

NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday 15th May 2007 – for immediate release

150 children to help launch equine strategy at unique interactive event

More than 150 school children will join VIPs to publicly launch the 10 year **Equine Health and Welfare Strategy** in London on **Wednesday 23rd May 2007**.

The strategy is a unique document jointly put together by more than 20 key organisations, including the ILPH, British Equine Veterinary Association and key government departments. They are aiming to achieve a single vision for horse health and welfare in Great Britain.

The launch is at a free interactive event at the **Lee Valley riding centre** in **Leyton**, London, from 10am to 4pm. The event is open to the public.

Key spokespeople will be available for photographs and interviews, including **Desi Dillingham**, the founder chairman of British Dressage and a director of British Equestrian Federation and the British Horse Foundation

Local children and hundreds of other visitors will be taking part in exciting interactive events, teaching them about correctly caring for horses. Youngsters will especially learn about the importance of correct nutrition and exercise for horses – valuable skills they can use to improve their own lives.

Lee Valley riding centre was chosen as the launch venue because of its commitment to quality, and making horses accessible to the entire community.

Barry Gardiner MP, the government Minister for the horse, said: "The strategy will provide vital guidance to horse owners for the next decade. My department, Defra, has been pleased to be a partner in this industry-led initiative. The strategy will help us to improve disease surveillance, and help us to prioritise resources for tackling these diseases.

"BETA estimates that there are over a million horses in this country, looked after by nearly three quarters of a million people. We want to encourage these people to adopt the new strategy and make it a part of their everyday actions."

Josh Slater, president of the British Equine Veterinary Association, said: "The strategy is a highly important equine welfare initiative which BEVA has strongly supported from the beginning and is proud to be associated with. The interactive launch is a key event to raise public awareness of the strategy and help horse owners understand their responsibilities and what is meant by 'duty of care'.

"BEVA will be working with the industry to provide public education about the responsibilities of horse ownership and we have already started work on the two specific areas of the strategy, disease surveillance and medicines, for which we are responsible."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Media attendance

All media are welcome to attend the event, at Lee Valley Riding Centre, Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, London E10 7QL on Wednesday May 23rd 2007, from 10am to 4pm.

Please confirm your attendance to our press liaison Paul Green on 07936 712007, or by email press@publicityheaven.com.



- raising equine welfare standards for over 30 years -

President: Dr Harry Greenway

Vice Presidents:
Dr Elisabeth Svendsen MBE
Mrs Lesley Barwise-Munro BSc,
BVM&S, CertEP, MRCVS

Chairman: Martin Taggart

EVENT PRESS CONTACT:

Paul Green
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07936 712007
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ABOUT NEWC:

The National Equine Welfare Council is made up of 58 equine welfare organisations including Animal Health Trust, British Horse Society, Blue Cross, Donkey Sanctuary, The Horse Trust, International League for the Protection of Horses, National Pony Society, Redwings Horse Sanctuary & RSPCA.

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Further information

Additional information will be available during and after the event.

Also see

- www.equinehealthandwelfarestrategy.co.uk
- www.leevalleypark.org.uk

About the strategy – organisations involved

The organisations who worked on the strategy include:

- DEFRA
- Scottish Executive SEERAD
- National Assembly for Wales
- British Equine Veterinary Association
- RSPCA
- National Equine Welfare Council
- ILPH
- British Horse Industry Confederation
- British Equestrian Trade Association
- Horseracing Regulatory Authority
- The Horse Trust
- The British Horse Society
- National Equine Database
- Redwings Horse Sanctuary
- The Donkey Sanctuary
- British Equestrian Federation
- Brooke Hospital for Animals
- British Dressage
- The British Horseracing Board
- British Eventing
- British Show Jumping
- Horserace Betting Levy Board

About the strategy – the vision

The vision for horse health and welfare is:

1. All horses are healthy and are treated humanely.
2. Everyone responsible for horse health and welfare fulfils their duty of care.
To enable this:
3. Owners, keepers, users and others concerned with horse health and welfare must understand their responsibilities, know how to meet them and take steps to do so.
4. Everybody involved with horses, including Government, must collectively ensure that:
 - a. Health and welfare standards, and other information necessary to support each individual's duty of care, are appropriate, up to date and accessible.
 - b. The risks of infectious diseases, including those entering Britain from abroad, are prevented or managed effectively.
 - c. The health and welfare status of the horse population is adequately monitored.



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- d. Significant health and welfare problems are identified and addressed.

About the strategy – key aims

Eight key aims have been identified. These are:

AIM 1: To Review Equine Health Standards & Welfare Standards – Collate available information and identify potential gaps to improve these standards.

AIM 2: Health Surveillance Arrangements – Investigate procedures, contingency plans and control measures. Assess emerging threats. Non infectious disease, such as lameness, to be included.

AIM 3: Equine Welfare Observation Arrangements – Review methods of identifying welfare concerns and consolidate reporting procedures.

AIM 4: Methods of Equine Identification – Examine preferred techniques and encourage industry-wide take-up and Government support.

AIM 5: Medicine Needs and Availability – Determine current and future medicine needs and recommend how best to meet them.

AIM 6: Education, Skills and Training – Assess current quality and availability of educational material and qualifications. Address omissions and accessibility.

AIM 7: Review Research Requirements – Co-ordinate current and future research to enable best use of available funds.

AIM 8: Oversee and Review the Strategy – Ensure strategy is implemented, monitor effectiveness and review content over next 10 years.

About Lee Valley Riding Centre

This urban riding centre in the heart of east London is the first equestrian centre in the UK to have been awarded the prestigious QUEST award for quality. It is also a 'green' riding centre, with solar panels, recycled bedding and a waste compactor to name a few environmentally friendly initiatives.

In addition to Riding for the Disabled sessions, Lee Valley Pony Club enables youngsters to 'own' a pony for a day and compete at shows. The Riding Centre's 17 horses and 15 ponies have been carefully selected to be safe and sensible and its show jumps, cross country courses and indoor and outdoor floodlit arenas cater for any standard of rider.



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