

The official veterinarian's role in FEI sport, Horse Inspections and medication control

Leo Jeffcott

University of Sydney, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Sydney,
NSW 2006, Australia.

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
1. Introduction	2
2. Official Veterinarians at FEI Events	2
3. Veterinary participation at FEI Events	4
3.1. Conflict of interest	4
3.2. Horse Inspections and Veterinary Examinations	4
4. Passport Control	9
5. Medication Control	9
5.1. FEI Medication Control Program	9
5.2. Problems with Medication Control	11
5.3. Results of medication Control	12
6. Treatment of horses during competition	14
6.1. Treatment during competition with substances not on the prohibited list	15
6.2. Guidelines for medication during competition	15
7. Some Do's and Don'ts for veterinary officials	17
8. Conclusions	17
9. References and recommended further reading	18

Foreign Veterinary Delegate

The Foreign Veterinary Delegate is appointed at higher level international competitions (e.g. Championships, Games, World Cup Finals, CIOs). The appointment has to be approved by the FEI and always involves event veterinarians with extensive national and international experience. The Foreign Veterinary Delegates forms part of a three person Veterinary Commission. The other members of the Commission are a President and Associate Member. In some special cases (e.g. Olympics and WEG) more than one Associate member may be appointed.

The Foreign Veterinary Delegate's role is to be part of the Veterinary Commission, but with some special responsibilities:

- to check that the Veterinary Regulations are being properly implemented.
- to oversee the passport control, and to check and sign each passport.
- to assist the Horse Inspection Panel for Eventing at the 1st and 2nd Inspections and to be in attendance during the 2nd Examination at the end of the cross country.

President of the Veterinary Commission

The President is appointed by the Organising Committee and must be someone with extensive knowledge, experience and authority in the discipline(s) involved. The post is the senior member of the Commission and involves the supervision of the clinical facilities and veterinary surveillance throughout the event.

Associate Member of the Veterinary Commission

The Associate member is appointed by the Organising Committee to assist the other members of the Veterinary Commission. It is usual for the Associate member to act as Examining Veterinarian in the Holding Box during the Horse Inspections. This person should obviously have the requisite experience of lameness and equine orthopaedics.

Team Veterinarian

Team Veterinarians are appointed by their National Federation and are responsible for the health and welfare of team horses. Team Veterinarians are not eligible to be members of the Veterinary Commission/Delegate and cannot act as official Treating Veterinarians. They may not officiate in any other capacity or compete themselves. Chefs d'Equipe must report the presence of Team Veterinarians to the Veterinary Commission/Delegate before they assume their official functions in the care of team horses.

Individual Competitor's Private Veterinarian

The Person Responsible must report the presence of Individual Competitor's Private Veterinarians to the Veterinary Commission/Delegate before they can assume their official function in the care of private competitors' horses. They are not eligible to be members of the Veterinary Commission/Delegate or to act as official Treating Veterinarians, nor may they officiate in any other capacity or compete themselves.

Treating Veterinarian

Treating Veterinarians are official veterinarians appointed by the Organising Committee who are in attendance to provide emergency care at the event. The Treating Veterinarian must liaise closely with the Veterinary Commission/Delegate.

Testing Veterinarian

Testing Veterinarians are specifically responsible for carrying out the Medication Control in certain geographical areas (e.g. Groups I and II in Europe). They must always operate in close liaison with the Veterinary Commission/Delegate and the President of the Ground Jury.

Examining Veterinarian

Examining Veterinarians are appointed by the Organising Committee in consultation with the Veterinary Commission/Delegate for all Horse Inspections except those in Endurance. An Examining Veterinarian is only appointed if this role is not filled by the Associate Member of the Veterinary Commission. They must have specific orthopaedic experience. The role of the Examining Veterinarian is to provide the Ground Jury / Veterinary Commission / Delegate with an expert opinion on the fitness of horses to compete.³

VETERINARY PARTICIPATION AT FEI EVENTS

One of the most important roles of the veterinarians is to advise other officials, competitors and the public on matters affecting the health, welfare and safety of horses. It is therefore important that the official veterinarian is available throughout the event. This must be for the whole time the horses are under FEI Rules.

3. VETERINARY PARTICIPATION AT FEI EVENTS

One of the most important roles of the veterinarians is to advise other officials, competitors and the public on matters affecting the health, welfare and safety of horses. It is therefore important that the official veterinarian is available throughout the event. This must be for the whole time the horses are under FEI Rules.

3.1. Conflict of interest

The problem of conflict of interest can affect all FEI officials, but it is obviously especially relevant for veterinarians to avoid any hint of improper professional conduct or conflict of interest. An article in General Regulations, Art. 162, covers the matter for all officials. Of particular relevance to veterinarians are the following paragraphs:-

- A Team Veterinarian or Individual Competitor's Private Veterinarian may not act as a Veterinary Delegate, a member of the Veterinary Commission or compete at an event.
- The Veterinary Delegate or any member of the Veterinary Commission may not act as a Team Veterinarian, a Treating Veterinarian or compete at an event.

FEI expects its veterinary officials to refrain from giving any form of medication or treatment to horses at an event. Verbal advice on medication and horse welfare may be provided specifically in the case of authorisation of emergency treatment, but a strict "hands off" policy in regard to actual treatment of participating horses, should be followed. This also applies at 'mixed' events, where both national and international classes are being run. Although FEI rules do not strictly apply to a national class, involvement of an FEI veterinary official in the treatment of horses could lead to confusion and easily damage the image of the sport and its officials.

3.2. Horse Inspections and Veterinary Examinations

The official veterinarians have a pivotal role in assessing the horses' fitness to compete by carrying out a series of examinations and inspections. It should be remembered that the veterinarian is there as a professional to advise the judges (Ground Jury) as a member of the Horse Inspection Panel. The FEI Veterinary Committee has introduced standardisation of these examinations in all disciplines except Endurance Riding (see Vet Regs Art.1011).

The number of Horse Inspections and their timing will vary between disciplines as will the composition of the Horse Inspection Panel. However, the panel will always consist of judges and veterinarians. It is important that all examinations and inspections are carried out efficiently and quickly. The discipline of Eventing is a good example to illustrate the value of veterinary involvement in which the horses are subject to:-

- First Veterinary Examination - on arrival of the horses.
- First Horse Inspection - before the Dressage Test
- Second Veterinary Examination – after the cross country
- Second Horse Inspection - before the Jumping Test.

The Veterinary Examinations are always performed by veterinarians, although they do not have to be FEI official veterinarians. The Horse Inspections have been referred to as "veterinary inspections" in the past, but they are now always carried out together with the Ground Jury (i.e. the Inspection Panel).

All veterinarians who act as officials at FEI events must have the requisite experience to make quick and informed opinions about the state of fitness or fatigue of the horses. The other point to remember is that the official veterinarians do not eliminate horses themselves and must work closely with the Ground Jury. It is therefore vital that the Ground Jury seek and fully respect the opinion of the veterinarian at all inspections. There are a number of important points highlighted by the FEI to both judges and veterinarians:-

- a close dialogue and collaboration between the Ground Jury and the veterinarians.
- a common sense approach to the "fitness of horses to compete" and in relation to the Second Horse Inspection their potential to continue safely.
- it is clear that no horse that is acutely lame can be allowed to continue; however some degree of flexibility should be exercised for horses showing only mild stiffness or variation in gait symmetry at the Second Horse Inspection.
- the use of the Holding Box and the subsequent report from the Examining Veterinarian is very helpful in checking on horses deemed to be doubtful by the Inspection Panel.
- the Horse Data Form is also a useful way of monitoring the horses' veterinary status and fitness to compete during the event (Fig 1).
- it is the safety and welfare of the horses that is paramount.
- the ultimate objective is to see as many horses as possible compete to the highest level of their capabilities as long as it does not prejudice their health and safety.

An innovation into FEI competitions some 15 years ago was the introduction of the Horse Data Form. Much work and advice from colleagues in the United States has gone into the preparation of the form which provides veterinary information on the horse throughout the event (Fig. 1). This has been introduced to monitor the horse's progress from the first examination on arrival through to the final show jumping phase of the competition. These forms were first used at an Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992 and have proved to be valuable in assessing the horse's response to the high level of competition under the fairly difficult climatic conditions. In recent years a good deal of more detailed scientific work in monitoring the horse's vital signs throughout all phases of the competition has been carried out. All this information is currently being evaluated and will provide competition veterinarians and organisers with useful parameters to level of fitness, heat stress and fatigue.

First Veterinary Examination

This initial examination should be carried out when the horse first arrives at the competition site, and if possible before it enters the stable compound. The purpose of an "examination", as compared to an "inspection", is for the Veterinary Delegate to establish the general health status of the horse. The First Veterinary Examination establishes the identity of each horse from its passport, and verifies that the current vaccination requirements and other details are correctly recorded. The clinical examination ensures that the horse is not suffering from any infectious or contagious disease. It may include recording heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature and any other pertinent clinical investigations as deemed necessary. It is not permissible to jog horses during this examination unless specifically requested to by the person responsible. The entire examination should take <10 min. The findings should be recorded on the horse data form which should follow the horse through successive examinations and inspections.

HORSE DATA FORM						
DATE		EVENT				
1. FIRST EXAMINATION						
PASSPORT NO	NAME OF HORSE	NF	NAME OF RIDER	ID-NUMBER		
COMMENTS						
2. FIRST INSPECTION						
TIME	TEMPERATURE	HUMIDITY	PASS	HOLD	FAIL	
COMMENTS						
3. SECOND EXAMINATION						
TIME	TEMPERATURE	HUMIDITY	TIME IN	TIME OUT	PASS	FAIL
PULSE		RESPIRATION RATE	TEMPERATURE		COMMENTS	
1						
2						
3						
COMMENTS						
5. SECOND INSPECTION						
TIME	TEMPERATURE	HUMIDITY	PASS	HOLD	FAIL	
COMMENTS						

Fig 1: An example of the information and clinical data collected on horses participating in Eventing.

Medication Form 3.

Authorisation for administration of substances not normally considered to be Prohibited Substances (i.e. rehydration fluids, antibiotics).

For permission to administer these substances by injection, nasogastric tube or nebulisation it is necessary to complete Medication Form 3. This form requires the authorisation of the Veterinary Delegate/Commission who will be requested to make an assessment of the climatic conditions and fitness of the horse concerned prior to authorisation. The form does not need to be countersigned by the President of the Ground Jury. It is important to note that:-

- authorisation for administration of these substances is not a right and always requires the approval of the veterinary official.
- requests for small volumes of rehydration fluids (e.g. 1-5 litres) which have no clinical justification are unlikely to be approved.
- samples of the fluids/electrolytes may be taken for medication control screening.

Medication Form 4.

Application form for Elective Testing

Persons Responsible or their representatives may elect to have a horse tested by the FEI Central Laboratory as a preventative or informative measure. Any elective testing is subject to the terms and conditions included at Annex V of the Veterinary Regulations. Elective testing is only available for the substances listed in Annex V. Anyone undertaking elective testing must submit Medication Form 4 included in Annex VI with the sample(s) to be analysed.

7. SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR VETERINARY OFFICIALS

It is very important at FEI events that official veterinarians do undertake the following:

- Get involved with the Organising Committee in the preparations for the event. This will go a long way towards resolving problems before they occur.
 - Avoid any possible conflict of interest.
 - Carry a copy of the current FEI Veterinary Rules at all times.
 - Be sure to attend all briefing sessions and veterinary meetings prior to the start of the event.
 - Meet with the Ground Jury, Technical Delegate and Appeal Committee to discuss any particular problems or to receive any specific instructions before the event.
 - Introduce yourself to all team and individual competitor veterinarians and ensure they understand your role.
 - Inspect the stables before the event starts and at periodic intervals throughout the competition.
 - Check the condition of the sampling boxes, veterinary facilities and isolation boxes.
 - Review the site and arrangements for all horse inspections and examinations.
 - If it is a Three-Day or Driving Event inspect the course before the competition starts, preferably in the company of the Ground Jury.
 - Always ensure you have the appropriate accreditation. Veterinary Delegates should have access to all parts of the event site.
- It is equally important that official veterinarians do not:
- Attempt to withdraw or eliminate a horse on veterinary grounds without proper consultation with the appropriate members of the Organising Committee or the Ground Jury.
 - Palpate an abnormal clinical finding at a horse inspection unless at the request of the Ground Jury, or at the brief examination in the holding area.
 - Give permission for any medication to a horse during the competition without receiving a request in writing from the team or other appropriate veterinarians. (i.e. Medication Authorisation Forms)
 - Permit the use of a prohibited substance without a good clinical reason and then only if you can be perfectly satisfied at the dose and route given it will not have an effect on performance.
 - Inform a Person Responsible or Chef d'Equipe that a horse is required for "random" or "spot" medication control until it has finished competing.
 - Leave before the end of the competition (i.e. till after the prize giving ceremony).

8. CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that there are considerable responsibilities for official veterinarians at FEI events and that a working knowledge of the General Regulations, Veterinary Regulations and Rule Books of the specific discipline is essential to be able to offer effective advice to the various facets of the event. There are still many difficulties and problems to solve.

9. REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Kohn, C.W. (1993), Veterinarian's role in 3-Day Eventing. Procs. Am. Ass. Equine Production. 39, 173-185

Jeffcott, L.B. (1990), Some comments on Veterinary attendance at FEI International Events. Equine Sports Medicine III, Svensk Veterinartidning Supplement 20, 21-32.

Jeffcott, L.B. (1990), Welfare Of Horses - An International Perspective. In: Kompendium Allmänt Veterinärmöte Sveriges Veterinärförbund, pp.255-259.

Jeffcott, L.B. (1995), Veterinary aspects of the Three-day event at the 1994 World Equestrian Games (WEG). Equine Veterinary Education 7, 249-252.

Jeffcott, L.B. (1995), Inspections and examinations of horses during the Three-Day-Event: an official vet's perspective. Equine Veterinary Education 7, 270-273.

Jeffcott, L.B. (1996), Three-Day Event Competition at the 1996 Olympics - A veterinary success. The Equine Athlete 9(4), 12a-12d.

Reading material from the FEI Website [www.horsesport.org]

- Veterinary Regulations – 10th edition, effective 1st June 2006
- Article 1011 (from Vet Regs 2006) – Veterinary Examinations and Horse Inspections
- FEI Rule change in FEI requirements for Equine Influenza vaccination.
- Equine Prohibited List (from Vet Regs 2006)
- FEI Equine Anti-doping and Medication Control Rules – 1st edition effective 1 June 2006.
- FEI Medication Advisory Group – Anti-doping and Medication Control: Reducing the risks of positive drug tests in competition horses. Guidelines for Treating and Team Veterinarians (the Medicine Box).
- The FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the horse.

There is a fair range of substances detected in positive samples recorded from the FEI medication control program, but some 80% are drugs that affect the musculoskeletal system (Fig 6). In the past there have been serious problems with substances possibly related to food contamination or stable management. For example in 1997 the highest incidence of detections was due to caffeine/theobromine which was thought to be due to contamination of these substances from improperly prepared food. These positives are rarely detected in countries in Western Europe where feed companies are alert to the dangers of these impurities getting in to horse feeds.

The FEI has alerted riders to these dangers through notices in the Bulletin and leaflets inserted into FEI passports. There was a substantial reduction in caffeine/theobromine positives in 1998. The potential contaminant is isoxsuprine (circulon) which may be administered inadvertently or from poor stable management (e.g. contaminated buckets, feed or water). Other substances detected tend to be tranquillisers, analgesics and anti-inflammatory drugs (Fig 6).

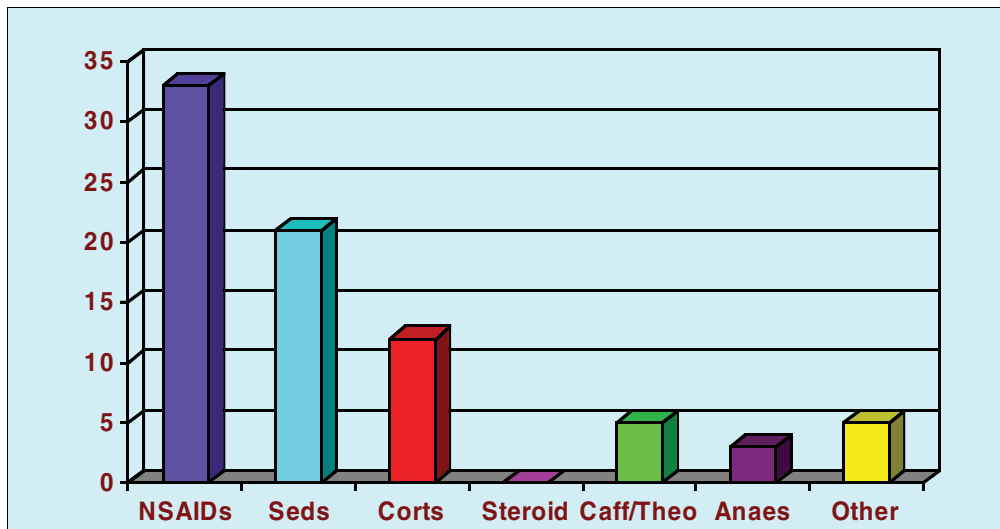


Fig 6 Breakdown of 79 substances detected in 68 positive samples in 2004

6. TREATMENT OF HORSES DURING COMPETITION

The FEI has established a system whereby horses can receive veterinary treatment during competition, under certain circumstances, for minor problems or injury that do not affect performance. The Treating Veterinarian requests the recommended treatment by completing an official Authorisation Form for Emergency Medication (Medication Form 1). This is then submitted to the Veterinary Commission/Delegate for their consideration. The Veterinary Delegate will wish to examine the horse before making a decision and signing the form. After this the approval of the President of the Ground Jury is required to complete the authorisation procedure.

The difficulty that arises is to decide whether the treatment is permissible or not under the rules. The clearest advice on this matter that can be given is to ensure that horses which suffer from serious conditions must be withdrawn from competition to enable them to receive effective treatment without infringing the medication rules. Otherwise each situation is considered on a case by case basis and the decision will depend on the experience and advice of the Veterinary Delegate.

6.1 Treatment of horses during competition with substances not on the prohibited list

There have been difficulties concerning medication of horse with substances not on the prohibited list (i.e. fluids, electrolytes, vitamins). Prior to the Atlanta Olympics, research had been undertaken which indicated that daily recording of fluid losses in horses and maintenance of hydration status was crucial. The FEI recommended that in competition under hot/humid conditions fluid losses would be monitored in horses (e.g. by recording the in body weight) and requests for appropriate treatment with fluids and electrolytes made as necessary.

- All treatments must be given in the best health and welfare interests of the horse.
- Every treatment must be fully justifiable by the medical condition of the horse receiving the treatment.
- Horses that cannot compete as a result of injury or disease must be given appropriate veterinary treatment. The Person Responsible must obtain advice from their Treating Veterinarian or Team Veterinarian prescribing a treatment and the necessary duration of treatment.
- No substance shall be given to any horse during or close to an event unless the appropriate FEI guidelines for medication authorization have been followed.

The new rules also include an Equine Prohibited List (EPL) which classifies prohibitive substances into three classes:

- Doping – agents, cocktails or mixtures of substances that may affect the performance; masking agents; substances with no generally accepted medical use in competition horses; substances which are usually products prescribed for use in humans or other species; agents used to hypersensitise or desensitise the limbs or body parts.
- Medication Class A – agents which could influence performance by relieving pain, sedating, stimulating or producing/modifying other physiological or behavioural effects.
- Medication Class B – substances that either have limited performance enhancing potential or to which horses may have been accidentally exposed, including certain dietary contaminants.

The latest innovation in the FEI's anti-doping program is the introduction of the "Medicine Box". This is a list of first choice medication for competition horses on which detection times will be provided. The FEI believes that any horse requiring bona fide veterinary treatment should receive it, but recognizes that the use of medication close to an event carries a risk of incurring a positive drug test if insufficient time has elapsed for the elimination of the drug. The drugs in the Medicine Box are all treatments that might reasonably be expected to be used in routine clinical practice in the time running up to the event. These include;

- NSAIDs - phenylbutazone, flunixin, ketoprofen ;
- Corticosteroids - dexamethasone sodium phosphate (iv), triamcinalone acetonide (ia), methylprednisolone (ia) ;
- Local anaesthetics - lidocaine, mepivacaine ;
- Sedatives - detomidine, romifidine, xylazine ;
- Respiratory - dembexine, clenbuterol, salbutamol ;
- Colic - scopolamine n-butyl bromide, butorphanol dipyrone (metamizole).

At present the FEI are determining detection times on all these drugs. The 'Detection Time' (DT) is the period during which a drug remains in the horse's system such that it is detectable by the laboratory. This is different from the "Withdrawal Time" (WT) which is the safety margin provided by the Treating Vet to ensure that no infringement of the rules occurs.

5.2. Problems with Medication Control

It should now be clear why veterinarians are faced with the difficulty of advising clients about medication for horses that are going to compete in the near future. There is limited published advice on withdrawal times of drugs for horses, but with individual variation and complex pharmacokinetics it is difficult to be precise about any drug. It is hoped that the Medicine Box and the possibility of Elective Testing will significantly alleviate the problem.

Another difficulty for competitors involves food contamination in sport horses. Some foods can contain prohibited substances which are unknowingly ingested and result in a positive dope test. Most common in this category have been positives from caffeine and theobromine. It is therefore important that competitors always use feed certified free of these substances. Recently the FEI has included warnings to owners that have been distributed in their passports and this seems to have had a beneficial effect and reduced numbers of positives are not occurring. It is worth noting that these substances will usually be classified as Medication Class B.

Other forms of contamination also occur from different types of oral medication. The most common one is isoxsuprine used for navicular disease, as the powder-like drug can easily be transferred to other horses by inadvertently contaminating buckets, feed etc. Horses receiving this form of medication should be kept apart and receive their food last to reduce any risks of contamination. Horses may compete with the presence of certain substances in their tissues, body fluids or excreta for which "threshold" levels/ratios have been laid down provided the concentration of the substance is less than the maximum levels indicated below:

Available Carbon dioxide	37 millimoles per litre in plasma
Dimethyl sulphoxide	15 micrograms per millilitre in urine or 1 microgram per millilitre in plasma
Hydrocortisone	1 microgram per millilitre in urine
Nandrolone	free and conjugates 5 α -estrane-3 β , 17 α -diol to 5(10)-estrane-3 β , 17 α -diol in urine at a ratio of 1.
Salicylic acid	750 micrograms per millilitre in urine or 6.5 micrograms per millilitre in plasma
Testosterone free and conjugated testosterone (geldings)	0.02 microgram per millilitre in urine
Testosterone free and conjugates testosterone (fillies and mares)	to epitestosterone 12:1 in urine
Theobromine	2 micrograms per millilitre in urine

5.3 RESULTS OF MEDICATION CONTROL

The system adopted at FEI competitions is to select not less than 5% of the total horses competing by:-

1. Random sampling - horses are selected by the testing Veterinarian in consultation with the President of the Ground Jury and (Foreign) Veterinarian Delegate.
2. Mandatory Sampling - specific place winners are required in some Championships, World Equestrian Games and Olympics.
3. "Spot" samples - may be requested by the Ground Jury, Veterinary Delegate or Veterinary Commission at any time during the event.

About 1500 samples are taken within the MCP area and ~700 samples in other regions around the world. The details of numbers of samples analysed and numbers tested positive are shown in Fig 4 for the years 1991-2005. The number of positives is shows a gradual reduction in positive samples from around 6% in 1991 to 2.3% in 2000. There followed a progressive increase from 2000 to 2004, but this has dropped again in 2005 as a consequence of the new anti-doping arrangements introduced by the FEI.

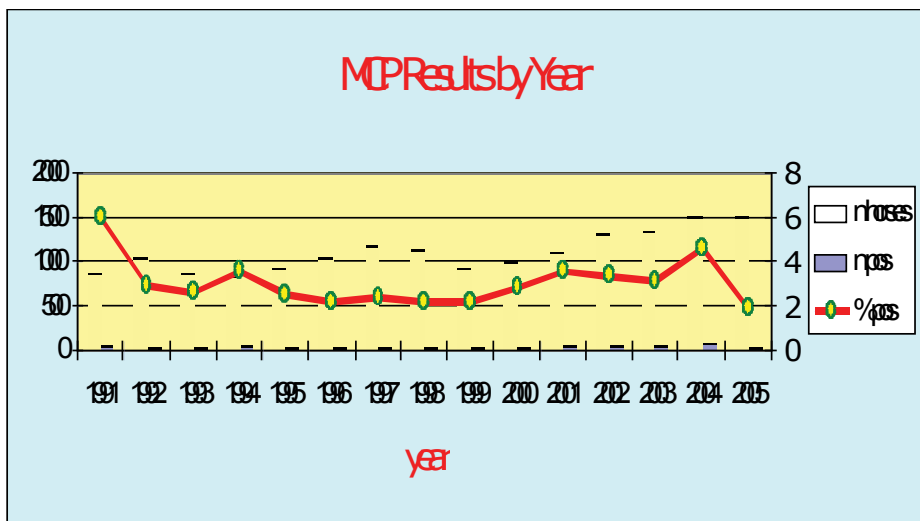
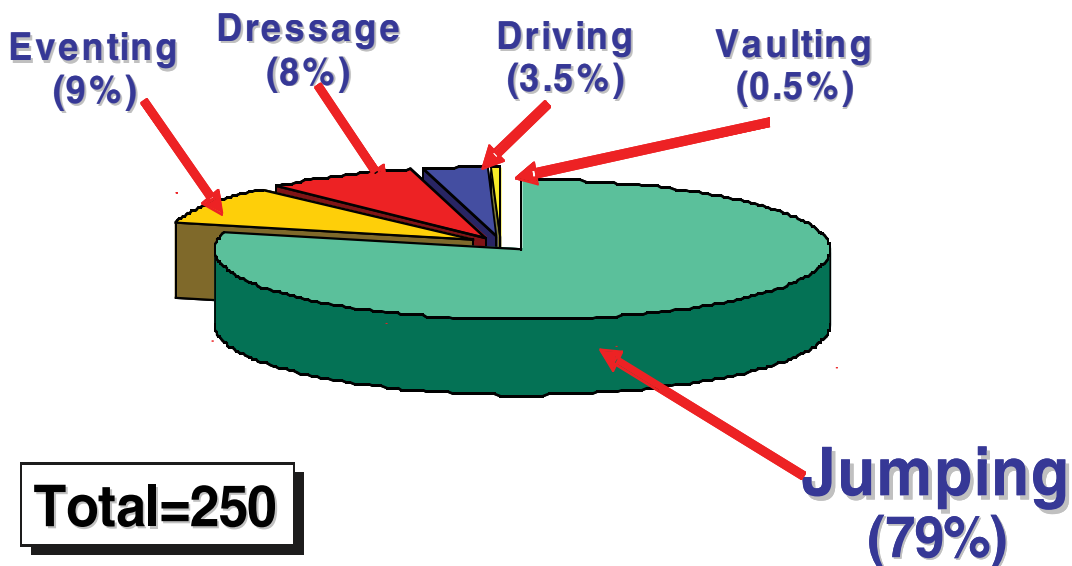


Fig 4 Results of the FEI Medication Control Programme in Groups I and II from 1991-2005 showing the number of horses tested and positive results.

There are also considerable differences between the different disciplines in the number of positives recorded (Fig 5). However, nearly 80% of positives are recorded in show jumpers because there are so many more competitions than the other disciplines with virtually none in vaulting and reining.



The routine treatment of competition horses with vitamins is a separate and controversial issue. It has become quite common place in the Jumping discipline; however there is no scientific evidence to support the practice. During the World Equestrian Games in Rome in 1998 there were no problems with administration of fluids and vitamins in any of the disciplines, except Jumping. Despite the normal climatic conditions at the time there were in excess of 60 requests within two days to treat healthy Jumping horses with fluids and vitamins by injection. This level of requests was certainly not justified by excessive heat and humidity or by the clinical condition of the horses. Since these substances could also be administered orally, the Chairman of the FEI Veterinary Committee, in consultation with the FEI Secretary General, decided only to allow treatment by injection with these products in horses that required such treatment on veterinary grounds. It was acknowledged that it was unfortunate to have made the decision during the competition, but it was judged to be in the best interests of the welfare of the horses, the spirit of the competition and the reputation of the veterinary profession. These events have reinforced the need for further investigation of the policy of medication of horses during competition.

6.2 Guidelines for Medication during Competition

As a result of these difficulties a new set of guidelines for the use and authorisation of treatment during an event has been formulated by the Veterinary Committee. These involve the use of four forms to cover all types of medication:

Medication Form 1. - Authorisation for Emergency Treatment involving medication with Prohibited Substances.

Medication Form 2. - Declaration for administration of altrenogest (Regumate) to mares competing in FEI competition.

Medication Form 3. - Authorisation for the use of medicaments not normally considered to be prohibited substances (i.e. rehydration fluids, antibiotics).

Medication Form 4. - Application form for Elective Testing.

If photocopying facilities are available at the event site, it is prudent to give the provider of treatment (treating veterinarian, physiotherapist, etc.) a copy of the form, which can then be shown to the FEI stewards, if required.

Medication Form 1. - Authorisation for Emergency Treatment involving medication with Prohibited Substances

In exceptional circumstances, the use of a Prohibited Substance can be authorised during an event, but only for the treatment of minor conditions. This might, for example, be the use of a local anaesthetic to suture a small laceration. However, the use of intra-articular injections, the administration of agents with multisystemic effects or conditions requiring repeated treatments will not be authorised. If such medication is required on clinical grounds the horse must first be withdrawn from the competition.

The Veterinary Delegate/Commission must always be consulted if medication is required for a horse while it is under FEI Rules. The decision as to whether it is a minor condition and the medication requested will not unfairly affect the horse's performance will be decided on a case by case basis. The veterinary official will be required to use clinical judgement in assessing the condition, the proposed treatment and the fitness of the horse to continue in the competition. A second opinion should be sought if necessary. After proper consideration this form must be completed, signed by the veterinary official and counter-signed by the President of the Ground Jury.

This form must always be completed when a prohibited substance is to be given to a horse at an FEI event, even if it has been officially withdrawn. As long as the horse remains at the event site it falls within FEI regulations.

This form may also be used for retrospective authorisation where treatment has been given prior to the start of the event. An example might be where a mild sedative had to be administered to help the horse travel to the event; the administration of a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug for similar reasons would not be acceptable. However, for example, the use of a local anaesthetic to suture will be authorised.

Medication Form 2.

Declaration form for administration of altrenogest (Regumate) to mares competing in FEI competition.

The use of altrenogest (Regumate) is currently permitted by the FEI for mares with an oestrus-related behavioural problem. The following conditions apply:

- Authorisation of Regumate treatment is only permitted for mares with an oestrus-related behavioural problem.
- The dose and duration of treatment must be in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- A Medication Form 2 must be completed by a veterinarian and submitted to the Veterinary Delegate/Commission for completion and signing before the start of the event.

The clinical examination includes auscultation of the heart for rhythm and absence of murmurs, auscultation of the thorax and abdomen, brief examination of the eyes with a penlight, assessment of hydration (i.e. capillary refill, skin tent), and rapid palpation of the limbs. Significant injuries, and abnormalities should be noted, especially those that might be questioned by the Ground Jury at the First Horse Inspection. Particular attention should be paid to palpation of the flexor tendons and suspensory ligaments. Heat swelling and/or pain on palpation are obvious warning signs and any findings should be discussed with the rider. Potential supporting leg injuries may require investigation by ultrasound or radiography. It is useful to have as much information as possible about supporting leg injuries in order to be best able to inform the Ground Jury of the horse's fitness for competition. Because tendonitis and desmitis may not result in significant lameness at the trot up, affected horses may not be easily identified at the First Inspection. It is useful to note the state of the shoeing as occasionally a horse may lose shoes or require a blacksmith's attention. It is useful to note possible spur marks and abrasions so that there is a record that these things were present before the competition. Horses are not eliminated from competition at this First Veterinary Examination. Any problems with the health or identification of the horses are reported to the Appeal Committee for their consideration and decision on appropriate penalties or sanctions.

Horse Inspections

These inspections are carried out by the FEI official veterinarian (i.e. Veterinary Delegate or Foreign Veterinary Delegate) with the Ground Jury which forms a Horse Inspection Panel. A full description of the standardised procedure is given in the Vet Regs Article 1011. In Eventing there is often a great deal of public and media interest in the inspections and it is very important, therefore, that they be conducted smoothly and efficiently. All Horse Inspections have the same format which assesses the fitness of horses to compete and verifies that they are adequately 'sound' for competition.

The horses are inspected in hand at rest, and at walk and trot on a firm, level clean, but not slippery surface (Fig 2). A strict procedure for the inspection should always be used. In cases where there is any doubt about soundness or fitness to compete, the horse is immediately sent to a holding area where the suspected problem can be examined more fully. No appeal is possible at any of the Horse Inspections.

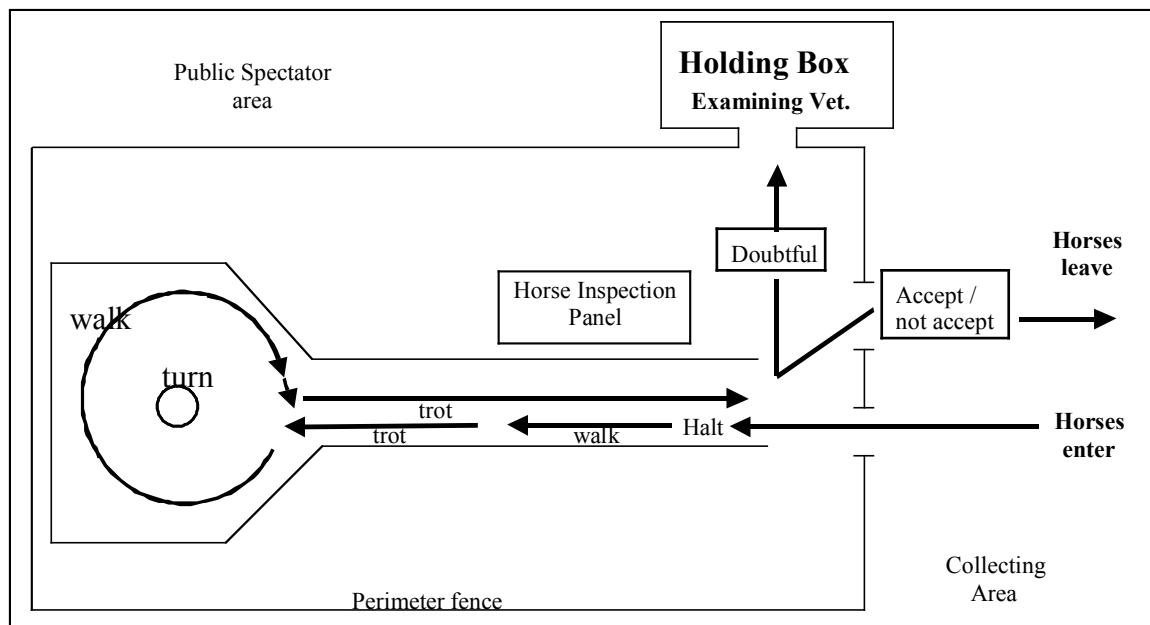


Fig 2 Plan for standardised Horse Inspections at FEI Competitions

A useful format for carrying out Horse Inspections is as follows: -

- Prior to first horse inspection - The Ground Jury and Veterinary Commission/Delegate must meet in order to establish the framework within which the system should operate.
- Appointment of an examining veterinarian - A second veterinarian experienced in equine orthopaedics is necessary to carry out a brief examination in the holding area of any horses put back for re-inspection.
- Holding Box examination - Only in doubtful cases are horses sent back for re-inspection. The Examining Veterinarian makes a brief examination in the holding area with the Team Veterinarian, the Person Responsible for the horse and the Chef d'Equipe in attendance. This includes a physical examination and any region that is thought to be injured or painful will be palpated. Hoof testers may be used to evaluate pain in the feet and passive flexion of the distal limb joints may be carried out. Passive flexion of the distal limb joints may be carried out to assess the range of movement of a joint. Active flexion tests are not permitted. The horse will then be walked and trotted in hand. Walking and trotting in a circle is permissible. The examination continues until the Examining Veterinarian is satisfied that sufficient clinical information has been collected to enable a report to be made for the Inspection Panel.
- Re-inspection procedure - The horse is presented again to the Horse Inspection Panel to review its fitness to compete bearing in mind the Examining Vet's report. A decision is then made by the Panel and if the horse is not passed, the President of the Ground Jury informs the Person Responsible and a public announcement is made immediately.

What the official veterinarian is looking for at the:

- Halt - A quick visual inspection to see that the horse is in good condition with no obvious abnormalities of its vital signs. The veterinarian walks round the horse looking for any areas of swelling, contusion, recent scarring. Any suspected problem may be briefly palpated and the competitor asked a short question.
- Walk - The horse is walked for about 20 metres and should stride out on a loose rein.
- Trot - During the trot to the end of the inspection path, any lameness or suspicious unlevelness of the hind gait is checked. After turning, the horse is trotted back towards the Horse Inspection panel so the forelimb action and any head nod can be appreciated. The horse should trot past the Panel so there is a final chance to view the hind action again.
- The horse will be asked to trot again if the lead rein is held too tightly, if the horse breaks into a canter or the trot is deemed to be too slow or too fast objectively to evaluate the levelness of gait.

Second Examination in Eventing

At the end of the cross country the horse is immediately examined by an experienced veterinarian, often the (Foreign) Veterinary Delegate. The vital signs are recorded on the Horse Data Form and these may be recorded at one or more intervals until the veterinarian is satisfied the horse is recovering and can return to the stable area. The examination should not prevent proper cooling or the horses not stop any medication or fluid therapy as indicated on veterinary advice. Horses can then return to the stables.

Although there is no further official inspection of horses until the Horse Inspection next morning, most official veterinarians want to see any horse that finished looking particularly tired or stressed during the evening.

In all these examinations, it is the safety and welfare of the horse that is paramount. For the system to work well there needs to be excellent dialogue and communication between the FEI Official Veterinarians, the Team Vets, the Ground Jury and the other officials involved with organising the event. The ultimate objective is to see as many horses as possible compete to the highest level of their capability, but not if it prejudices their health or safety.

5. MEDICATION CONTROL

5.1. FEI Medication Control Program

This is a controversial area and a difficult one for all veterinarians whether they are FEI officials, Treating or Team Veterinarians. The FEI has strict rules concerning anti-doping for all its eight disciplines. Its aim is to keep all FEI competitions drug-free, thereby ensuring that horses perform on their inherent merits without any interference from ergogenic agents or drugs that could affect performance.

The overall programme run by the FEI for medication control is managed by the Veterinary Department at its headquarters in Lausanne. It is set up to be self-financing through the fees charged to Organising Committees. The programme is run differently in different parts of the world. In countries outside Europe it is frequently left to the Organising Committees to obtain appropriate veterinary assistance to take samples of urine and blood using standard FEI kits. However, some Federations have their own program which uses trained vets and stewards. The samples urine and blood can only be sent to FEI approved analytical laboratories. The results are sent to the FEI for consideration and any action if samples prove to be positive.

In European countries, Groups I and II, there is a central medication control programme (MCP) which is run from FEI headquarters (Fig 3). The collection of samples is undertaken by a team of 23 specifically trained Testing Veterinarians (TVs) from 15 countries. They attend all FEI

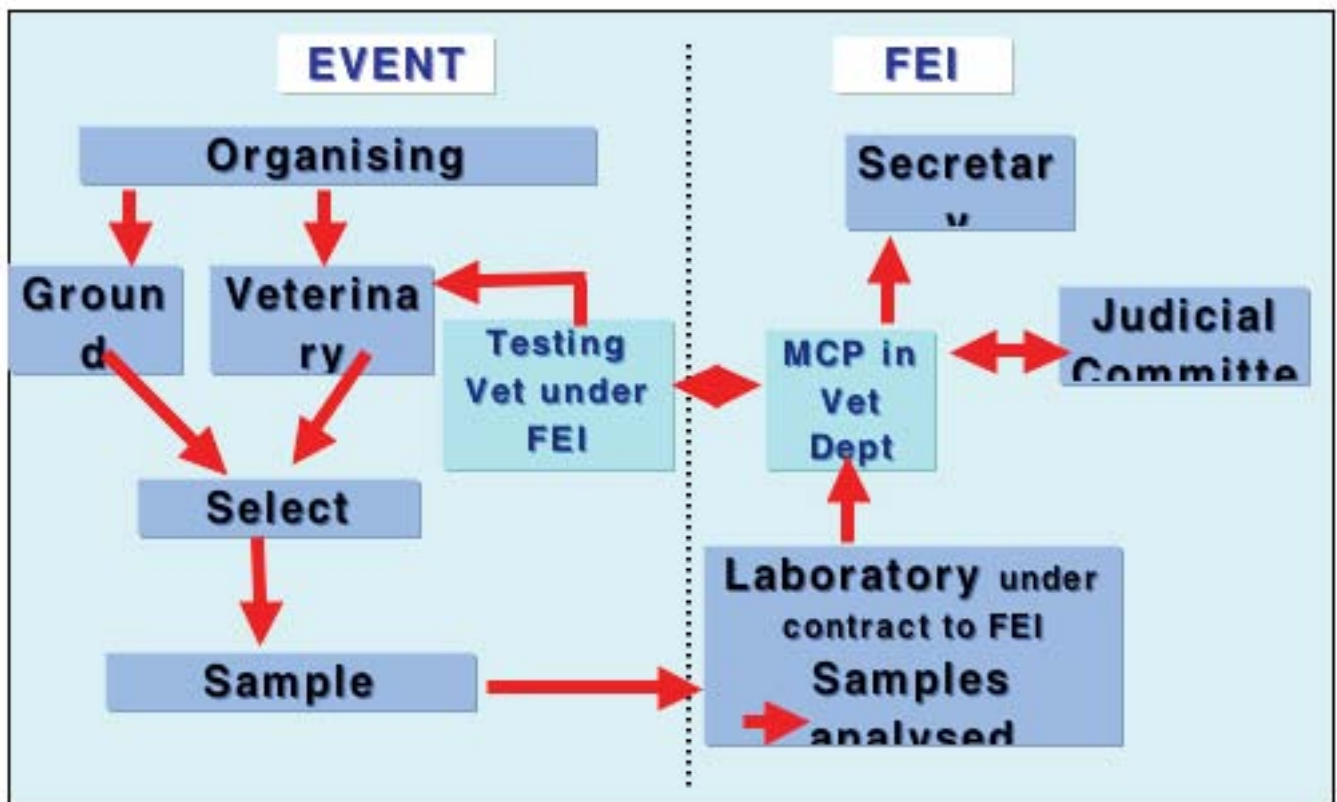


FIG 3 System for the FEI Medical Control Programme in Europe since 1990

competitions in the region for all or part of the event and collect the appropriate samples. These are submitted to the FEI analytical laboratory in Paris. The results are then sent to FEI headquarters. Positive results are referred to the Legal Department and the case is investigated with the collaboration of the Veterinary Department. Advice may be sought from the Medication Advisory Group (MAG). Their opinion is then considered by the Judicial Committee who decides what action and penalties should be imposed. The Veterinary Committee are not involved in this process at all.

The Veterinary Regulations, which were revised in June 2006, contain all the details of the procedures to follow for collection and handling of medication samples. A completely new set of rules, the Equine Anti-doping and Medication Control (EADMC) Rules have recently been created by the FEI Legal Department in an attempt to prevent medication violations that may affect performance of a horse or mask an underlying health problem. These have been drawn up in line with the World Anti-Doping Code and include a newly defined FEI Medication Code:

1. INTRODUCTION

A major part of the FEI Event Veterinarian's role is to act as an advisor to the officials and other veterinarians at an event. The prime function, of course, is to ensure the health and welfare of all horses competing in international events, and this will involve wide ranging and sometimes onerous duties. It is crucial that official veterinarians are experienced equine practitioners as well as being fully conversant with the discipline(s) at which they officiate. The official veterinarian is a professional and is usually giving time without payment to assist the FEI and the Organising Committee. Nevertheless, it is an honour to be invited to be a Veterinary Delegate or a member of a Veterinary Commission and the position should never be accepted lightly. There is no doubt that efficient veterinary attendance at FEI events will improve the overall execution of the competition and considerably enhance the reputation of the profession.

It is the official veterinarian's duty to ensure that the FEI Veterinary Regulations are effectively implemented. However, this regulatory and advisory function must always be considered in the context of being facilitatory to the running of the event and not aimed at imposing unwarranted delays or unnecessary restrictions on competitors or their horses. Veterinary Delegates must always be available for advice to the competitors, team officials or the Organising Committee which is why it is important to have experience not only as an equine veterinarian, but also of running the competition itself. The high standard of competition that exists today places considerable stress on the competitors, Chefs d'Equipe and other team officials, but there is no excuse for rudeness or verbal abuse to official veterinarians from competitors. All instances of unnecessary rudeness must be reported to the Appeal Committee or the Ground Jury immediately.

2. OFFICIAL VETERINARIANS AT FEI EVENTS

Contact Veterinarian

Each National Federation in the FEI must appoint a Contact Veterinarian who heads the list of official FEI event veterinarians for that country. This appointment is usually made in consultation with the country's National Veterinary Authority. The Contact Veterinarian's main role is to act as a point of veterinary contact between the Federation and the FEI. They must be familiar with all the equestrian disciplines, keep up to date with national and international equine disease situations and know the current health requirements for the import and export of horses to and from their own country. Contact Veterinarians are kept abreast of veterinary issues in international equestrian sport by the FEI Veterinary Department. Another very important function of the Contact Veterinarian is to liaise with their Federation in the selection of veterinarians to be nominated to the FEI List of Event Veterinarians. This process of selection is carried out rather differently by National Federations, but in all cases the list must be reviewed and updated every two years.

Event Veterinarian

In order to accept an invitation to act as an official event veterinarian at any international competition you must first be formally recognised by the FEI. The veterinarian must satisfy the National Federation that they are sufficiently experienced in equine work and have assisted at a number of previous events. It is also helpful to have attended an official FEI Veterinary Course for event veterinarians (and an essential requirement for some Federations). There is an age limit of 70 years imposed which is in line with other disciplines in the FEI. The National Federations submit their lists of event veterinarians to represent them in one or more disciplines for the ensuing two years. These lists are finally approved by the FEI Veterinary Committee.

A list of the veterinarians likely to be participating at international equestrian events includes:

Veterinary Delegate

All international competitions (CIs) must have at least one veterinarian to act as Veterinary Delegate and be responsible for implementing the Veterinary Regulations. The Veterinary Delegate will be involved with the organisation of the event and the overall supervision of the veterinary facilities. At the end of each competition a report has to be submitted to the FEI Veterinary Department within 15 days of the event.

Associate Veterinary Delegate

It is possible to appoint an additional veterinarian if this is deemed to be necessary (or Associate Veterinary Delegate) to assist the Veterinary Delegate at some competitions (e.g. Championships, CIOs or events with large numbers of entries).