lighting is courtesy of individual solar batteries on each light pole.



The magnificent home exudes old-world charm and comfort.

At the very heart of Somersby, and just 3 minutes to the M1, sits this jewel of a property. Situated on 33 mostly flat and cleared acres, magnificent gardens surround the delightful 1885 period homestead, which features high ornate pressed metal ceilings, four generous bedrooms including an attic bedroom complex,

four bathrooms, a large country style kitchen and family room, separate formal drawing room, wood fireplaces, a luxurious main bathroom, verandahs, an expansive covered outdoor entertaining area, and three garages.

With commanding views to the east over the beautifully manicured grounds, this property exudes a timeless sense

of warm, peaceful, comfortable country living. The home and grounds lend themselves to weddings and special functions, and there have been three weddings held there in recent times.

The horse facilities are excellent and include over 20 fenced paddocks, multiple shelters, rainwater supply to troughs in each paddock, sand arenas, a jump area, and a 20-metre diameter round yard.

A functional and roomy shed includes new steel framed stables, a kitchen, laundry, bathroom, tack and feed room, and heavy and light equipment storage areas. There is a hot water horse washing facility along with washing machines for the horse rugs. A high-capacity solar system has recently been installed on the roof of the shed to

provide power across the property. The sand arena lighting is courtesy of individual solar batteries on each light pole, providing continuous lighting for up to four hours. The property also has 3-phase power connected.

The water sources are plentiful. There's a large dam as well as a separate spring

fed dam to which a high capacity, near-new multiple stage pump is connected. This pressurised water feeds all irrigation across the property and could also be used to fill some of the tanks, currently connected to rainwater down pipes on both the shed and the home. Visit [Horse Property](#) for more details, or call Tony Gilmour on 0400 723 193.



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