

**RUMOURS OF 'DOPING' IN EVENTING –
A response from the FEI Veterinary Committee.**

- 1. There have been a number of disturbing rumours in the media recently, suggesting that event horses are being 'doped' during the dressage test with a mild short acting calming agent to improve their performance.**

- 2. The Veterinary Committee of the FEI has been aware of these rumours since July 2003. It has taken steps to investigate these allegations, but as yet has no positive proof that any such drugs are being used.**

- 3. The steps undertaken by the Veterinary Committee include:**
 - alerting the Bureau (the main policy Committee for the FEI that meets twice a year) to the seriousness of these rumours;**
 - increasing the level of testing at high profile events;**
 - taking advice from the FEI Medication Subcommittee on what sort of agents might be being used;**
 - ensuring that the specific categories of drugs likely to cause these effects can be detected by the FEI analytical laboratories;**
 - instigating various avenues of research in an attempt to pursue further awareness of investigation;**
 - continuing a programme of heightened vigilance in association with the Eventing Committee over the next few months.**

- 4. The Veterinary Committee is determined to establish the truth behind these rumours that could so seriously tarnish the sport of Eventing.**

- 5. Some facts about medication control in the FEI.**

SAMPLING - up to 2000 samples are collected per year for testing; about 1300 of these are from Europe (FEI Groups 1 and 2) and the remainder from events in the rest of the world. Blood and urine samples are collected by an experienced vet who follows a careful protocol to ensure that no tampering of the samples can occur.

LABORATORY ANALYSIS - the samples are sent to an FEI approved laboratory, which is experienced in dealing with horse material. The laboratory then reports the result directly and confidentially to the FEI Veterinary Department in Lausanne.

Positive samples - these are reported to the FEI Legal Department and an opinion as to the type of drug and whether it is on the Prohibited Substance list is sought from the Medication Sub-committee.

DECISION MAKING – all the information on positive samples is passed to the Judicial Committee who then decide on the outcome of the case and what sanction should be imposed. The outcome of their discussions are regularly reported in the FEI Bulletin. The judgements and sanctions are carefully considered, based on legal principles, and involve an appeal process should this be necessary.

RESULTS - From the 2000 samples examined each year the positive rate is approximately 3%, most of which (85%) are due to pain killing and sedative drugs. About 70% of samples are taken from Jumping horses and so

proportionately the highest number of positives come from that discipline; 7% are taken from Dressage and Eventing competitions with 4% from Endurance; the rest come from Driving, Vaulting and Reining.

EVENTING – There has been no demonstrable increase in the positive rate in any discipline, including Eventing, over the last 12 months nor in the types of positives detected.

The medication control programme in the FEI is kept as transparent as possible and the results disseminated widely within the FEI and its participating disciplines. The programme (as the Press Release indicated) is constantly under review. Its ultimate aim is to protect the reputation of equestrian competition as a clean sport. More information about the FEI's medication policy can be found on the FEI website www.horsesport.org

Contacts

Professor Leo Jeffcott, Chairman of the FEI Veterinary Committee,
Tel: +44 223 337 664 Email: lbj1000@cam.ac.uk

Dr A Higgins, Chairman of the Medication Sub Committee
Tel: +44 7768 461714 Email: ajhvet@globalnet.co.uk

Dr F Sluyter, Head of the FEI Veterinary Department, Lausanne
Tel: +41 21 310 47 47 Email: f.sluyter@horsesport.org