

BHIC gives thumbs down to Defra's proposed levy

The British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) has given an emphatic 'No' to Defra's proposed £10.50 levy on horse owners.

BHIC Chair Professor Tim Morris (Equine Science and Welfare Director at the British Horseracing Authority), Mark Weston (British Horse Society Director of Access, Safety and Welfare) and Jan Rogers (British Equestrian Federation Head of Equine Development) worked together to produce a united response from the horse section. The result was a definite 'No' to Defra's proposal to impose a new structure to animal health control which would mean a £10.50 levy per horse on all horse owners.

BHIC Chair, Professor Tim Morris, said on behalf of all horse owners: "The proposals for responsibility and cost sharing are based on inaccurate data and flawed assumptions, and represent an increase in costs for the equine sector where a significant proportion already fund their leisure activities out of taxed income.

"I have seen no information on objective measurement of efficiency and accountability, and I can see no clear benefits for the equine sector. I believe these proposals are unworkable and of no benefit and must not proceed in their present form."

Mark Weston, the British Horse Society Director of Access Safety and Welfare said: "The equine sector cannot be compared to the livestock sector; it is primarily a leisure activity. Two thirds of owners have just one horse, most do not keep horses to make money, and the horse sector does not receive the subsidy, which we estimate at £1 billion annual, that the livestock sector receives."

Jan Rogers British Equestrian Federation Head of Equine Development commented: "The BEF have not heard from anyone in the equine sector who sees any benefits and so there is no support for the levy."

For further information, please contact Mark Weston, BHS Director of Access safety and welfare on 01926 707760 or mark.weston@bhs.org.uk