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Comment

HORSE-HOUND

Outstanding WEG success



Lucy Higginson
Editor, *Horse & Hound*

ANOTHER World Equestrian Games (WEG) is over and the post-games analysis begins. By all accounts America hosted a brilliant event — even after scribing 30,000 words and innumerable early starts, our staff reporters are sorry to be leaving. Britain enjoyed outstanding success —

three silvers, yes three, in dressage; gold for our eventing team; individual gold for vaulting, and seven more golds in parade dressage.

So why has it been so hard to keep abreast of all this in the British media? The Beeb's red button service was good — but not recordable nor downloadable for those of us with jobs, children or horses. As for the newspapers, I am proud to say *H&H* readers have already taken them to task (see letters, p12). Next week we find out what it will take to get equestrianism covered better in future.

“Readers have already taken the papers to task over WEG coverage”

At home, the Horse of the Year Show produced brilliant stories. How exciting it is to see young Brits like Laura Renwick, Nicky Boulter and Dan Neilson on cracking young horses like Oz De Breve, Super Trouper De Ness and Chauvinist. I hope their owners continue to stay loyal to such jockeys so that future British showjumping teams might bring home medals too.

And the curse of the *H&H* front cover (poor Tina Fletcher was off the team before our WEG preview issue hit the newsstands) became a charm for our HOYS preview cover models. Ellen Whitaker won four classes, Dan Neilson won two, and as for Katie Jerram — I doubt she's stopped grinning yet.



Researchers found a traditional measuring stick less consistent than a laser

Showing

Height unaffected by condition says study

COULD new research change the way horses are measured?

A study by Liverpool Vet School casts doubt on the accuracy of current official measurement practices, but suggests ways to make results more reliable.

The study also puts to bed a few old wives' tales — like the suggestion that animals in show condition measure taller.

The research recommends 20 minutes' relaxation time on the pad before measurement, that horses are measured from the left and that lasers may be more accurate than sticks.

However, the researchers concluded: “True height to the exact millimetre may remain an unobtainable concept.”

The project was funded by the Joint Measurement Board (JMB), which oversees measuring certificates for showing and pony racing

and jumping in the UK.

JMB boss Howard Robinson said: “The research validates the current system, but there are aspects that may need to be tightened up, including the time horses spend on the measuring pad and the sticks themselves.”

Sixty horses and ponies, from 115-155cm and in moderate to obese condition, were measured with a standard stick, a laser device and a modified measuring stick — with a second arm to ensure it stayed straight. The measuring stick and modified stick consistently measured about

1cm lower than the laser device.

Measuring a horse from the left side produced the most consistent result — because horses and handlers are more accustomed to this.

By measuring the depth of soft tissue at the withers, researchers also found that a horse's condition makes no difference to his height.

One of the vets involved in the research, Dr Caroline Argo told *H&H*: “It's not often we see such proactivity, the JMB deserves a pat on the back.”

The 11 societies that comprise the JMB were deciding what to do with the findings at a meeting on Monday (11 October) as *H&H* went to press.

Showing producer Louise Bell said: “Until we have annual measurement for all, or measurement at each competition, we are not going to stop overheight horses in showing classes.”

Some aspects of the current system may need tightening

Howard Robinson
Joint Measurement Board

The Week Ahead

Send details of your event to weekahead@ipcmedia.com

Friday, Gloucestershire

Top National Hunt jockey Ruby Walsh launches his autobiography, *Ruby*, at the Cheltenham Literature Festival



Saturday, Surrey

The Surrey Union hosts a meet as part of Hunting's Newcomer's Week (16-23 October) at Puttenham, at 2.30pm. Visit www.surreyunionhunt.shutterstock.com

