



Denmark to Impose Limit on Noseband Tightness in Competition After Study Finds Link to Mouth Lesions

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The Danish Equestrian Federation has adopted a new rule on the tightness of nosebands on horses in competition based on a study that it reports “shows a clear correlation between tight nosebands and the presence of mouth lesions.”

The rule for all horses in competition will come into effect Jan. 1, 2018 and requires room for a certified measurement unit between the nasal plate of the horse (bony surface) and the noseband equivalent to a diameter of at least 1.5 cm/0.59 inches.

The study of the use of tack and equipment including nosebands, spurs and whips on 3,000 dressage, jumping, eventing and endurance horses over at least three years was conducted by the Danish Equestrian Federation. A veterinary consultant with International Equestrian Federation (FEI) national head veterinarian Mette Uldahl overall in charge.

The study found that a proportion of the horses were recorded having oral lesions, most in dressage horses.

For the remainder of 2017, selected technical delegates will test measurements of nosebands at shows. The federation did not say whether the opening leg of the 2017-2018 dressage World Cup Western European League at Herning in Denmark this week would be a test venue.

Traditionally, the noseband has been measured with “one” or “two” fingers, and different types of noseband measurement devices have also been developed.

Measurement methods and devices will be tested for the rest of 2017 to be able to introduce an easily reproducible method according to the metric scale.

The federation said: “To insure reproducibility the measurement device will have a specified diameter. The measurement will always be performed between the nasal plate of the horse (solid support) and the noseband.

“There must be room for a unit of measurement equal to more than 1.5 cm in diameter between the nasal plate and the noseband. The rule applies to all types of nosebands, both upper and lower nosebands.

“The aim is to ensure in cooperation with the riders that riding on the venues always takes place with sufficient governance of horse welfare.

“If officials find that a noseband is too tight, the rider will be asked to loosen it according to the rules, after which the competitor can participate in the competition. If the rider refuses to loosen the noseband, or if there are repeated violations of the noseband tightness rules sanctions will be imposed.”

It did not provide details of the sanctions.

“The purpose of the study was to contribute with evidence-based knowledge that can form the basis for governance of the horses, development of regulations and contributions to research in the future.” the federation said.

The federation reported the study found “a low proportion of horses were recorded having spur-associated lesions or worn hair at the ribcage. The study indicated that spurs are technically more difficult to use correctly for riders riding at a low level of competition compared to riders riding at a higher level of competition.

“For all riders, regardless of level, a relatively longer spur presented a significantly greater risk of finding hair on the spur and worn hair on the horse ribcage compared to a shorter spur.

“We are pleased that the occurrence of lesions caused by spurs was relatively low, but we will use the results and the correlations found as a tool for future control of equipment and training of the riders.”

The study also showed “very few recordings of lesions due to use of the whip.” The horses were inspected for lesions at the shoulder and hind quarters (swelling and skin lesions).

“We are pleased that the incidence of lesions due to use of whip was very low, but we are also aware that individual cases of lesions must be identified and addressed at the events.”

Location and angle of measurement of tightness of the noseband



Cavesson



Cavesson with flash



Drop



Micklem



Mexican