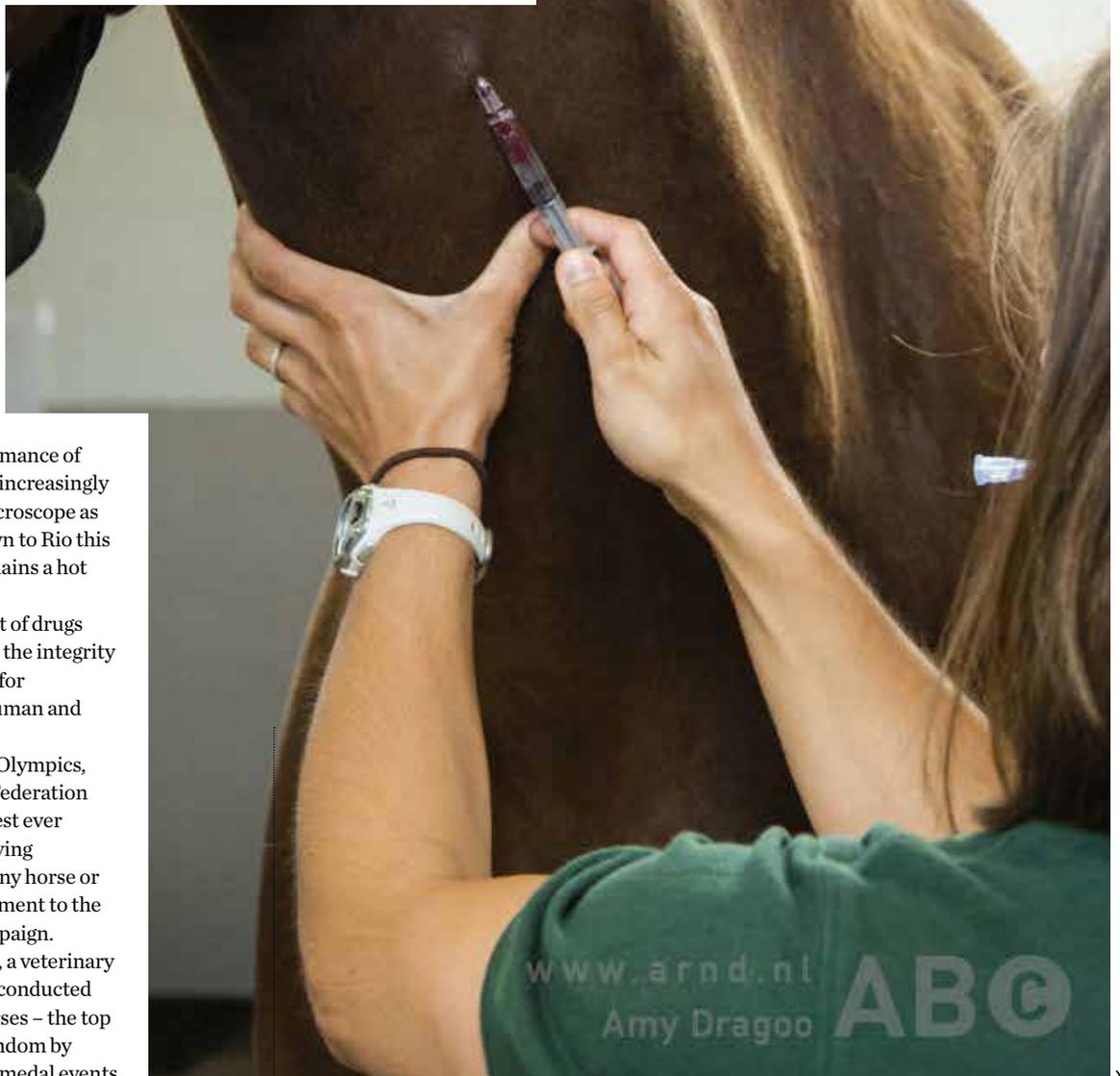




SUPPORTING CLEAN SPORT

BARBARA YOUNG discusses current anti-doping legislation in our sport, and highlights the importance of adhering to strict medication rules and regulations



With the performance of elite athletes increasingly under the microscope as we count down to Rio this summer, sporting fair play remains a hot topic of discussion.

Doping and mismanagement of drugs in any sport threatens not only the integrity of sporting achievements, but, for equestrianism, the health of human and equine athletes, too.

Following the London 2012 Olympics, the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) hailed the event as the best ever games for equestrian sport, having announced it officially free of any horse or human doping results – a testament to the success of the Clean Sport campaign.

In Greenwich four years ago, a veterinary team of more than 230 people conducted the most ever drug tests on horses – the top four, plus horses selected at random by computer, from each of the six medal events

www.arnd.nl
Amy Dragoo **ABO**



of which there were two each for dressage, eventing and jumping.

However, dope testing isn't just the preserve of our elite sporting stars; amateur riders must also ensure they abide by the Clean Sport rules and guidelines, to check that they remain in the clear throughout their competitive career.

READ UP ON RULES

Whatever an individual's role in the equestrian competition world, those that sign up to affiliate must also be aware that competing goes hand in hand with knowledge of the rules and regulations that govern our sport.

BEF's Anti-Doping Programme Manager, Sophie Thomas, points out that these rules exist to protect not only the health of equine and human athletes, but the integrity of our sport, too: "Everyone in sport wants to know that they are competing on a level playing field, and why should dressage competition be any different?" she says. "It's important that we protect the welfare of the

horses and ponies involved in dressage and the Clean Sport Programme is one of the tools that can help us to do that. It's also vital to implement the current Clean Sport system in order to retain our place as an Olympic sport, and enjoy the myriad opportunities that come with that."

Sophie's role in coordinating and developing the anti-doping campaign is also key in helping to educate and spread the knowledge to everyone involved in equestrian sports.

In consultation with the member bodies, Sophie is responsible for the planning and implementation of the equine testing programme for all member body sports (dressage, para dressage, eventing, jumping,

“Everyone in sport wants to know that they are competing on a level playing field” **Sophie Thomas**

driving, endurance, reining and vaulting) at competitions throughout the UK. The FEI remains responsible for equine testing at international competitions.

“On the human anti-doping side, I liaise with UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) and the FEI to plan and implement a testing programme for our human athletes,” says Sophie. “I am the point of contact for anti-doping enquiries (human and equine) and provide education and support directly to our World Class staff, and World Class funded athletes and their support teams.”

Clean Sport is a term coined by the FEI that refers to its Equine Anti-Doping and Controlled Medication Regulations and its Human Anti-Doping Regulations collectively.

“We also use it to refer collectively to the BEF's Equine Anti-Doping and Controlled Medication Rules (also known as BEFAR) and the BEF's Human Anti-Doping Rules. All competitors competing in affiliated competitions in the UK must adhere to the BEF's Human and Equine Anti-Doping Rules.

“The Equine Anti-Doping and Controlled Medication Rules at both FEI and BEF level exist not only to catch those that are intentionally doping to gain a competitive advantage (which is covered by the Doping chapter of the rules), but also to protect the welfare of competing horses and ponies who shouldn't be given Controlled Medications in order to compete when they are not well enough, or fit enough, to do so as a result of illness or injury (covered by the Controlled Medication chapter of the rules). We're not just about catching the cheats, but also about protecting welfare.”

AVOIDING RISKS

Sophie explains that one of the most common mistakes that riders make (and results in a positive test) is thinking that their horse or pony won't be tested at a local event, as well as ignorance of the rules and what's on the prohibited substance list.

“We've also found that competitors just don't leave sufficient time between the last administration of a controlled medication and going back out competing,” explains Sophie. “Competitors need to consult with their vet to decide on a sensible withdrawal period, depending on the substance that has been administered and the horse or pony's individual characteristics. And then there is, of course, the age-old problem of feed bucket mix -ups, where a medication meant for one horse gets mixed up in the feed of a competing horse.”

Q+A

Sophie Thomas answers members' questions

Q: Who is responsible if a test proves positive, and what happens next?

A: The Person Responsible (PR) is always the person that competes the horse or pony, whether or not they own it, train it, care for it, pay for it, have ridden it before, etc. The PR is the person that becomes answerable if a test proves positive for a prohibited substance.

The only exception to that rule is in the case of a rider who is under 18. In that case, the rider's parent or guardian becomes the PR, as we cannot legally challenge a minor.

When we hear from the lab that a sample has tested positive, we run our own in-house investigation to confirm the

integrity of the test. If we are happy, we will formally notify the PR in writing of the alleged offence.

The PR now has three options, depending on the substance found:

- 1). Request that the B Sample is tested. If the B Sample is tested and is negative, the case is dropped. If the B Sample is positive, the case will continue via route 2 or 3 below. NB. If the B Sample is tested and is positive, the PR will be responsible for covering the costs of that screen.
- 2). Accept the Administrative Procedure, but *only* if it is the PR's first offence and the finding is a single controlled medication. The Administrative Procedure sanctions are a standard fine of £500, costs of £750 (more if they have requested that the B Sample is tested) and disqualification from the event at which the sample was taken. The PR has no opportunity to explain how the substance came to be in the horse's system.
- 3). Proceed to a hearing. This will be a paper hearing based on the

written submissions made by the PR, unless the PR requests an oral hearing. The Hearing Body will decide the case and notify the PR of the outcome. If the Hearing Body finds against the PR, they will face:

- i). disqualification from the event at which the sample was taken
 - ii). a period of ineligibility (ban) of up to six months for a controlled medication or two years for a banned substance
 - iii). a fine
 - iv). an order to pay costs.
- NB. The period of ineligibility covers all sporting disciplines under the BEF banner.

There are nine anti-doping rule violations in total, so it is not only the presence of a prohibited substance that leads to sanction. Others include evading, refusing or failing to submit to sample collection (as serious as the finding of a banned substance), tampering or attempted tampering with any part of the doping control process, and complicity.

Q: Are both riders and horses tested at the same time?

A: Responsibility for testing riders falls to UK Anti-Doping for national level competition, while we at BEF are responsible for equine testing. That can mean that horses and riders are tested at the same events.

Q: How can we become better informed about prohibited substances and controlled medication?

A: 'Prohibited substances' refers to all substances that are not allowed in competition. That list of prohibited substances is subdivided into banned substances and controlled medications.

Anyone involved, but particularly competitors, must take responsibility for becoming better informed, and the information is out there on member body websites, and the BEF and FEI websites. BD is available on the telephone for specific enquiries, as am I. Members sign up to abide by the rules of the governing body, so the onus is on them to familiarise themselves with the rules and what is and is not allowed.

“We're not just about catching the cheats, but also about protecting welfare”

Sophie Thomas

Sophie also cautions riders who are competing horses that are not routinely under their everyday care, and offers the following advice.

“Be extremely cautious and question whether or not it's worth the personal risk to compete that horse, bearing in mind that you, as the rider, will always be the Person Responsible. Make sure everyone involved with the care of the horse knows about BEFAR and realises the importance of getting it right. Make a list of ways that risk can be minimised, perhaps starting with my list (see page 26). Insist that a Medication Log Book is kept.

There is scope in the rules to bring in an Additional Person Responsible and they can be sanctioned, too. Make owners and

those that do care for the horse aware of this, as they could receive the same sanction as the competitor. But also bear in mind that the competitor will always be the Person Responsible and will never be let off.

“Whatever level you're competing at, be aware that testing is increasing year on year and competitors should expect their horses to be tested at any event. Doping in sport is very much in the public eye, so we need to show to the world that equestrian sports are clean.”

“Competitors should expect their horses to be tested at any event” Sophie Thomas



Case studies

LOUISE BELL AND INTO THE BLUE

“Routine testing on my Advanced horse, Into the Blue [Dynamo], took place at Vale View EC’s High Profile Show in October 2014, after we won the Advanced Medium 98, but it wasn’t until the end of March 2015 that I received the results. To say that my first reaction was panic is an understatement – I couldn’t for the life of me have predicted a positive test!

“Luckily, I keep a yard diary, so was able to look back to the time leading up to the show and saw that I’d made an entry that said ‘Dynamo saw the vet due to being kicked and was given Metacam’, five days before the show.

“In any normal horse, this would mean a three-day withdrawal, so the vet happily dosed Dynamo, and I was happy to have him dosed in order to prevent any pain or swelling.

“But, as anyone who knows Dynamo is aware, he is far from normal! I was totally uneducated in the fact that drugs used in horses are only tested on a small number and you need to be aware that horses’ systems are individual. But having this information didn’t change the fact my test was still positive. As a professional, this is the worst thing that can happen, and it made me feel as if I had not been thorough enough and taken a very basic drug administration for granted.

“In my case, the assurance from a vet that it was a three-day withdrawal, which is also what the FEI list states, wasn’t enough. I admitted what Dynamo had been given five days before competing straight away and received a massive fine for the penalty.

“Looking back, I feel there is a lack of drug education for the normal person, like me, without the back-up education given by World Class to our team members and young riders, plus grooms. I have been drug tested many times in my career and this was the only one that came back positive. I feel my result is a huge warning to everyone that you must check, check and check again, because your horse can be tested at any show and if it has had some medication in recent weeks, you need to be sure it’s not still in its system.

“I was lucky. My fantastic sponsors were a huge support. I told them exactly what was going on from the day it happened and it was a massive shock to us all.

“As our horses’ caretakers, we must be aware that you can’t take anything for



“As our horses’ caretakers, we must be aware that you can’t take anything for granted” **Louise Bell**

granted. Now everything in our yard is double-checked, triple-checked and then checked again!

“My advice to anyone would be to check the FEI for withdrawal times and then add three days!”

JO BATES AND CONSULT RAMIRO

“On 27 October 2014, Consult Ramiro [Curtis], who I was riding in an Elementary qualifier for owner Heather Jeffers, was dope tested at Bury Farm EC. On the day, I was completely happy about being tested – during my career I’ve had several dope tests done, all of which have proved negative, but this particular sample came back as a positive in March 2015 after feeds were accidentally mixed up by one of my temporary staff in my absence.

“Curtis was stabled at the yard I rent near Banbury. The doping incident occurred after my daughter, Holly, who helps me in the yard, broke her leg and I had to quickly organise temporary yard staff to help until Holly returned.

“Curtis wasn’t on any medication, but there was a young pony that came in to us for two weeks’ schooling and was stabled next to him. This pony had its wolf teeth removed and required medication to reduce pain and inflammation for three day after so, having discussed this with our vet, we administered Metacam, in conjunction with ‘bute. Because the pony was extremely difficult to deal with, I made the decision to put the medication in its feed.

“Unfortunately, the feeds for Curtis and the pony became mixed up when the temporary groom fed. They had meant to text me to let me know that the mix-up had occurred, but it slipped their mind, so I was completely unaware of this until they returned to help me two days after the Bury Farm competition. When I mentioned in passing that we had been dope tested, they were absolutely mortified and couldn’t be more apologetic. I accepted that this was an unfortunate human error, although potentially very costly on my behalf.

“I was aware that this was a major problem as it would come back as a positive sample, so I telephoned Paul Graham at BD immediately and explained the situation. He informed me that the samples had already gone to the lab for testing and we would need to wait for the formal results, which would be about six weeks.

“I didn’t hear anything until a registered letter arrived from the BEF in March 2015, informing me of the positive sample. Because two substances were involved, I had to go to a formal hearing and faced a possible £3,000 fine, plus costs, together with a six-month ban. The hearing took place in October 2015 with three panel members, my solicitor, Jacqui Fulton, the BEF’s solicitor, Lynne Bailey, my temporary groom and Holly.

“I waited for two weeks for the decision. It was accepted by the BEFAR Hearing Board that the temporary groom accidentally mixed up two feeds, one of which contained anti-inflammatory painkillers that were intended for the pony. It accepted that I had a very satisfactory feeding system in place and found that it was likely that the temporary groom had mixed up the feeds, but found that, ultimately, negligence was attributable to the Person Responsible (ie myself, as the rider).

“To say those months were a nightmare would be an understatement – it has had a devastating effect on our lives”

Jo Bates

“My fine was £950, plus costs of £1,000 (less than was originally stated because they accepted a valid mistake had been made) and a six-month ban. I had 14 days from the decision to appeal, but chose not to and accepted the fine and ban.

“I took professional advice from equine specialist solicitor Jacqui Fulton, who was amazingly helpful throughout the months preceding the hearing. She helped sort out witness statements, copy invoices, details of Holly’s hospitalisation, character references and other relevant information that would assist in the hearing.

“To say those months were a nightmare would be an understatement – it has had a devastating effect on our lives. I informed all my owners and sponsors about the doping violation from the start and they were all incredibly supportive. I still ask myself if I could have done anything different to avoid this happening. We have colour-coded/numbered feed buckets and there is a big whiteboard with a stable plan, together with horses’ feeds and any special supplements/medication listed in our feed room. We also have a locked medication cabinet in a different part of the yard next to our tack room, which is also alarmed. We have a work diary situated on the yard, where a daily log for all horses/requirements/special notes is kept to refer to throughout the day. This was an extremely unfortunate mistake. I couldn’t get angry with anyone as accidents can happen and this person was kindly just helping us out.

“My advice would be to make yourself aware of all the rules and regulations that could affect you should a mistake happen. Medication control is something that we like to think we understand, but it is so easy for something silly to happen. Be aware that if you ride and compete a horse for an owner, you are responsible for anything that has been administered to the horse. I have always sought veterinary advice regarding any medication and its withdrawal, and to say I am even more OCD now is an understatement.”

MEDICINES AND MEDICATION

- Check *all* human medication *before* taking it. Visit www.globaldro.com and search for any medication, prescribed or over-the-counter, under trade or substance name.
- Keep a medicine box of all the things you’ve checked and are permitted to use. Take one to competitions and keep one for use at home.
- If you suffer from coughs and colds or allergies, or other conditions such as headaches or backache, find a brand that is permitted and stick to it. Re-check medications regularly, as ingredients can change and so can the Prohibited List.
- Check all equine medication on the FEI’s prohibited substances database at www.feicleansport.org

TOP TIPS FOR YARD SAFETY

- Make sure everyone involved with the care of the horses knows the rules and the importance of getting it right.
- Ensure there is a locked medicine cabinet for storing all medications that only certain people on the yard have access to.
- Use different-coloured buckets for the feeds of any horses on medication.
- Establish clear and continual communication with all personnel involved in the care of competition horses.
- Take personal responsibility for feeding horses, if necessary, to minimise mistakes.
- Use separate utensils for mixing the feeds of horses on medication. Even better, use a carrot to mix each feed, which is then dropped into the feed of that horse, so there is no cross-contamination.
- Draw up a clear, legible feed chart indicating which horses, if any, are on medication.
- Keep a Medication Log Book for each horse (example downloadable from the BEF website), recording all controlled medications administered.
- Make sure you have veterinary input before administration of any controlled medication.

WHAT EVERY COMPETITOR NEEDS TO KNOW

- Familiarise yourself with the rules and how they apply. If you’re not sure, ask.
- Familiarise yourself with the FEI Equine Prohibited Substances List, remembering that it also applies to all BD competitions, not just FEI ones.
- Download the FEI’s Clean Sport Prohibited Substances Database app free of charge (search FEI Clean Sport in the App Store or on Google Play).
- Make sure anyone involved in the care of a competition horse knows what is and isn’t allowed, and ensure they are vigilant.
- If you are in any doubt as to whether or not a controlled medication may still be present in the horse’s system, don’t take a risk and withdraw from competition.
- Expect your horse to be tested.
- Take your anti-doping responsibilities seriously. Getting it wrong can be expensive – both financially and for your reputation.

ONLINE COURSE

An online e-learning course has been launched to help educate grooms, riders, students, owners and parents about the importance of following the correct procedures to avoid an accidental positive test for a prohibited substance in competition. It also includes practical stable management tips on how to avoid an anti-doping rule violation.

The British Grooms Association (BGA) has worked with the British

Equestrian Federation to develop the Groom Clean course. This interactive e-learning module covers all aspects of anti-doping and controlled medication, with a certificate awarded on completion of the course.

Groom Clean e-learning, sponsored by Spillers, is free for all BGA members or can be accessed by non-members for £14.50. For more information visit www.britishgrooms.org.uk

For more information on anti-doping and the Clean Sport policy, visit www.ukad.org.uk/athletes/elite/clean-sport