

**POSITION STATEMENT by World Bitless Association
regarding the FEI rules on Bitless Bridles**



THE WORLD BITLESS ASSOCIATION requests important fundamental rule changes within the FEI and all INTERNATIONAL Governing Equestrian bodies. The current rules and regulations, require investigation as they are outdated, unfair to bitless riders and are therefore not all necessarily in the interest of the welfare of the horse.

BITLESS bridles are currently offering a valid, ethical fair alternative for the horse, yet continue to be overlooked by the FEI
All competitive disciplines require dedication and training which should be given important consideration alongside any debate related to bitted or bitless bridle riding.

We urgently request that a representative for bitless riders be offered a place on the FEI rules committee so evidence and public opinion can be honestly and fairly heard.

Rules and regulations need to be altered as progress is being made in the education of the rider, for the welfare of the horse..

The FEI rule that bans bitless riders from most of its events cannot be justified. It is arbitrary, out-dated and highly discriminatory against many equestrians. There is sound evidence * that modern bitless bridles are perfectly ethical items of tack, used by many equestrians around the world in a vast range of equestrian activities..

There is currently much concern about stressful/aversive training and riding methods, overtight nosebands and bits which are currently acceptable within competition yet are able to inflict pain, discomfort and injure the horse.

The World Bitless Association seeks to update the rules, to bring them into line with current evidence which shows that bitless bridles can offer more comfort for the horse

The time has come for Bitless bridles to be recognised as being totally acceptable for all riders who compete in all disciplines.

The World Bitless Association request:

That there be far more emphasis on ethical evidence-based training methods so the forced outlines we see only too often will be recognised as having no place within harmonious riding

That the FEI open the door as a matter of urgency, for open discussion whereby competitions allow, indeed encourage bitless and bitted riding, side by side at all events.

Discussion on Training Methods

Discussion on ending the discrimination against bitless riders

All Nosebands to be optional and fitted as per ISES guidelines regarding tightness/noseband gauge measurement

We ask for the opportunity to work with the FEI to help bring about much needed change

We first must listen to each other - as we listen to the horse - we are HIS VOICE.

For the welfare of the horse, we ask for the support of every rider to change these outdated rules.