

# International Society for Equitation Science Annual Conference Sunday 12 to Tuesday 14 July 2009

Ethical Equitation – a sustainable approach

## Straight from the horse's mouth

International experts in horse behaviour, training and welfare will converge in Sydney for the **5<sup>th</sup> Equitation Science Annual Conference** to be held at the University of Sydney's Faculty of Veterinary Science and Centennial Parkland Equestrian Centre from 12 – 14 July.

The theme this year is **Ethical Equitation- a sustainable approach**, and will consider how horse sport and horse welfare can go hand in hand.

What is the effect of different training regimes on the physical fitness of the equine athlete? Can the mere presence of a human help to calm a nervous horse? How does rider position affect stride length during canter? And how is the temperament of a future sport horse accurately assessed? The world's leading experts in horse behaviour and physiology have the answers to these questions and many more. And the good news is that the Equitation Science Conference is not just for the equine egg heads of the world, but open to everyone involved in training and caring for horses including coaches and competitors.

The three-day conference will feature a lively combination of keynote and academic presentations alongside practical demonstrations from some of Australia's leading horse professionals including;

- Top international showjumper and coach **Colleen Brook**
- Horse trainer for stage and screen **Steve Jeffries** - whose breathtaking gallop onto the centre stage with his Stock Horse signalled the start of Sydney's Olympic Games
- ParaOlympian and clicker training expert **Georgia Bruce**
- The Australian Equine Behaviour Centre's **Warwick McLean**

These internationally acclaimed horsepeople will be working with learning theorists and new technology such as rein tension meters and gait analysis software to unpick the mechanisms common to all clear animal training.

The three keynote presenters are:

- **Dr Bidda Jones**, Chief Scientist at RSPCA Australia
- **Emeritus Professor Bob Boakes**, one of the world's leading experts on learning in non-human animals
- **Professor Leo Jeffcott**, longstanding veterinarian to the Australian Olympic Eventing team

The 5<sup>th</sup> Equitation Science conference is convened by **Associate Professor Paul McGreevy** from the University of Sydney, who is recognised as one of the world's leading experts on companion animal behaviour and welfare and was recently awarded the UK's prestigious British Society of Animal Science/RSPCA Award for his innovative developments in animal welfare.

“The inclusion of practical demonstrations as part of the conference is important because it enables us to show that these are not just theories, they actually work”, says Dr McGreevy.

Equitation Science provides a refreshingly clear and horse-centered approach to understanding how horses learn and interact with humans on the ground and in the saddle. It undertakes the measurement and interpretation of the interactions between horses and their riders, and, most importantly, it explores the welfare consequences of training and competing horses in all the disciplines from the Olympic sports of dressage, showjumping and eventing through to racing, reining, endurance, driving and pony club activities.

**The conference program and registration details can be found at**

**<http://www.equitationsscience.com/Sydney2009.html>**

Dr McGreevy is available for interviews and there will be opportunities to photograph/film horses and riders in action on Monday 12 July by prior arrangement