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HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein  
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20th February 2010

Your Royal Highness,

**Subject: Hyperflexion and the problem of relentless pressure: The importance of objectively assessing rein tension**

We would like to congratulate the FEI on their decision to ensure that aggressive force is not applied to horses during competitions, but would suggest that your statement makes the need to collect rein tension data more pressing than ever. As with most things, policing such practices relies on a universally accepted definition of aggressive pressure, which we respectfully assure can be achieved only through ensuring that objective measures are made to confirm or refute the observations made by stewards.

As scientists with considerable experience observing the behaviour of animals, we do not believe that video footage will assist stewards, if that is the intention, since even the most strategically placed cameras can neither focus on the lateral aspect of the head and neck of a single horse continuously nor avoid that view being obscured by other competitors. That said, it would be useful to combine rein tensiometry for the proposed study with video footage if the FEI is committed to the latter. Rein tension data will permit some quantification of apparent breaches, "so that potential abuse accusations can be more readily identified and recorded".

By measuring rein contact in warm-up, we can guard against abuses in the public domain and even estimate the practices applied at home.

We hope that you will see that this is the only way forward to protect the welfare of horses, and we look forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Andrew McLean BSc, PhD (President, ISES)

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