



‘Better Beginnings’ – Your Opinion Matters

Zoom webinar on 6TH December 2022 at 19.00

Focussing on the improved management and welfare of the young horse from conception to 2 years through the lens of the increasing threat to equestrianism’s social licence to operate

Dear BSPA Members,

Please find below a British Horse Foundation report on its Better Beginnings conference of last month, and the invitation to our follow-up webinar, on giving young horses the best possible start in life.

The link for information on the webinar is <https://www.britishhorsefoundation.org.uk/better-beginnings-webinar-your-opinion-matters> and for more information on the BHF program Better Beginnings please see <https://www.britishhorsefoundation.org.uk/programs> .

Collaboration and education are key to giving young horses the best start in life – and we want your input into the best possible practice.

At the first British Horse Foundation Better Beginnings conference, on 10 October, speakers and guests covered the importance of everything from good breeding decisions to early farriery intervention.

The consensus of speakers and guests was that a guide should be produced, and freely available to all breeders and youngstock owners, on best practice, from before conception until two years of age.

<https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/better-beginnings-giving-horses-the-best-possible-start-in-life-806688>

The BHF is inviting all those who are interested to a webinar entitled Better Beginnings – Your Opinion Matters, on 6 December at 7pm; a question and answer session during which expert panellists will share their opinions. The panel will answer questions posed in advance, and the consensus will be used to create the guide. Registration is now open, and attendance is free. Here is the BHF’s Facebook event with link through to the BHF webinar web page for more information <https://www.facebook.com/events/843487536786116>.

Here is the direct link to the FB post

<https://www.facebook.com/britishhorsefoundation/posts/pfbid027ZeAQitdFvFBikm34GfZfJyFuWcqVr7VvkTVkvkZuVqrsBYDni1tRXLUQaRic7gYl>

And to a shortened url

<https://bit.ly/3fNqSUV>

BHF chair Jane Nixon, who will also be chairing the panel, said “The purpose of the whole project is to address and improve equine sustainable welfare with a new approach, by improving breeding and production practice, up to the age of two, when the growth plates fuse.

“Socrates said the secret of change is to focus all your energy not on fighting the old but on building the new. Today we won’t look back, unless it’s to plan for the future. We must produce a content horse rather than chastise for an unhappy one.”

“We will address, using the most modern science and technology, and capitalising on age-old horsemanship experience, issues to ensure our horses and ponies are truly fit for purpose.

“I’m very much looking forward to the webinar, and to hearing your opinions and questions to our panellists, to assist the British Horse Foundation in producing the guide.”

Thank you to all those who spoke at and attended the Better Beginnings event on 10 October, and huge thanks to Dame Madeleine Atkins for guiding the BHF and chairing the afternoon discussion.

The panellists will be:

- Di Lampard, British Showjumping performance manager
- Jennie Loriston-Clarke, four-time Olympian, and leading breeder and trainer
- Ben Benson, lead farrier at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics
- Jan Birch, whose doctoral studies and specialist research interests are in reproduction, lactation and growth
- Richard Davison, four-time Olympian
- Marcus Capel, Pony Club chief executive

Other proposed actions are to work on encouraging continued professional development for both farriers, for whom it will be compulsory from next year, and nutritionists, working together for the good of the horse, especially in the crucial early years.

With every good wish,

Jane.

Dr. Jane V. M. Hastie nee Nixon, M.A., Vet. M.B., B.Sc., MRCVS

Chair

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