

07 December 2023

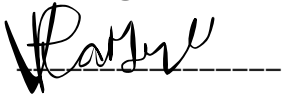
Decision not to allow horses diagnosed with Stringhalt to compete at DRASA rides.

Stringhalt is caused by neuropathy (disease of the nerve) that innervates the hind limb. The condition is not easily diagnosed. It is sometimes the result of an injury. There is no treatment that is curative. Spontaneous recovery is rare. It is believed to be a non-painful condition, but some horses seem to be uncomfortable. It can be mild but eventually cause stiffness and the horse going lame. The horse often has a limited ability to perform groundwork manoeuvres. In some cases, the horse can trot without any abnormalities.

Based on the recommendation of DRASA's chief veterinarian, the DRASA executive committee decided not to allow horses diagnosed with Stringhalt to compete at DRASA rides. The main reasons are:

1. A horse diagnosed with Stringhalt is not visibly sound. If a horse is lame, although not a conventional lameness he is NOT sound. It is also more difficult for the veterinarian judging if the horse is going lame during a ride if time does not allow for a proper exam and or knowledge of this condition.
2. If horses with Stringhalt is allowed, it must be proven that diagnostic routes were followed and that all other possible causes were eliminated. This will include, but may not be limited to a recent, official letter from a specialist veterinarian confirming all tests done and all test results, neurological examination and reassurance that the horse is fit to compete as well as safe to be ridden. To protect DRASA and ensure the welfare of the horse, only specialist opinions will be considered. This requirement is not feasible.
3. There are unanswered questions regarding safety. It is not known for sure if the rider of such a horse is safe or if fellow riders are safe. Most importantly, we do not know if the typical uneven trail ride terrain is safe for horses with this condition.
4. It will reflect negatively on our sport if we allow these horses to compete while there are other disciplines that do not accept these horses. Our ethical values will be questioned.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Petronell', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

Petronell Vorster

DRASA President