



ISES Abstracts

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF EQUITATION SCIENCE (ISES) - CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY, WAGGA WAGGA, AUSTRALIA – COLLATED SHORT ABSTRACTS
CONFERENCE TITLE: EQUITATION SCIENCE IN PRACTICE: COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE

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Equitation Science in practice: past, present and future

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The International Society for Equitation Science's mission is to improve horse welfare. Although research conducted over the past decade has allowed some of ISES's aims and objectives to be met, there remains a long way to go. The global horse industry is changing with increased focus on horse welfare. Equitation Science research has started to determine which methods, approaches and equipment promote ethical and sustainable practice, with increasing focus at the individual horse level and increasing use of animal- versus resource- based welfare indicators. The core activity of Equitation Science must remain the generation of rigorous, reliable and robust evidence-based findings to promote ethical and sustainable equestrian practice. The Horse-Human relationship is central to equestrian pursuits and is problematic. With the best of intentions it is difficult to remain objective when observing, reporting and interpreting equid behavior even in the best designed studies. Although Equitation Science has taken a multidisciplinary approach and proactively adopted technologies known to facilitate objectivity, approaches used by social scientists to study multiple aspects of the horse-human relationship must also be assimilated. ISES still needs to increase its inclusivity and consequently widen its reach both within local environs and globally. This can only be achieved if Equitation Scientists continue to hone their collaboration and communication skills. Given the fact that change inevitably causes discomfort, it is up to Equitation Scientists as potential 'leaders' to help make sure that inevitable reticence and resistance to change is managed in a positive and productive way within the equine industry. **Keywords:** Equitation Science; practice; welfare; communication; collaboration; change

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Standing on the shoulders of giants: building foundations for the future of equitation science
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Sir Isaac Newton famously wrote: 'If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants' (nanos gigantum humeris insidentes), conveying the notion of discovering 'truth' by building on previous discoveries. It is widely agreed that globally as a body of

horse practitioners we still don't know what we don't know and even more importantly, what we need to know, to improve equine welfare. Often we forget the true heroes, those who have gone before upon who's 'shoulders of wisdom' we have built our equestrian and equitation practice. Examples of these go as far back as Xenophon who wrote about foundation training in young horses making key statements such as "The groom should stroke or scratch the colt, so that he enjoys human company, and should take the young horse through crowds to accustom him to different sights and noises. If the colt is frightened, the groom should reassure him, rather than punish him, and teach the animal that there is nothing to fear". This basic advice resonates in Equitation Science based approaches to young horse education. Although there are also teachings within Xenophon's book that are no longer considered acceptable, and certainly not in the interests of good equine welfare, the introduction of habituation to frightening things, the use of reassurance rather than punishment and the introduction and acceptance of positive emotions in horses (such as enjoying human company) are now all active and growing areas for research in the established field of Equitation Science.

Keywords: Equitation Science; equine; horse training; safety; welfare

THEME: COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION
SUBTHEME: EQUINE BEHAVIOR AND WELFARE

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Body language: it's importance for communication with horses

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Body language is important for communication between individuals. Body language is based on the fact that the thought, alone of performing a known action will activate the motor neurons used for the action, resulting in a slight contraction of the involved muscles. These contractions called intention movements signal what the sender will do within the next second, enabling the recipient to react. This type of communication is important both for animals and for peoples' interaction with animals. For example in competitive situations the exchange of information prevents physical interaction making life in the social group more peaceful. Domestic animals having frequent contact with people learn to read our body language. Similarly, experienced animal trainers learn to read the body language of their animals. This exchange of information makes it safer and more efficient to work