



EFTBA Veterinary Newsletter 21



North Farm Stud / the home of HEROS

The retired racehorse part III

October 2016

. The retraining of ex-racehorses requires competence both in regard to handling the animals and advising new owners

. Aftercare must be funded and very many possibilities do exist

. The need for adequate solutions is recognized and promising prospects are initiated

Welcome to EFTBA's veterinary newsletter

Dear EFTBA members,

I invite you to enjoy the third part of the EFTBA Newsletter dedicated to the retired racehorse. As the "producers" of racehorses, the breeders must endorse a responsibility towards retirement and aftercare of Thoroughbreds. The EFTBA Veterinary Committee and the EFTBA members countries have taken this subject as a priority of the coming months. We will welcome at the coming EFTBA November meeting the managers of the main retire-

ment programs with the aim of having a European common system for the second life of the Thoroughbreds in order to give them the second life they deserve.

With kind regards

Hubert Honoré

Chairman, EFTBA

"Many thanks to Mrs. Eva-Maria Bucher-Haefner, Moyglare Stud Farm, for her valued sponsorship of this newsletter."

Editorial

This newsletter contains the third and final part of our endeavors towards the care of the retired racehorse.

In the last issue, we highlighted possibilities for repurposing ex-racehorses and became familiar with different examples for second chances for them. But of course, their realization is ambitious and must be financed – just like any undertaking. There is a lot of excellent and comprehensive information on these subjects available, but here, only some examples from around

the world highlight such intentions, ideas and possibilities. However, they might at least serve to inform where to find more detailed and helpful literature.

Dr Hanspeter Meier

EFTBA veterinary advisor & Newsletter editor



**Free Eagle (IRE, 2011)
by High Chaparral – Polish Gem
bred & owned by Moyglare Stud**

Introduction

Competence is an indispensable requirement for persons repurposing ex-racehorses, both in regard to retraining the animal and to advising people who are interested in adopting an Off-Track Thoroughbred (OTTB).

In respect to the latter and for certain, no-one will question the wonderful intention of someone to provide an ex-racehorse with a loving, caring home. However, "but" is the next word that always follows and reminds us of the fact that racehorses in training are accustomed to an environment which is very different from the one in most show and pleasure barns. Usually, racehorses are accustomed to a strict routine, are often confined for most of their days, are working hard and fed a rich diet. Taking a horse straight from the track and putting him in a pasture can cause a variety of behavioral and health problems which can surprise well-intentioned new owners.

Of great importance is here also that ex-racehorses may interest people who are looking for a cheap horse. But actually, the first essential question to ask is ... Can I afford it? One must keep in mind that the cost of buying the horse is basically irrelevant, as it is a one off payment. But the real issue is a long term commitment and actually one must be able to financially provide and care for the horse; initial considerations as above have to be made and a financial plan has to be worked out. (RoR, Scollay et al., 2011).

These two most important subjects, competence in respect to understanding the racehorse and funding its aftercare, are the essence of this newsletter.

Competence

What's about the life of a racehorse?

For understanding Thoroughbreds off the tracks (au delà des pistes), one must be acquainted with the life of a racehorse. Most important is the knowledge about the methods of breaking in and riding gallopers, their typical daily routine, the life in a racing yard, feeding and what happens on race-days.

Racehorses normally have a busy life, as many foals will already have travelled with their dam to the next appointment within their first month. They can be prepared for and sold as foals and yearlings, as two-year-olds at a 'Breeze Up' sale or later at a 'Horses-in-Training' sale.

They are broken-in at around 18 months of age and will already have been well handled and used to

having a bit in their mouth. They will usually have been long-reined, lunged and led out in hand. They will also be used to wearing rugs, being shod and generally examined by a variety of people, been transported in company – and very many other things we ourselves are familiar with. Already as two-year-olds they probably have seen more in their short lives than the average horse sees in a lifetime.

But in retraining – details might pose problems, and as we all know, attention to those is a basic management skill. We therefore remember that a racehorse may never have been tied up outside the stable and therefore is likely to become anxious and fidgety when this happens. Or it is not used to stand still when the rider gets on, for the simple reason that lads, lasses and jockeys are more often than not legged up whilst the horse is walking. It also may not be accustomed to be ridden with long stirrups and legs draped around its sides – and last but not least - may never have been ridden out alone (RoR).

Missing out on such details in the daily routine may lead to accidents, although being very basic. It therefore must be our responsibility to make potential new owners familiar with our routine in handling racehorses. Otherwise, unnecessary accidents may happen or the horse be punished for something it simply isn't accustomed to and its confidence may be lost.

Transport

Generally, an ex-racehorse is good to load, but it is unlikely the horse will have been transported in a trailer and on its own before. Racehorses might have travelled more than the new owner - but in box stalls. Even a two horse trailer can look an alien concept to them, especially when it rattles when they try to get on. By being put into a small box they may feel like a sumo wrestler squeezed into a sardine can, especially if there doesn't seem to be much room for the head. At least seven feet of head room, rubber matting or shavings in a stock trailer to muffle the rattle and some good hay is all it usually takes to convince an OTTB to board (RoR, New vocations racehorse adaptation program).

The purchase

For finding a suitable horse, the first impression, the consultation of racing records and the examination of soundness, feet, conformation, balance, action, temperament and vices are recommended. The first impression is meant to be important and Cold-

rey and Coldrey (1997) are of the opinion that one shouldn't try to convince one-self of a horse's assets unless he pleases immediately.

For where to find a suitable horse, commercial sale houses are mentioned, together with the advice to be careful at auctions if one isn't experienced and doesn't know what to look for. Buying directly from a trainer is another option. Retraining/rehoming centers are a further and probably the best option, as such organizations normally are experienced and can offer already retrained horses. Above all one should choose a trustworthy person or institution.

Medical Problems

In this chapter, the most often occurring injuries and ailments of racehorses are mentioned: e.g. chips and fractures, arthritic changes, osselets, cartilage damage, tendon and ligament problems and exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage.

Ideally one wants a horse that was just too slow for the track but has nothing else wrong with it. But if one is considering a racehorse that was retired due to injury, it is important to think about the future athletic plans for the animal. For owners who are looking for a horse to function well in another athletically demanding sport, such as show jumping or eventing, a realistic chance for rehabilitation only can be expected with minor injuries.

Here one sees a wide breadth of problems and severities and one has to judge each horse and case individually and base it on what one wants to do with the animal in a secondary career.

In regard of the early and future management of the hopeful acquisition, the services of a qualified physiotherapist are an essential aspect, of course with the agreement of the vet who examined the horse.

The veterinary examination

The answer of the vet Laurie Metcalfe to the question "What do you consider to be the most important tests in a pre-purchase veterinary exam and why?" was: "**Number one is a complete, thorough physical exam**" (Salk 2011). She certainly is right, as this is the best, easiest available and cheapest diagnostic tool which can be loaded with valuable information. One has to look at the whole horse and she added: "*I have been told that you don't ever miss things because you don't know, you miss them because you didn't look. Also important while performing a physical exam is that it is an opportunity*

to judge a horse's personality, behavior and how they are responding."

In the same sense, Metcalfe also recommends the purchasers themselves to use all of their senses (e.g. look and listen) for judging a horse.

Grace Muir (HEROS) also recommends to always have a horse vetted, if ever possible by a vet who knows thoroughbred horses. Beside this, her rehoming organization prides itself on telling prospective new owners everything about a horse.

All the recommendations for vetting an ex-racehorse consider the fact that many people tend to think of what they spend on their pre-purchase exam in relation to the value of the horse. However, such reflections are penny-wise and pound-foolish (can also be expressed in cent and €, by the way). They try to save money because the horse is inexpensive and they have plans of turning these horses into show horses. But one has to make sure the raw material is there, otherwise any expenditure is a waste of money. If you're diligent, you'll save yourself heartache and money by making the right decision for you and the horse (Brown, 2010).

Turning out

Gratifyingly, an increasing number of racehorses in training do now get turned out. But this won't be for hours at a time, so all day turnout will also be a new experience for an OTTB. A 24/7 turnout therefore will only become achievable after having got accustomed to it, and in the early stages access to stabling is essential. It may also mean that kitting out the new charge with a waterproof turnout rug. This could also be a problem and alarm him as he has to adjust to the restrictions such rugs impose (RoR).

Advantageously, some owners and trainers nowadays like to give their horses a rest between seasons in any case and they go back to their owners' private stables to get away from the hurly-burly of a racing yard. If this has been the case with your horse, then so much the better for it to get habituated to be turned out also (Coldrey and Coldrey, 1997).

How long you leave him out depends on your timetable and the fact that you will probably want to have the job done before winter begins. A horse doesn't have a calendar and can't tell the difference between, say, three months or four, but the minimum time at complete rest should be six weeks (Coldrey and Coldrey, 1997).

In regard to socialization in the pasture, a horse must be sound enough to be turned out with others. One has to take care to introduce an ex-racehorse to his new friends across a fence for at least a few

days, until he has accepted them and they have welcomed him into the group. For horses that can be safely socialized with others, a period of turn-out in a social group is found to be particularly beneficial for horses that are nervous and apprehensive. Integrating these into a group often gives them some welcome relief from having to make all of their own decisions about what is and is not threatening to them, and they often gain self-confidence from participation in a natural herd environment (Clark).

In regard to security, please make sure that you take the smartness and curiosity of Thoroughbreds into account (Coldrey and Coldrey, 1997).

The Care / Grooming

Life for the horse in training is based on strict routine and regime. And whilst being used to a very active lifestyle with plenty going on in the yard, this doesn't necessarily equate to a noisy environment. Many yards still have a couple of hours complete peace and quiet in the afternoons to enable horses to rest (RoR). In this context we must especially pay attention to the findings of Lester et al. (2007) that having a radio on in the barn was correlated with an increase in ulcer risk (3.6-fold with talk, 2.8-fold with music). This insufferable bad habit simply does not show consideration for the sensitive hearing of horses.

The Thoroughbred is anyway sensitive and quick minded so is often more prone to exhibiting signs of stress than other equine breeds, particularly if boredom sets in. These horses can also more easily become flustered when they do not understand what is being asked of them (RoR).

Remember also that life in a racing yard is invariably busy and time is short, especially in the larger ones, so your new horse may not be used to receiving the huge amounts of affection you now wish to shower it with and may well actually shun you to start with. Don't take this personally - just give him time to adjust (RoR).

Normally, the day the horse leaves the training yard, its life is tipped upside down so that is when any behavioral or stress-related symptoms will kick in. So do give your new horse time to adjust to its new lifestyle (RoR).

Considering the strict regime in training stables, establishing also a routine is best practice for letting down an ex-racehorse in the new home. Horses crave routine and habituation is particularly important with these animals early on (e.g. feed at the same time daily, turnout in the same paddock, use the same stall) (RoR).

Feeding

According to the Kentucky Equine Research Staff (KER, 2006), racehorses must consume considerable calories daily and trainers and caretakers must often resort to inventive ways to load up horses with sufficient calories. But when horses leave the race-track, typical workloads will likely decline considerably, and with that should come a corresponding decrease in calories - and this is vital. Once they segue into a second career, horses rarely work hard enough to merit the calorie intakes and if they are left on the same high-calorie diets, problems might ensue most probably.

Feeding the retired racehorse is often a challenging proposition. The rules are not hard-and-fast and often require an inventive and flexible mind. Pasture is a welcome dietary diversion to most former racehorses. As with all horses, a gradual increase in the amount of turnout time is advisable.

If the grass is good and succulent, in the opinion of Coldrey & Coldrey (1997), there is probably no need to supplement at all. However, if it is poor and drought-stricken one will have to feed as well, because at the end of the rest period one wants a plump, contented animal to start the next phase (schooling).

Once the horse has adjusted to the new situation and has started into work, some adjustments to the diet may need to be made. Metabolism plays a significant role in fattening the retired racehorse. Thoroughbreds are often genetically programmed to inefficiently convert dietary energy to body fat, and therefore have a reputation for being hard keepers. The core of the diet should be high-quality forage, especially young, flush pasture. If the horse must be stalled or maintained in a barren run or lot for a portion of the day, nutritious dried forage, preferably long-stem hay, though hay cubes are perfectly acceptable provided the horse finds them palatable, should be offered at all times. Expect to use heaps of hay, and plainly stated, there's no such thing as too much hay, at least until the horse achieves the desired weight. Don't forget to keep clean water available to a horse that is eating dried forage, as this helps maintain proper digestive function (KER, 2006).

In winter, horses use a lot of feed just keeping warm, so in inclement weather horses that are turned out must be fed like fighting cocks - what costs (Coldrey & Coldrey, 1997).

If ever one doubts the feeding management, veterinarians and equine nutritionists can offer valuable nuggets of advice for those tackling the reconditioning of OTTBs (KER, 2006).

Funding

The necessity for funding the retirement of racehorses is a concomitant phenomenon and asked for solutions all along (Fig. 1). It is a demanding and often difficult subject and therefore, different possibilities have been tried and many opinions prevail. Some examples in the last five years are cited here, but their collection is neither complete nor final at all. They are just meant to give an idea of what can be done and are vicarious for many more similar and comparable ones.



Fig. 1 An example of funding in earlier years, where *"The organisers of these Flag Days should insist that riding school horses get a ration of oats. Many of these hacks are thoroughbreds and sold out of racing stables, who would receive 10 lbs. of oats per day under the Government Rationing Act for Racehorses. It is cruelty to let horses out for hire who only receive a diet of hay and grass. The proud rider or "Hacking Enthusiast", mounted on the ill-nourished thoroughbred hack in the illustration, is a common offender. If he were a horse lover he would refuse to ride the animal."*

Possibilities

Governmental Funding

Five years ago in Australia, Victorian Minister for Racing Denis Napthine delivered on the Coalition Government's election pledge to provide on-going funding in the amount of \$ 1m to "Living Legends" (Woodland Park's facility for retired champions). He described this as one of the most exciting tourism opportunities in the state and noted that "Living

Legends" already attracts 40,000 visitors each year and this funding will bring even more people to this hidden tourist gem (right next door to Melbourne Airport) (breedingracing.com 21.06.2011).

Funding mechanisms attached to betting handle

In 2011, owner and breeder Gary Bizantz, a former president of TOBA and the primary benefactor of California's Tranquility Farm, wrote a commentary for *The Blood-Horse*: "The Thoroughbred industry for many years has overlooked aftercare of these great athletes we watch and that bring us great excitement and thrills, and when many of these fine horses can no longer perform, they are often treated like objects to be quickly discarded". He challenged racing's leaders and contended that until there is a codified funding mechanism attached to betting handle – handle generated by the very horses whose interests need to be served – there never will be a secure and lasting program in place. "Takeout on wagering handle as extracted by the tracks and uncashed parimutuel tickets give us numerous opportunities to take a very small percentage of these funds and place them in escrow accounts," Bizantz went on. "At year's end these funds could be distributed to accredited retirement and rehabilitation farms all over the U.S. that want to take care of the horse and desperately need funding" (Hovdey, 2012).

Voluntary donations

In 2011, The U.S. Jockey Club was confronted with a plan of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), with their "Thoroughbred 360 Lifecycle Retirement Fund". This proposal would have required a mandatory \$360 retirement fee with every foal registration, a \$360 fee for every transfer of ownership, and a \$360 fee for each stallion and broodmare registration. The amount of all these fees would have supported the retirement of the annual ex-racehorse-population. This was a reaction to the Jockey Clubs "Retirement Checkoff Program", where a voluntary donation could be made when owners submitted required registration papers. In 2010 this program generated only \$43'000 from 30'000 foal registrations (a paltry \$1.43 per horse). In the opinion of PETA, Thoroughbred retirement is a racing industry obligation, not a voluntary donation (Kathy Guillermo, Bellingham, WA Herald, May 03, 2011).

Donations by the Jockey Club and other TB groups

According to a report in the Blood-Horse, the official registrar of the thoroughbred breed in North America was raising fees by \$25 for nearly all registry-related transactions in 2013, including foal registration, naming, and import and export applications to help pay for care of retired racehorses (BH, Gregory A.Hall, October 11, 2012).

Support by the industry

In the same issue of the Blood Horse (BH, Oct. 11, 2012) was reported that farms and industry groups decided to support the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (TAA). Several industry groups, including 13 prominent breeding farms in Kentucky, developed plans to provide funds beginning in 2013 to support the TAA's mission to accredit and raise funds for Thoroughbred aftercare facilities. They pledged 25% of their stallions' advertised 2013 stud fee to the TAA.

In coordination with The Jockey Club of Canada, funds raised from Canadian customers of The Jockey Club were directed to Canadian Thoroughbred aftercare organizations to supplement their activities. The Jockey Club did also contribute \$300,000 in 2013 to the TAA from its commercial companies.

Two racetracks owned by the Stronach Group, the Keeneland Association, Fasig-Tipton, Barretts Equine Limited, California Retirement Management Account (CARMA), and Ocala Breeders' Sales Company (OBS) did also join the farms in supporting the aftercare organization.

Moreover, the TAA received seed money from Breeders' Cup, Ltd. and some of those funds were used for initial site inspections and accreditations planned for the last few months of 2012.

Some sales companies, beginning with the 2013 sales calendar, did enable buyers and consignors to automatically contribute .05% of their respective purchases or gross sales directly to the TAA. The companies did contribute an additional .05% from their gross sales receipts as well. Boyd Browning, president of Fasig-Tipton said: "We feel that establishing an automatic mechanism by which to fund aftercare is both the right thing to do and the only way to do it right" (BH Staff, Industry Group to Support Aftercare).

Automatic Donations by Racetracks

In 2015, the New York Racing Association announced it will donate \$5 per start at its three tracks to the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (Teresa Genaro, Bloodhorse.com/daily, 2 September, p. 7).

Donation by the racing press (betting challenge)

In 2014, *Daily Racing Form* donated \$ 61,000 to the TAA, the proceeds from its handicapper Matt Bernier's 6th-place finish in the Breeders' Cup Betting Challenge.

Donation by Blood-Horse Daily doing a survey

At the beginning of this year, Blood-Horse Daily made the assistance in answering surveys more attractive with the promise to donate \$1 to TAA for every completed questionnaire.

Charity Christmas Cards & Calendar

A further initiative last year was the offer of cards and a calendar from the British "Homing Ex-Racehorses Organization Scheme" (HEROS) – one of the partners of RoR, the very well organized British System "Retraining of Racehorses". And by the way: In 2015, HEROS was awarded The British Horse Society Welfare Award for excellent service in the cause of equine welfare.

(www.heroscharity.org)

Moneighs®

The word "Moneigh®" comes from combining the name of the famous artist *Monet*, and the sound that a horse makes, a neigh. Moneighs are pieces of artwork created by horses using their muzzle, tail and hooves (Fig. 2 & 3). This undertaking was already started in 2002 by Lori Nagle and Shon Wylie, to raise money for their aftercare organizations "ReRun" and "After the Finish Line".

(www.rerunottb.com/moneighs)



Fig. 2 American Pharoah's Moneigh creation

By now this has become a most recognizable and creative fundraising idea and more than 200 origi-

nal works of art have been created over the years, with originals bringing hundreds, if not thousands, at auction. In 2015 alone, the Moneigh series has raised more than \$52,000 (Roytz, 2015).

(Prints are sold on eBay.

<http://stores.ebay.com/The-ReRun-Shop>)

Moneighs painted by **Metro Meteor**

A very special type of Moneighs is created by the former stakes-placed *Metro Meteor* and his master Ron Krajewski, a Gulf War veteran. These two found one another and each helped the other find their purpose in life.

Metro Meteor, who rather than being ridden in his second career, creates vibrant works of art with the help of his owner.

Money brought in from his paintings - roughly \$ 80,000 to date - has gone to helping others like *Metro* find productive post-racing careers at New Vocations Racehorse Adoption (Roytz, 2016).

Krajewski penned a book about his relationship with his OTTB, titled "*Painting with Metro: How a Crippled Racehorse Rescued Himself (and Me) with a Paintbrush*" (www.paintedbymetro.com).



Fig. 3 *Metro Meteor* in his second career

Reaching two goals at once

Further on, the cooperation of *Metro Meteor* with his master reminds us also of the very special activities of the U.S. Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF) (Shea 2016). This institution has about 1'000 horses in its care and many of them are playing a major role in the rehabilitation of offenders in prisons and juvenile justice facilities. Already in 1984 at New York's Walkill correctional facility, a program called "Second Chances" was started and has now grown to facilities in nine states. This program provides vocational training in horsemanship skills to inmates while giving retired racehorses a

home. Landing a job after getting out of prison is one thing, but it's quite an accomplishment to just stay on the outside. A report by Davis et al. (2013) revealed that inmates who participated in correctional educative programs had 43% lower odds of recidivism than prisoners who did not. Beside this, with graduates of "Second Chances", the employment rate after release is 13% higher. During the 16 years that the program has been in place at Lowell, more than 120 women have graduated and only three have returned to prison (2.5%) (Davis et al., 2013). Obviously, two goals at once are very well reached here.

Contributions by industry-partners

In the business of advertising, positive and delightful messages are best received by customers. Therefore, any contribution to improving problematic situations and showing empathy and goodwill are very welcome. The pharma-industry uses these mechanisms diligently and easily finds every week a chance to publish an "Aftercare Spotlight" (s. Paulick Reports). It may be just anything in relation to ex-racehorses, e.g. a report on equestrian competition venues with OTTBs or a reference for a farm-to-table dinner at a beautiful setting for fundraising. In this way, the awareness is kept alive in a positive way and may even protect from compassion fatigue.

Events

- The British Thoroughbred Retraining Centre is already celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and wants to mark this remarkable feat. A unique challenge has been launched to raise £ 100'000 by riding around the equivalent of Britain's coastline. Riders from the length and breadth of Britain are invited to take part to tally up 7'723 miles - the distance around Britain's coastline. To take part, riders are asked to donate £ 10 and all money will go towards building a further 40 stables at the Centre in Lancashire (www.britishtrc.co.uk).

- Philanthropic high school students in Virginia recently donated \$14,000 to help the horses and inmates at the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation's (TRF) James River facility. Following months of fundraising, the drive culminated in a 27-hour Deep Run Marathon Dance, which raised funds for 12 charities, including the TRF. Students were so impressed by the work the TRF does to help prison inmates and horses through its unique Second Chances program, that they presented the charity with a check to purchase a four-wheel-drive vehicle needed to maintain the farm (Salk, 2016).

And what looks the future like ?

Finally, this issue of our newsletters got much more voluminous than intended and expected, though the author only superficially cited few subjects and examples. There would still be much more to say – but actually, this incompleteness can be looked at with gladness. There obviously is quite some momentum in all these endeavors and a widely spread goodwill is well recognizable. In these days, our industry obviously agrees generally that aftercare for racehorses isn't an afterthought any longer.

This positive impression is also proven by recent activities, as for instance that aftercare has been discussed in other important organizations. There is for instance the "International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses" which informed in August that an international aftercare conference will be staged in October 2017 (LaMarra, 2016). On the other side, at the 50th conference of the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) in Paris at the begin of this month, James L. Gagliano (president North American Jockey Club) moderated a panel titled "Providing Aftercare Solutions at a Global Level" (Anon., 2016).

New International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses

A new International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses (IFAR) will bring together the official and national operations based around the world that facilitate and promote the retraining of racehorses. It has been formally unveiled at the three-day conference "Lifetime Care for Thoroughbreds: Godolphin Forum" in Newmarket (UK) this summer.

This International Forum will include representatives from Australia, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Japan and the United States and will enable experiences to be shared, for best practices to be adopted and for advice to be given to all racing jurisdictions regarding caring for and the retraining of former racehorses.

IFAR will work alongside the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) and act as an assembly for discussion, recognising geographical and industry differences, to help take racing aftercare to a new level all around the world. Paul Roy, Chairman of the British Retraining of Racehorses (RoR), said: "RoR has developed into a vehicle for the practical retraining of horses for different disciplines and works to pursue this proactive approach with benefit of consulting like-minded international bodies while recognising cultural differences across the globe. IFAR is a natural next step in our journey."

Diana Cooper, Strategic Advisor, Charities at Godolphin, said: "As one of the largest racing stables and breeding operations in the world, Godolphin works tirelessly to take the lead in both the lifetime care of horses and aims to have a positive long-lasting impact on the industry and racing communities worldwide. We want to continue on this journey and we look forward to supporting IFAR when it hosts its first international conference in October 2017" (LaMarra, 2016).

Providing Aftercare Solutions At A Global Level...

At the annual conference of the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) at the beginning of this month in Paris, Jim Gagliano chaired a forum entitled "Providing Aftercare Solutions at a Global Level." He introduced the session by highlighting some of the recent developments made in aftercare globally, and noted the relevance of programs such as mentioned above and further efforts.

The first to speak on the panel was Roly Owers, chief executive of World Horse Welfare, the UK's largest rescue and rehoming charity that works across four continents. Owers stressed the importance of responsible ownership, including responsible end-of-life decisions. He said responsible selling and re-homing is part of responsible ownership and mentioned that it is important to consider when euthanasia is more humane, a concept that can be a difficult one across nations with different ethics. "When Thoroughbreds are in training and racing, they're surrounded by the best care in the world. When they move to their second careers, we need to consider whether they will receive such basic things as good farriery," he said.

Jamie Stier, Director of Raceday Operations for the BHA and Chairman of the Horse Welfare Committee, followed to discuss global best practices in aftercare. He said. "Whether we accept it or not, society places expectation upon us. It shouldn't be lost on anyone the significance welfare is playing in our sport these days, and the fact the IFHA have seen fit to have this as a significant topic on their 50th anniversary conference, that in itself says where we are going with it."

Stier called for enhanced data to follow horses at each stage of a horses' life, which also highlights the need for improved traceability of ex-racehorses. "Without our statistics, we are leaving ourselves open to challenges. They might not always tell a comfortable story but we must be aware of them so we know areas we need to address, where we should be putting our resources, what research

needs to be done and they will enable us, hopefully, to devise a standard to provide optimum care to a horse after its racing career" (Anon., 2016; Riley, 2016).

**There it is –
All it takes is the will to make it happen**

(Hovdey, 2012)

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