

North Island Riders Meeting 2024

2024 April 8th

Meeting started 7pm

Present

Nikki Williamson, Kaasandra Chee, Lizzie Turnbull, Gina Mabey, Carol Bloomfield, Leia Maxwell, Jacqui Thompson, Paula (HDG), Catriona MacFarlane, Sarita Kennedy, Cat Turnbull, Andrea Fuehrer, Phoebe Brown, Cindy Wiffin, Becky Corlett, Jody Hartstone, Amy Sage, Juliet Iremonger, Toni Louisson, Kara Lockhart, Susam Tomlin, Georgia Mullins, Vanessa Fenemor, Alex Murphy, Belle Clark, Betty Brown

Apologies

Kyrie Gausden

Discussion topics

Allowing bitless bridles in competition

- Remit put in by Gina Mabey
- Overall, good support from those present
- It's about offering choice, not about having no bits; could encourage more riders to compete if their horses had injuries or other reasons that prevent them from being ridden comfortably in a bit
- Still requires good training, but horses can be in self carriage even without a bit
- Mention of previous resistance from DNZ given that test marking is based on acceptance of the 'bit'
- How have other countries dealt with this? Netherlands did a trial for 3 years, now allowed at lower levels; Working equitation allows this; Australian Pony Club has also introduced it for dressage

Ways to address declining number of helpers and volunteers at shows

- There are overseas examples in other disciplines (e.g. eventing) where riders are required to volunteer in order to compete
 - Difficult to enforce? Better to incentivise rather than mandate?
 - Pay/reward the ones who want to help, rather than forcing those who don't want to
 - Some area groups have removed member discounts when entering shows, and instead giving discounts to volunteers (members or not); have had success
- Also, be conscious that some people just enjoy helping so we shouldn't take their jobs away

- Be sure that volunteers are treated respectfully, that they're actually needed and it's clear what they're doing and when; there have been instances where volunteers turn up and then was told they weren't needed, which was very demoralising
- Interesting that some area groups pay their Event Secretaries, and some don't
- Very few higher level riders visibly volunteering / helping
 - Lack of role models for younger riders to look up to as an example of what they should be doing
 - There was an instance of one very high level rider on the poo pickup roster in the indoor at the NEC – was noticed and remarked on by so many people, and that could have made a difference to their willingness to be involved in the future
- Try and involve Pony Clubs and other sports/community groups to help; could be good ways for them to raise funds
 - Could also reward in other ways, e.g. giving an educational talk
- Experimenting with different length time slots for volunteering could help – sometimes 2 or even 1-hour slots are tricky for riders to fit in between riding

What's reasonable for entry fees (related to above)?

- Riders increasingly having to pick and choose which shows to go to, because the overall cost of competing keeps going up – entry fees, facility fees, diesel/RUC, time off work etc
- There are some new(ish) factors driving costs up, e.g. needing medics at the larger shows, and more facilities having world class surfaces
 - Some concern that there are emergency medical services providers who aren't even qualified to offer the services that they're offering (!!!)
 - Could ESNZ or DNZ do a deal with a provider to secure group savings?
- Some venues are cost prohibitive, it's more about the extras that add up, rather than the class entry fees (e.g. yard and other facility fees)
 - Could try and reduce shows from 3 days to 2 days? Reducing stabling fees. This was previously done during COVID years so it's possible
- General support for prize money to be removed – typically won by the same smaller group of riders - in order to reduce entry fees for all riders
 - Some area groups continue to pay prize money because grants and sponsorship have allowed them to keep entry fees the same for some years
- Are we also swinging the other way a bit too much, in terms of how much judges are paid, accommodation, rosettes etc? A benchmark of costs to run different types of shows in the different regions would be useful – local vs PL events, who gets paid what

Requirement for sitting trot at L3 and 4

- Could be kinder for both riders (especially with injury) and horses (if their riders can't sit well), and encourage more riders to progress through the levels, and stay involved for longer in the sport
- Dispensations for injuries/physical conditions already exist? Need to better understand why sitting trot is a barrier, e.g. more practice vs genuine dispensation required
- Acknowledgement that from a training point of view, sitting trot is required for collection, and just part of the test requirements
- Could sitting trot be made optional?

- That way some riders can choose to sit for certain movements, and just accept lower marks if the movement isn't performed as well (e.g. loses collection in the lateral work)
- Possibly just at local shows where most grassroots riders are competing?
- Need to encourage broader discussion ahead of going into a remit

Downgrading rule changes and how they impacted ponies

- The challenge is that the rules are unclear (or at least come across that way), creating confusion and loopholes
- But more fundamentally, people are finding the whole process difficult, with little perceived benefit
 - Data indicates that downgrading impacts a tiny percentage of combinations, and there's no indication of pot hunting
 - Time to remove downgrading rules altogether?
- Related topic: Grading rules
 - Currently it's not possible to compete an older retired GP horse in say L5, unless with a different rider. Whereas in showjumping or eventing you could enter any lower height class you like – except for restricted classes.
 - *'I don't see why I should have to be banned from competing my favourite horse of all time because he's done a higher level.'*
 - Given the small amounts of prize money (if any), it's not really pot hunting

Alternatives to Vet and Farrier certificates for scratching

- As these can end up more expensive than refunds. e.g. Photo evidence of the horse with ID, same for riders for rider injuries
- General support for this, and agreement that it all comes down to honesty anyway, as vet and farrier certificates can also be faked
- To socialise with OCs as they set the refund policies

Quick brainstorm on ways to reward and celebrate riders besides prize money

- Achievement Rosettes for those getting over a certain percentage but not in the top placings.
- Spot prizes
- Sportsmanship
- Volunteer prizes
- Judges choice
- Best presented

Remits – called for additional questions/discussions but none raised

Meeting closed 8.46pm