

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to you in my role as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the FEI with responsibility for the discipline of Endurance. You will recall that in June this year, the FEI Bureau, in order to more formally recognise HRH Princess Haya's previously stated potential conflict of interest with regard to the discipline, voted unanimously to grant responsibility for overseeing Endurance to me, as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, during HRH Princess Haya's term of office.

As you are all well aware, Endurance is a discipline that has had its share of challenges in recent times and I wanted to write to all those involved in the sport on the back of the important new rule changes that came into effect on 1 August 2014 and ahead of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ in Normandy.

The [rule changes](#) which include athlete penalties for equine injuries, extended rest periods and the involvement of independent governance advisors, are in line with the recommendations made by the Endurance Strategic Planning Group (ESPG) and are a great step forward for horse welfare and fair play. We strongly believe they address the key issues that the discipline has been facing.

Established over a year ago in July 2013, the ESPG was independent of the FEI and included officials, vets and athletes with international experience in Endurance. As part of its in-depth review of Endurance, the ESPG consulted extensively with the discipline's participants and National Federations worldwide. The result of the Group's work was 41 recommendations together with a five-year strategic plan. The ESPG was disbanded on completion of its final report and its recommendations formed the basis of new rules that came into effect on 1 August 2014.

The FEI and the National Federations have consistently stressed the importance of putting the new rules in place as soon as possible rather than waiting for a vote at the FEI General Assembly in December, which would have meant delaying implementation until 1 January 2015. So, under Article 20.3 of the FEI Statutes and bearing in mind the

positive implications for horse welfare of the changes, the Bureau exercised its right to pass resolutions that are normally voted on at the General Assembly.

The values of horse welfare, clean sport and integrity were prioritised throughout the [ESPG report](#). The FEI strongly supports the ESPG in its call for all those involved with Endurance, from the FEI, to National Federations and the participants, to recognise our individual and collective responsibilities towards horse welfare and the integrity and reputation of the sport.

**I ask that each of you, as your national governing body, share this letter with the Endurance athletes registered with your Federation, the officials and all involved with the discipline in your region.**

Not only is it important that these rule changes are now in place, it is also critical to the future health of the discipline that there is greater awareness of the commitment to address the issues that Endurance has faced and our determination to overcome them. To help spread awareness, we have produced a brochure – *Endurance 2014-15, Delivering a safe and fair sport* – which can be viewed [online here](#). Print versions are available on request and will also be readily available at the Games in Normandy. The brochure outlines not only our commitment to horse welfare but also how Endurance is one of the fastest growing equine sports and a discipline we should be proud of.

We have also put on the website a comprehensive list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) which are designed to address both general and specific issues raised with the FEI regarding Endurance in recent months.

The eyes of the equestrian world will be on us at the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ in Normandy and we also hope to attract a much wider audience, both onsite and across global media, so it is our joint-responsibility to ensure that we have a safe and a fair Games across all our disciplines.

In addition, and specifically for Endurance, a number of initiatives have been put in place, over and above the normal protocols, to help each of your athletes achieve their goals in an open and transparent environment.

Here are the main items we have introduced for the competition at Sartilly:

- Fixed and roving video surveillance of the Endurance Stables (24/7), the cooling area and rest areas on competition day.
- Fixed video surveillance on the entrance to the Vet inspection area and each of the 12 trot-up lanes.
- All video recordings will be in high definition, recorded continuously and with the possibility to produce individual, HD and colour pictures from the recordings.
- The Control Unit for the video surveillance is manned continuously and there will be radio contact between an FEI 4\* Judge positioned in the Control Unit and the FEI Officials on the Field of Play.
- Tamperproof GPS units on both the athlete and the horse to provide FEI Officials with a record of the route and distances covered by a combination during the day of competition.
- Approved FEI Vet Gate Timing system that sends horses to Vet Lanes in strict order of arrival time into the Vet Inspection area, removing any perceived conflict of interest as horses will be automatically diverted away from own nation Veterinary Officials.
- Approved Heart Rate System programmed to comply with the new Heart Rate Protocol, in the rules from 1 August 2014, to ensure equal timed assessment across all horses.
- Additional FEI Officials, in excess of those required per the rules.
- The FEI will be testing more horses in Normandy across all disciplines than at any previous edition of the FEI World Equestrian Games™.
- The FEI is also offering a Pre-Arrival Testing facility for all horses in the run-up to the Games in Normandy, as we did for the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games.

I am confident that these measures will ensure a safe and fair sport in Normandy, and am greatly looking forward to being with you in Sartilly. I know that together we will produce a really wonderful day of Endurance sport on 28 August, and beyond.

Yours,

John McEwen

FEI 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

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