



NEWS & MESSAGES

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- **Letter from the FEI Endurance Department: Review of Endurance Rules**

"Fax to: All Endurance NFs
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From: Mr Ian Williams, Head of Endurance Department

CC: Endurance Contacts
Date: 15 May 2003

Dear Sirs,

The FEI Endurance Committee assisted by the FEI Endurance department has commenced a full review of the existing Endurance Rules together with a review of existing qualification criteria for officials.

In due course, after the initial review being undertaken by 4 independent senior experienced International Endurance Judges, all National Federations will be asked to put forward their own views on proposed changes (Rules) to the Endurance Committee so that we will establish a full set of rules and qualifications to which everyone has contributed.

However, as always the Endurance Committee are the governing body and will decide the final format after consideration of all views and suggestions, but in this way everyone will have had the opportunity to contribute to the final outcome.

Following on from the recommendation which arose from the Paris Forum, at the recent Bureau meeting the establishment of a Temporary Veterinary Sub Committee was authorised who's task it will be to undertake research into various aspects of the Endurance competition and its effect upon the horse. This Sub Committee will report jointly to the FEI Endurance Committee and Vet. Committee on the above together with various welfare aspect of competition such as distance, vet gates, hold time, etc.

We will continue to provide you with information on how this full review is progressing.

Yours sincerely

Ian Williams, Head of Endurance Department"

Horses which had to be treated at CEI's: Reasons, manifestations and consequences_

Association Française des Vétérinaires d'Endurance Equestre (C. Robert)

(translated by Suzanne Dollinger)

Between 1998 and 2000 the "Association Française des Vétérinaires d'Endurance Equestre" studied the reasons, manifestations and consequences of horses which needed treatment during or after CEI rides.

Number of evaluated rides: Total 27 (19 CEI**, 5 CEI***, 3 Championships (FRA))

approx. number of starters: 2000+ Number of treated horses: 200

Results

Eliminations:

Depending on the ride, 4.2% to 16.4% of the starting horses needed treatment. These horses covered on average 84 km which means that the majority had to be eliminated at the 2nd or 3rd vet-gate.

Speed:

The majority of the horses which needed treatment turned between 13 and 15 km/h (average speed of the rides: 13.9 km/h). Only a small number of horses which turned slowly needed treatment which can be explained by a protective effect due to slow speed. Concerning very fast speeds it seems that only horses in excellent condition can sustain it: either they finish brilliantly or they are stopped due to lameness before serious metabolic problems occur.

Horses:

The treated horses were typical for the overall population of endurance horses: Majority of Arabs or Partbred Arabs, grey, average age of 9 years. No difference between geldings and mares (40% each) whereas only 20% of stallions had to be treated. This could be explained by the fact that only a few number of stallions are participating and perhaps also due to a certain self-protective attitude of male horses.

Career of the horses:

Many of the horses which needed treatment were not experienced: 46.7 % of them had their first experience at this level and 58.2 % tried before but never finished. In addition 10.4 % were already eliminated at least once during the same season.

As such it seems that the first participation over a new distance is a risky affair and that novice horses need more precaution than experienced horses.

Race preparation:

More than 50% of the treated horses travelled a long way (more than 500 km or more than 6 hours).

Several studies emphasise the possible dangers of transportation and it seems imperative to allow the horse a maximum of time possible to recover.

Diet:

The fact of apparent feeding mistakes occurred often during this study. At least one out of two horses which needed treatment had a modification of diet (in quality or quantity) during the week before the race.

This leads to the assumption that horse owners/ riders need to be educated that any change in diet has to be made progressively and that it requires about a month for the horse to adapt.

Some problems could be related directly to typical mistakes such as

- horses kept in boxes during the day before the race potentially developing a tying-up during the first kilometres
- colic since the horse is not used to stay in a box
- severe backaches due to the use of a new saddle during the race

Symptoms:

At least half of the cases showed obvious signs of fatigue, exhaustion and dehydration. About 25% showed stiffness, muscular cramps or colic.

Diagnostic – Severity:

33 %	dehydration	29 %	exhaustion	27 %	tying up
16 %	thumbs	15 %	colic	12 %	lameness
4.5 %	acute laminitis				

The signs were considered to be severe in 40% of the cases.

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Evaluation:

In 70% of the cases the metabolic problems disappeared during the hours after treatment, the horses seemed to be in good health the next day and got permission to travel home.

30% of the horses needed intense treatment and/ or supervision for several days.

At least 3 of the treated horses died (at home) due to the problems they lived during the race: 2 because of laminitis and 1 because of septicaemia.

Only 41% of the treated horses managed to complete a ride at the same level within the next two years and only 21% completed at least two times.

On average the first placing could be reached one year after the horse had to be treated.

This study will be continued with more sophisticated details in 2003.