

Contents

NZREF Chairman Dr Tim Pearce wins 2023 NZEVA Brian Goulden Prize!	1
Research update: Aerobic uterine bacterial isolates from mares with post-partum metritis and their resistance to antimicrobials in New Zealand - Dr Babiche Heil	2
A simplified approach to frozen semen insemination in mares - Dr Lee Morris	3
NZREF Video Library	3
NZREF Vet-Farrier Scholarship Report - Dr Petra Hazlitt and Ryan Lim	4
NZREF Scholarships and Grants	4
NZREF Vet-Farrier Scholarship Report - Dr Katie Grant	5
Equifest Taupō 13 - 15 October 2023	5
NZ Equine Health Association Update - Dr Ivan Bridge	6
Resignation of Board Member Justine Sclater	6
NZREF Scholarship Recipients - Hannah Airey - Dr Rochelle Kerr and Dr Hannah Burrows - Dr Lee Morris	7
Chairman's Corner	8
Contact Information	8
Acknowledgements	8

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NZERF Chairman Dr Tim Pearce wins 2023 NZEVA Brian Goulden Prize!

The Brian Goulden Prize is the NZ Equine Veterinary Association's highest honour, awarded annually to an outstanding NZ Equine Veterinarian. It gave the NZEVA great pleasure to award the 2023 Brian Goulden Prize to long-serving NZERF Board member and current NZERF Chairman Dr Tim Pearce.

Tim has been an equine veterinarian for 40 years, working at Southern Rangitikei Veterinary Services since graduating. During his career Tim has served the NZ equine industry not only as an outstanding veterinarian, but by serving on the committees of a number of organisations that promote equine health and wellbeing.

An NZEVA member his entire professional life, Tim served on the NZEVA committee for 16 years, culminating in a 3-year term as President.

Tim is passionate about improving equine health and welfare through scientific research, and has been on the board of the NZERF for 27 year, 6 years as Vice Chairman the last 5 year as Chairman. He has also been a Board member of the NZ Equine Trust for 10 years. Tim's role in both of these organisations require him to wade through many pages of research proposals, secure research funding and do a huge amount of legwork, including organising travelling lecture series, manning Equifest stands, coordinating committee meetings and providing material for the NZERF bulletin - all while working full time as an equine practitioner as well.

As well as serving on committees, Tim has always had a broad interest in equestrian sports. Throughout his vet career he has produced and competed showjumpers, enjoying success at World Cup level for 20 years. This inevitably led to his taking on the role of Official Veterinarian and Chef d'Equip for the NZ showjumping team at the Barcelona, Sydney and Beijing Olympic Games. He was also a showjumping selector for Equestrian Sport NZ.

Congratulations Tim for winning this well-deserved prestigious award!



Drs Trish & Tim Pearce



Rodmor Charitable Trust

Research update: Aerobic uterine bacterial isolates from mares with post-partum metritis and their resistance to antimicrobials in New Zealand

Dr Babiche Heil, Washington State University (previously at Matamata Veterinary Services)

Metritis refers to inflammation of the entire uterus (uterine lumen as well as the uterine wall). It is a common disease in the early post-partum mare and often occurs as a result of dystocia and/or retained foetal membranes. However, the disease can also occur after abortion, uterine trauma, uterine inertia or a seemingly normal foaling under unhygienic conditions. In the immediate post-partum period the equine uterus is capable of significant involution and expulsion of foetal membranes and fluid (lochia). If uterine involution is delayed the lochia and cellular debris present provide an excellent environment for bacterial growth. Translocation of these bacteria and their endotoxins into the systemic circulation can not only have a negative impact on future fertility, but can lead to severe life-threatening complications such as endotoxemia and laminitis.

Post-partum metritis often becomes apparent within 2-4 days (range 1-10) of foaling. It is accepted that mixed bacterial infections are common, with *Streptococcus* spp, *Escherichia coli*, and the anaerobes *Bacteroides fragilis* and *Clostridium* spp. frequently found. In a more recent study from the USA, *E. coli*, *Klebsiella* spp., *Enterobacter* spp., *Streptococcus* spp., *Enterococcus* spp., *Citrobacter* spp. and

Staphylococcus spp. were the most common pathogens identified. Various treatments have been advocated and systemic treatment of the mare with broad-spectrum antibiotic and anti-inflammatory drugs is common practice.

To help prevent the development of laminitis, systemic and local antibiotic therapy is often combined. Despite being indicated, uterine cultures are rarely obtained from mares with metritis and therefore antibiotic selection is often empirical with a broad-spectrum target (penicillin and gentamicin or trimethoprim/sulfonamide systemically combined with intra-uterine penicillin and gentamicin). Limited data is available on which antibiotics are most effective; however, it is known that after systemic administration, ceftiofur does not achieve bacteriocidal activity against *Streptococcus zooepidemicus* nor does it inhibit growth of a clinical *E. coli* isolate in the uterus. One report from the University of Georgia, USA, shows that a mixed bacterial growth is more common (62.2%) than a pure growth. The empirically selected antibiotic combination of trimethoprim/sulfonamide or penicillin and gentamicin was only effective in 48.8 and 65.1% of the mares in this study respectively [1].

Antimicrobial resistance is a growing concern in

both human and veterinary medicine and poses a risk to public health. Knowledge of commonly encountered bacteria in the country and region the mare resides in, and their antimicrobial sensitivity patterns, should improve treatment efficacy and lead to more appropriate use of antimicrobials. Unfortunately this information is lacking, making it difficult to practise evidence-based equine reproductive medicine.

Having knowledge of the most common bacterial isolates involved in equine post foaling metritis in New Zealand and their sensitivity patterns to antimicrobials will allow practitioners to make better antimicrobial choices and see fewer mares suffer from life threatening complications.

The aim of the study is to report aerobic bacterial isolates found in uterine fluid from mares with post-partum metritis in New Zealand and document their resistance to antimicrobials. This is a multi-centre prospective study, with experienced equine veterinarians from multiple large equine veterinary practices around the country (2x Auckland, 3x Waikato, 3x Canterbury, 1x Southland) assisting in the collection of samples from clinical cases.

Mares presented at the participating veterinary practices during the 2022- 2023 equine stud season with post-partum metritis will be included. After diagnosing post-partum metritis a sterile sample will be taken from inside of the uterus and submitted to an approved veterinary laboratory for culture, identification and antibiotic sensitivity testing.

The identity of the microbes present, the percentage of isolates classified as susceptible to each antimicrobial and the relative frequency of antibiotic susceptibility in different bacterial groups will be analysed statistically.

The results of the study will be published in peer-reviewed and veterinary journals. Where possible we also aim to present the results at relevant veterinary conferences and in non-veterinary industry specific communications.

[1] Ferrer MS, Palomares R. Aerobic uterine isolates and antimicrobial susceptibility in mares with post-partum metritis. *Equine Veterinary Journal* 50(2018) pp 202-207.



Left: Dr Babiche Heil

A simplified approach to frozen semen insemination in mares

Dr Lee Morris, Equibreed NZ

Insemination of mares with frozen semen typically requires intensive reproductive management and the logistics involved in storage and distribution of frozen semen is expensive. In a 2003 paper Sieme et al reported that a single insemination with 800 million frozen-thawed spermatozoa within 12 hours of ovulation produced a per cycle pregnancy rate of 44.7% (55/123). Morris et al (2003) then showed that high pregnancy rates are achievable when mares are inseminated 32h after human Chorionic Gonadotrophin (hCG) administration with lower semen doses containing 14 million frozen-thawed spermatozoa either conventionally (67% in foal) or hysteroscopically (64% in foal). In this same study, when the insemination dose was reduced to 3 million frozen-thawed spermatozoa, hysteroscopic insemination produced better results (47% in foal) than conventional insemination (15% in foal). New developments in storage of fresh stallion spermatozoa at room temperature (Clulow and Gibb, 2022) also provide opportunities for improving the longevity of frozen-thawed spermatozoa, reducing the cost of shipping frozen semen and simplifying the insemination protocol. The objective of this study was to determine if satisfactory conception rates can be achieved if frozen semen is thawed, stored for 6, 16 or 24h in a modified SpermSafe™ diluent at 17°C and mares are inseminated at a fixed time (40h) after induction of ovulation with a Gonadotropin hormone-releasing hormone (GnRH) agonist (BioRelease® Deslorelin).

The fertility of frozen-thawed semen from three commercial stallions was evaluated after insemination of mares at various intervals from 6 – 24h after thawing. Semen was thawed at 37°C and the insemination dose was processed to select a viable subpopulation of spermatozoa suspended in a modified SpermSafe™ diluent and stored at 17°C until insemination. Forty hours after inducing ovulation with BioRelease® Deslorelin, a 1ml semen dose containing 3 million spermatozoa was deposited using deep horn insemination on the same side as the ovulating ovary. Embryo recovery was performed at 8 days after ovulation.

The overall conception rate using this technique was 51.3%. Conception rates at different time intervals after semen thawing ranged from 22% to 73%.

The study confirms that storage of thawed stallion semen in modified SpermSafe™ at 17°C will produce satisfactory conception rates after low dose, deep uterine insemination 40 hours after inducing ovulation with BioRelease® Deslorelin. Implementation of this insemination protocol will reduce the cost of frozen semen management without compromising fertility.

This study was funded by NZ Equine Research Foundation.

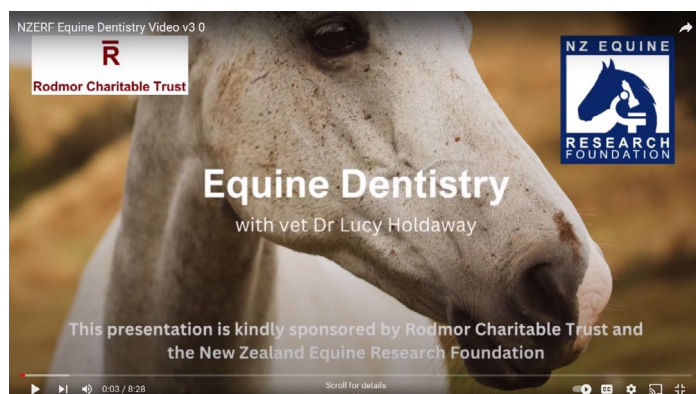
NZERF Video Library

Two new videos have very recently been added to the NZERF Video Library and are available free from the Foundation's official YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@nzerf5754>.

Equine Dentistry with Dr Lucy Holdaway

Throughout a horse's life many changes occur within its mouth, just as they do for humans. Because the oral cavity is generally inaccessible it is important to put a management plan in place with a trained expert to maintain your horse's oral health.

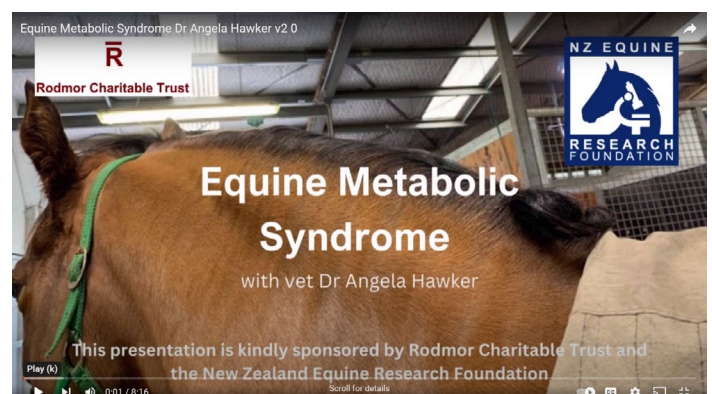
In this video, Dr Lucy Holdaway covers the basics of equine dentistry to give you a better understanding of what optimum oral health entails and how you can achieve this for your horse.



Equine Metabolic Syndrome with Dr Angela Hawker

Equine Metabolic Syndrome, also referred to as EMS, is a relatively common issue seen by equine veterinarians. Because there are so many elements to this syndrome it can present in a number of different ways.

Dr Angela Hawker helps us understand the basics of EMS, what to look out for and how the condition can be managed. Thanks to Tiny Pony for helping us with this video!



Other videos available on the NZERF YouTube site are:

- Learn about Strangles – presented by Dr Paul Fraser
- Gastric Ulcers – presented by Professor Ben Sykes
- Laminitis – presented by Dr Paul Fraser
- Equine Parasites: Deworming less? – presented by Dr Martin Nielsen

All videos are intended for a lay audience and should be of interest to all horse owners.

NZERF appreciates the time and effort all the presenters have put into their presentations and wishes to thank the Rodmor Charitable Trust for supporting the establishment of the Video Library.

NZERF Vet-Farrier Scholarship Report

Dr Petra Hazlitt, Auckland Veterinary Centre, and Ryan Lim, Lim Farrier Services

To the NZERF, NZEVA & NZFA, thank you for the generous contribution towards us attending the Vet PD Foot Lameness and Podiatry lectures and wet lab run in connection with the NZEVA Conference in June 2022.



Dr Petra Hazlitt and farrier Ryan Lim

It was a great opportunity to learn tricks and opinions from international speakers like Steve O'Grady and Andrew Parkes. It helped us understand the aetiology behind medial-lateral hoof imbalance and gave us some options for trying to save the digital cushion in the low heel, long toe pandemic. The most surprising treatment was leaving the horse barefoot to allow the heel to grow back, which makes sense but almost seems counterintuitive at a vet/farrier workshop.

The endocrine talks from Andrew Van Eps were also very interesting. We have already utilised glucose tolerance tests on laminitic cases and understand the importance of doing these to determine the underlying causes for the laminitis. Unfortunately, some of the latest pharmaceutical options for treating these cases such as velagliflozin and ertugliflozin are not licenced in NZ. Getting levothyroxine powder compounded here is also cost prohibitive, making it hard to trial some of these recommendations. For now we are stuck with metformin which Dr Van Eps' studies have shown only helps in 1 in 8 cases!

The practical sessions were fun, and we especially enjoyed learning how to apply

wooden or plastic clogs. Ultimately the most valuable aspect of the course was the development of communications and a collegial network between the vets and the farriers, all working alongside and learning from each other. This has already had a flow-on effect with Ryan and myself running a lower limb dissection course for apprentice farriers in the upper North Island. We hope to run a second course on imaging of the foot in the future.

It has been game changing getting to know all the farriers better and realising what knowledge we have to offer each other. I have no doubt that our equine patients will benefit significantly from this collaboration going forward.



Participants in the VetPD foot Lameness and Podiatry wet lab at the 2022 NZEVA Conference

New Zealand Equine Research Foundation Scholarships and Grants

Valachi Downs Young Achiever Award

\$15,000 available annually to assist an individual under the age of 35 in their career in the equine industry

www.nzerf.co.nz/valachidownsyoungeachiever

Closes 31st January annually

Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarship

\$10,000 available annually to help a "young at heart" New Zealand-based veterinarian gain practical skills that will be valuable in supporting his or her work within the NZ horse industry.

www.nzerf.co.nz/hope_scholarship

Closes 31st January annually

Travel Awards

For any travel relating to research and development in the NZ horse industry.

www.nzerf.co.nz/travel_awards

Applications received any time

Equine Research Grants

Applications from interested people for funding for projects in the field of equine research.

www.nzerf.co.nz/research_grants

Closes 30th April annually

Veterinarian – Farrier Scholarships

\$3,000 each for a veterinarian and a farrier from the same geographic location to attend a suitable course or symposium and/or spend time with colleagues in the USA.

www.nzerf.co.nz/vet_farrier_scholarship

Closes 30 November annually

Applicants should apply in writing/email to The Secretary:

NZ Equine Research Foundation,
PO Box 52, Palmerston North 4440

Email: nzerf@xtra.co.nz

NZERF Vet-Farrier Scholarship Report

Dr Katie Grant, South Wairarapa Veterinary Services

I attended the Vet PD Podiatry lectures and wet lab run in connection with the NZEVA Conference in June, 2022, with the generous support of the NZERF.

I found the lecture series to be incredibly informative, combining practical information on how to trim and shoe feet for different conditions with advice on how to diagnose and medicate different conditions, including a very thorough review of the medications available. The speakers, Stephen O'Grady, Andrew Parkes and Andrew Van Eps, were all entertaining and incredibly knowledgeable.



Dr Katie Grant

The practical day was awesome – I have always found VetPD courses to be excellent for giving you something to take away that you can immediately start to roll out in your own practice. One thing that particularly appealed was using clogs to help the laminitic horse, and how to apply these correctly. The opportunity to try this for yourself was great and showed me that it is a reasonably easy-to-perform practical task that can greatly aid pain levels and welfare of laminitic ponies and horses.



Applying clogs

We also had the opportunity to cast feet and practice complex nerve and joint blocks, and to perform some ultrasonography and radiography of the feet. Casting in particular was something I had not done myself and being shown the techniques of how to use one successfully and what to watch for was well worthwhile. Thanks to Greg Quinn and Leigh DeClifford for their expertise in these areas.

Live horses were presented and walked out for us to examine, and their feet stimulated much discussion about how to shoe and trim them to get the best results. This was always combined with discussion around the full treatment plan for the horse.

Since returning from the course I have been speaking with farrier Marshall Miller and we are working together to order in the supplies we need to improve the service we can offer clients and their horses. I have already been able to put some of the concepts to good use – the topics presented really were everyday equine challenges. If this course comes up again in the future I would highly recommend that people attend as I have gained more out of this course than any other so far.

Equifest Taupō 13 - 15 October 2023

Following on from our presence at Equifest in both Taupō and Christchurch in 2022, the NZERF will be sharing a site at Equifest Taupō 2023 with the NZ Equine Health Association and NZ Equine Veterinary Association.

Last year many NZERF booklets and bulletins were distributed, and a number of people were very interested in receiving more information about NZERF.

"This was a successful initiative with distribution of a great deal of material and generally getting our name better recognised," commented Chairman Tim Pearce in his 2023 Annual Report. "It is important that we distribute the outcomes of our science-based research to as many horse owners as possible."

Pictured from left to right: Tim Pearce, NZERF Chairman, Ivan Bridge, NZEHA Chairman, Paul Fraser NZERF Board Member, Hilary Simmons, NZEHA Equine ID and Traceability Coordinator and Trish Pearce, NZEHA Executive Advisor, at Equifest 2022.



NZ Equine Health Association Update

Dr Ivan Bridge, Chairman

Over the last year, considerable energy has been directed to the “Equine Identification and Traceability System” (EITS). The EITS will support rapid decision making in the event of an equine disease outbreak. It will affect all industry participants in some way, although it will be especially noticeable to those not involved with the two equine racing bodies or elite equestrian sports, where microchip identification and some degree of traceability are an accepted norm. Work behind the EITS has been a monumental effort that tested the resilience and resolve of our consultant team: Trish Pearce (Executive Adviser), Hillary Milne (Traceability Consultant), Sarah Rosanowski (Epidemiology Consultant) and Kate Brown (Digital Consultant).

The NZEHA aims to “spread the word” of both our existence and the EITS at every opportunity as engagement with all equine industry participants will be essential to the success of the EITS. As part of the NZEHA outreach and engagement programme, we joined forces with the NZERF to host a stand at Equifest in the North Island (October) and South Island (December). This year we will attend Equifest in Taupō (13-15th October 2023), at a stand shared with the NZERF and NZ Equine Veterinary Association (NZEVA). The goal is to develop an “Equine Health Hub” where visitors

can seek science-based veterinary knowledge regarding horse health, welfare and disease.

A delegation of five China Horse Industry Association (CHIA) members were in New Zealand for three days in February, on a visit organised by Dr Ivan Bridge. China has a rapidly developing equine industry that is seeking to develop in-country expertise. There was discussion regarding the opportunity for young Chinese cadets to be exposed to and gain experience in various equine industry activities in New Zealand. It is possible for CHIA, in conjunction with the NZEHA, to enable appropriate cadets to gain experience through working on a stud farm, in a racing stable, at a sport horse facility or to spend time with a farrier. These possibilities are currently being investigated for 2024.

The NZEHA is composed of representatives from the breadth of industry and is well served by this dedicated group. However, it is inevitable that with time there will be change. It is with much disappointment that we have accepted the resignations of Associated Industries’ representative Greg Northcott, NZ Thoroughbred Racing’s representative Marty Burns and NZ Pony Club’s representative Samantha Jones. Their support and experience has been immense and will be sorely missed.



Martin Burns receiving a token of appreciation from Dr Ivan Bridge for his services to NZEHA

We will be seeking nominations for new representatives from within each organisation to maintain the NZEHA’s pan-industry representation.

Resignation of Board Member Justine Sclater



Having resigned from her position as CEO of the NZ Thoroughbred Breeders Association (NZTBA) Justine Sclater has also resigned from the Board of the NZERF where she was the NZTBA nominee. During her 4 years on the Board Justine has contributed in many ways, but particularly as a member of the subcommittee which considers applications for the Valachi Downs Young Achiever and the Jonathan Hope Equine Veterinarian Scholarships.

NZERF looks forward to working with Justine in her new role as Head of Welfare and Sustainability with NZ Thoroughbred Racing.

Thank you, Justine, for your continued support.

Left: Justine Sclater

NZERF Scholarship recipients

Hannah Airey

2023 Valachi Downs Young Achiever Scholarship – Hannah Airey

The 2023 Valachi Downs Young Achiever Scholarship was awarded to Hannah Airey, who will use the Scholarship to finance a Bachelor Degree in Agricultural Science studies. Hannah is a very motivated person with the clear goal of completing a BAgrSc degree specialising in land resource management. This is a topic that the equine industry has largely ignored until recently, but it has now become much more important. It will be a great advantage for our industry to have someone trained to consultancy level who can lead us through this regulatory transition.

Hannah has been involved with collection of data for the Massey University “Overseer” program and will continue to do this while she is an undergraduate student. She has recently provided an update on this project:

Data collection has almost wrapped up. The last year has been spent recording how studs use their land to raise Thoroughbred racehorses. This includes data on feeding, cross-grazing, rotation length, stock numbers, and grazing pressure which all accumulates to give a picture of how New Zealand Thoroughbred farms use and look after their respective environments in comparison to exclusively sheep or cattle occupied land. So far, the outlook is positive that this information will give an accurate picture of Thoroughbred farming from an environmental perspective as a foundation for policy.

This is part of a larger undertaking by Massey University measuring other horse-related parameters, led by Professor Chris Rogers. While the reports are still in their early stages, this work shows that equines (being mono-gastric) excrete less nitrogen than sheep per kg of liveweight, have a much smaller demand for feed than originally estimated, and that nitrogen leaching occurring per hectare was also less than figures currently being used by Overseer. These findings are of course still being extracted from the data produced but the outlook is, so far, hopeful.



2023 Jonathan Hope Scholarships - Dr Rochelle Kerr and Dr Hannah Burrows

Rochelle Kerr is an experienced equine clinician with Matamata Veterinary Services and, since qualifying, has provided acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy to cases when appropriate. She has been using acupuncture increasingly in her reproductive case load, particularly in dry mares to hasten cycling, for pre- and post-breeding uterine fluid reduction and for treating urine poolers. She also routinely uses acupuncture to treat musculoskeletal pain, to help localize and treat lameness, in rehabilitation cases and in medicine cases both in hospital and on farm.

Although pleased with the results she is getting Rochelle was feeling a bit isolated and has used her Jonathan Hope Scholarship to travel to Lexington, Kentucky, and spend time with other veterinarians performing acupuncture at Hagyard's Equine Medical Institute.

Hannah Burrows is a practicing equine veterinarian at Massey University with responsibilities including primary ambulatory services, emergency and critical care, surgical and lameness cases and performing CT contrast studies.

Hannah will also use her Jonathan Hope Scholarship to spend time overseas developing her veterinary interests.



Dr Rochelle Kerr



Dr Hannah Burrows

NZERF Travel Scholarship - Dr Lee Morris

Dr Lee Morris, Equibreed, has been awarded a NZERF Travel Scholarship to help meet her costs to attend the International Symposium on Equine Reproduction (ISER) held 8-14 July 2023 at Iguazu Falls, Brazil.

The novel study of embryo metabolism, “The relationship between grade and metabolism for in vivo and ICSI derived embryos”, which Dr Morris was part of, had been accepted for an oral presentation at ISER:

“This is an honour for our research program and the opportunity to present the study to 300 peers in equine reproductive research is much appreciated. This experience will enhance future studies in the area of embryo metabolism and pregnancy maintenance in mares with our New Zealand team at the forefront.”

2023 will also be Lee's last ISER meeting as a member of the International Committee of the Symposium on Equine Reproduction, after 16 years in Office.

“The committee is also launching a series of webinars in equine reproduction that will provide global educational opportunities and I am making a personal contribution to this process”.

Dr Lee Morris



Chairman's Corner

At the end of May New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR) held its third annual one day welfare forum in Cambridge. This forum invites people from all parts of the racing industry – owners, trainers, jockeys, administrators, researchers, veterinarians and other servicing bodies – to a workshop focusing on the welfare outcomes for Thoroughbred horses and ways to improve them. The program also explored the concept of social licence around the use of horses in equine competitive disciplines.

The forum was addressed remotely by the Minister for Racing, Kieran McAnulty, reconfirming the Government's commitment to ensuring the welfare of Thoroughbred horses (and all other horses) is a high priority. Mr McAnulty also commended NZTR for the initiatives they have taken to achieve this. One of these initiatives was to appoint Justine Sclater as Head of Welfare and Sustainability. Justine was previously CEO of the New Zealand

Thoroughbred Breeders Association (NZTBA) and sat on the NZERF Board as the NZTBA nominee. NZERF looks forward to working with Justine in her new role with NZTR.

Professor Natalie Waran (a veterinarian who has expertise in welfare and ethical matters relating to horses) was one of the 6 speakers. She presented data from several worldwide surveys carried out on behalf of the FEI to measure the public's attitude towards the use of horses in various equestrian activities. This presentation was extremely thought provoking with the take home message being that a culture of empathy and care, and the public's perception of that, is critical to ongoing support for equestrian sports. This public perception is constantly being modified by actions (both positive and negative) from all equine disciplines as they conduct their sports. The influence on this public perception from negative incidents is long lasting and all equestrian sporting bodies really need to show how well animals are cared for and come

down hard on people found to be below par. Now more than ever the need for high quality research is an essential tool in ensuring the equine industry continues to improve the outcomes for the very special partners in our lives, the horses, and this continues to be a primary goal for the NZERF.

At its June meeting the NZERF Board approved 3 new Research Grants, 2 of which were from new researchers Hannah Burrows & Chris Beggan from Massey University. The third successful application was from Jasmine Tanner, from Lincoln University, who has previously received Research Grants. Although the budgets for all the Grants were modest, they were all worthy of consideration.

The new NZ Equine Research Foundation website went live on 1 August. Although there is much still to be added we believe this will be an important resource in the future.

Dr Tim Pearce, NZERF Chairman

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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HRNZ	Mrs Natalie Gameson	Christchurch	021 936 155
Massey University	Dr Erica Gee	Palmerston North	027 604 0095
NZEVA	Dr Alex Fowler	Karaka	027 364 2277
NZPCA	Mrs Geraldine Rae	Kaiapoi	027 250 0350
NZSBA	Dr Megan Reidie	Invercargill	027 283 3758
NZTBA	Mrs Vicki Pascoe	Taupiri	021 682 436
NZTR	Mr Colin Hall	Wellington	027 563 9526

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NZ Standardbred Breeders Association
NZ Thoroughbred Breeders Association
NZ Thoroughbred Racing
Valachi Downs

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