



# Newsletter

Horses in Education and Therapy  
International, AISBL

August 2017

## Research and Cooperation Are Themes of Equine Conference in Finland

**T**he first international conference of the Equestrian Educational Conference (GEEC) was held 26-28 May 2017 at the Equine College, Hevosopisto in Finland.

The purpose of GEEC is to develop production and dissemination of knowledge in the equine industry. The objectives include development of education, best practices, and problem prevention.

Central themes in the first GEEC in Ypäjä, Finland, were equine well-being and collaboration between horses and humans. GEEC is a part of The Horses of Southwestern Häme Project in Finland.

The conference was opened by Laura Airaksinen who is the president of Finnish Equestrian Federation who thanked the over 150 participants for their interest. Markus Scharmann, who is the president of EEN (Equestrian Educational Network) told the participants "that we are here because of the horse." Even though he stated that there is a lot of good in equine education a lot of improvement is still to be done.

Lars Roepstorff from Uppsala University spoke about the amount of peer reviewed studies conducted every year and "the amount of

knowledge rising from them". The filtering and evaluating of knowledge is more and more important. Choosing equine studies is a lifelong learning. Keeping horses fit is one big challenge. One solution is a mechanical hoof that is used to evaluate impact firmness, grip etc. from riding surfaces to make them equal in different riding arenas.

Education and Standard committee Dr. Harald Mueller from FEI reminded us that they have 134 member countries with educational differences. "Equine standards are not in the same level in different countries." he said. "We need research, because without it everyone has equal weight in their opinion." He showed statistics of the percent-

age of growth on all level of riders. Para riders were the most growing group among FEI competitors.

Animal actor and trainer Tuire Kaimio spoke about "how horses learn all the time, even though [not always] under training. It is equally important to know how horses learn."

All the speakers were aware of the needs that must be done in the field. Here is the consensus statement of the Conference:

"We need to understand nature, society, and culture to produce sustainable quality activities and raise awareness in society about what the horse contributes. This must be based on sound ethics, evidence, transparent communication, and networking. Education is the key to all this."

—Sanna Mattila-Rautiainen  
HETI President



## Equine Management and Welfare are the topics of Ireland Conference

This year the fourth annual conference of EFETA (Equine Facilitated Education and Therapy Association) was held near Dublin at Dun Laoghaire Golf Club in Wicklow. Approximately 60 people working in Therapeutic Riding field came to listen to this one day conference. EFETA (Ireland)'s goals are to improve the quality of equine facilitated education and therapy by educating practitioners and raising public awareness of the benefits of equine facilitated programmes, equine welfare and good horse management skills.

Jill Carey, the HETI treasurer, opened the conference day with an overview of development of Therapeutic Riding in Ireland. She runs Festina Lente equestrian centre in Wicklow with her sister Clodagh Carey, where they actively use evidence based information to improve their quality as a service provider. Their every day practice gives much attention to equine welfare and quality of teaching and individual learning. Aside their riding lessons and therapeutic riding they offer opportunities to practice friendly horse management skills.

Sanna Mattila-Rautiainen is the president of HETI (Horses in Education and Therapy International) and a physio- and hippo-therapist from Finland. She came to Ireland to talk about therapeutic effect of the horse's movement on physiotherapy patients. Sanna's interest lies in researching the benefits of equine movement for muscular symmetry and body posture. She is currently doing her doctoral degree in this

topic. We saw a very interesting comparative movement analysis between a horse and a human at a walk. Her later demonstration showed in practice how a therapist while loneliness a horse can produce rehabilitating movement for individual patients.

Martina Hausberger, an equine welfare researcher in University of Rennes, lectured on equine welfare, a very important subject in therapy work. With supporting research articles, videos and photos, she explained how to observe some typical welfare issues with horses (e.g. stereotypical behaviour and metabolic problems) and how to address them. As a basis for a well-adjusted and sound horse she highlighted the importance of the quality of the horse's basic behavioural and physiological needs: social life with another horses, optimal amount of feeding during the whole day, and exercise. All that combined with horse-friendly training creates safe and sound working partners.

Another story about therapeutic riding was told by Jean Mullan, who is a founder of Therapeutic Riding in Connemara. She introduced us to their journey and mission to provide therapy services in rural area for those in need. Her encouraging talk said, in a nutshell: "If there's a will there's a way". They had started on nothing and with the help of some enthusiastic people, funding and Festina Lente's staff they managed to coach instructors and horses and rent facilities for their work. Luckily, therapeutic riding has been well received and also

beneficial for their local community. Their work has improved the quality of life for many people and has created unforgettable experiences. And I have to mention as a bystander that I think seeing people thrive in the presence of horses and improving their skills to be just the thing for many therapists and is what keeps them doing their work!

The last lecture of the day was about research. Clodagh Carey with Jill Carey together have done two studies comparing the use of bitted and bitless Micklem bridle in therapeutic riding and Jill was there to present their results and methodology. In their study they observed the amount of negative and positive behaviour when the bridle was changed from bitted to bitless and vice versa. It was found that horses with bitless bridles showed more positive behaviour and naturally that presents the question of whether the use of bits is necessary in therapeutic riding. But as always in research more studies on this area have to be done.

Karyn Jamieson who specializes in veterinary physiotherapy worked with two horses who presented some stiffness and asymmetry. First she gave a very simple but informative explanation of how the whole body works together and showed what ergonomic posture is for the horse and highlighted some biomechanically critical parts like atlas-axis joint in neck and lumbar area. Karyn showed some mobilizing exercises with horses and gave tips for polework tasks.

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## Ireland Conference

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Raising their legs, the horses could activate their core muscles and increase flexibility which are needed for ergonomic work when carrying a rider. She also gave a brief talk on correct tack fitting.

In conclusion, it is our ethical duty to provide horses with a high quality of life and good training. Only physically and mentally healthy horses can be meaningfully employed in therapy.

*Fourth annual EFETA (Equine Facilitated Education and Therapy*

*Association) Conference, 12th May 2017, Dublin. Dun Laoghaire Golf Club, Bray, Co. Wicklow.*

—Heta Rautiainen

### The HETI Newsletter

is a publication of  
**Horses in Education and Therapy International**  
 Sanna Mattila-Rautiainen (Finland), President  
 Vera Horne (Brasil), Vice President  
 Jill Carey (Ireland), Treasurer

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## Membership in HETI

HETI has several membership levels with specific features. Choose the membership level that suits you or your organization's needs.

**Federation Member** – This member is any organization (including for-profit organizations) desiring to be a formative member of the HETI federation. This member has voting rights (one vote per organization) and full access to all materials (journal, triennial membership directory, on-line journal articles, advertising, discount for Congress, etc.). Federation Members have a specialized area of the HETI website as well. All IEC nominees need to be affiliated with a Federation Member, so the history, foundation, ethos and governance of HETI would be continuous. Federation membership needs to be approved the International Council. For more information, please contact the HETI Office at [office@hetifederation.org](mailto:office@hetifederation.org)

**Institute Member** – This membership category for colleges and universities, research institutes (physical, cognitive and emotional) and organizations, and organizations with educational and/or certification capabilities. It does not confer voting rights. These members will receive hard copies versions of materials. Institute Members can also apply to become a Federation Member if they met the criteria established by the IEC.\*\*

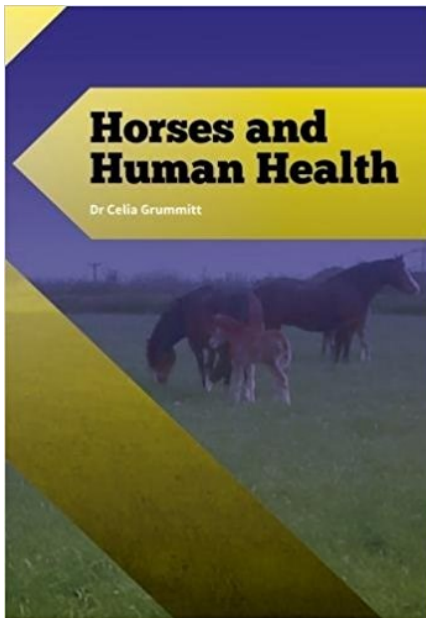
**Business Member** – This level is for organizations, businesses and individuals who are active in equine assisted activities, therapy and education, or related fields such as an equipment vendor, or other equine service provider. This non-voting membership level receives publications electronically.

**Associate Member** – This member level is for individuals, organizations, and institutes whose interest in HETI is primarily to stay abreast of what is happening in the field of equine assisted activities. These members will receive the journal and the directory in electronic form.

**Honorary Member** – This membership is an *electronic* membership, granted by the International Executive Committee, to affiliated organizations and individuals.

*Download an application, make payments through PayPal, and get further information and news at our website:*

<http://www.hetifederation.org/membership.html>



God Unlimited (GUL) was founded in 2006 to provide people from all walks of life the chance to enjoy the outdoors in a therapeutic setting. The culmination of their work is its new publication, *Horses and Human Health* by Dr. Celia Grummit which is currently available for sale on Amazon <http://amzn.to/2qRJoO2>. GUL has been using the methods discussed in the book for a number of years and this year began to offer the text as course material for training

courses run from their Wiltshire centre in the UK. GUL believes that this text would be of interest to all fellow members.

Dr. Celia Grummit is one of the original founders of GUL and her drive and commitment to improving the lives of disadvantaged individuals continues to inspire those at GUL.

# First President of ANDE-BRASIL Dies

**O**n 5 June Brazil's Equotherapy suffered a great loss with the passing of the first president of Brazil's National Association of Equotherapy, ANDE-BRASIL, Mr. Léo de Castro Cirillo.

He was a former officer of the Cavalry of the Brazilian Army, a renowned equitation instructor and a distinguished rider, who was also known to being the man responsible for the Brazil's growing interest in therapies with horses for persons with disabilities, for which the National Association of Equotherapy was founded in 1989, in Brasilia.



Colonel Cirillo had retired as the Executive Head of ANDE-BRASIL in 2012, but continued to offer his knowledge and personal experience to assist the growth of the credibility of the methodology of equotherapy, which he proudly had helped to bring up along with co-worker friends and a number of volunteer renowned professionals from the areas of health, education and equitation from Brazil and other countries .

—Vera Horne

## **XVI International Congress 26-29 June 2018 Royal Dublin Society Dublin, Ireland**

**Now less than a year away!**

Visit the Congress website: **HETI 2018**

for registration, information and to submit abstracts



### **Keynote Speakers**

**William Micklem:** *Going over the EDGE. An empowering approach to coaching*

**Patricia Pendry:** *Research on Equine Assisted Activities: Causal findings, implications for practice, and future directions*

**Martine Hausberger:** *Equines and Equine Assisted Activities: Maintaining Their Welfare and Well-being – the Challenges and the Solutions*

**Ed Bracher:** *Meeting the Challenges of Supporting Riders with Support Needs in a Modern and Efficient Manner*