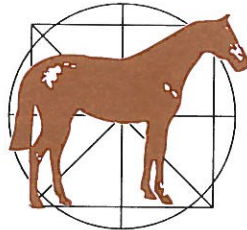


N.Z. EQUINE



RESEARCH
FOUNDATION

CURRENT EQUINE RESEARCH NEEDS

In July of last year the NZ Equine Research Foundation commissioned IER of Australia to undertake an online survey into the "Current Research Needs of the NZ Equine Industry". We tested the survey on our Board members and then the final forms were sent by email to 200 selected equine industry people. We tried to get a balanced representation across the whole industry and we are very grateful to those of you who completed the survey.

We undertake this type of review every five years and use the information gained to help us prioritise research applications and, dependent on funding, to commission work in important areas where applications have not been received. This is the first time we have undertaken an online survey. The survey form was based on previous questionnaires and asked respondents to rank various topics in degrees of importance and to make suggestions on other topics they thought should be researched.

Most of the respondents to the survey were involved with horses as a business (78%) rather than for leisure, they had been involved for a long time (70% for 20-50 years), they were spread evenly across industry sectors and their annual investment in the industry was generally high (40% spending \$50,000 to \$1m plus).

Of the responses to the survey questions the following list is those topics considered most important for further research. The figure shown is the percentage of respondents that put the topic in the "important" and "very important" categories:

Feeding and nutrition had three topics in the top ten

Nutrition of the horse in training/racing/competition	91%
Nutrition of the weaned foal (Autumn/Winter)	84%
Nutrition of the yearling (Spring/Summer)	84%

Growth and development had two topics in the top ten

Methods to improve the bone and cartilage growth of the young horse	84%
Studies on minimising developmental problems of foals and yearlings including bone diseases such as epiphysitis, angular limb deformities etc	82%

Supporting research and education on New Zealand horses for a quarter of a century

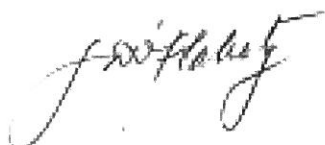
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Horses in work/training had two topics in the top ten	
Shin soreness, joint, tendon, foot problems	90%
Tying up and muscle problems etc	85%
Advisory systems had two topics in the top ten	
Systems to ensure improvement in how knowledge reaches the industry	82%
Development of systems to ensure that welfare issues are understood and that good practices are carried out	83%
Breeding had one topic in the top ten	
Methods to diagnose and treat health problems in foals	89%
Methods to improve control of parasites had one topic in the top ten	
Worming regime	88%

The comments after each section and the responses to the request to identify your three most important topics requiring research generally supported these priorities. There were topics included in the individual priorities that deserve further discussion and investigation. A number of respondents commented on the need to make research information more readily available and accessible and there were topics mentioned that have already been well researched. So there is still a big gap between the science/scientists and the wider equine industry.

As you would expect there are some variations between different industry sectors on the relative importance of some topics. These can be addressed at a later date with the respective sector bodies.

This review of what the NZ horse industry thinks should be researched will be a big help in deciding our research and educational priorities over the next five years. Again a very big thank you to all respondents. Please feel free to contact any Board member or myself if you have further suggestions or questions.



Dr John O'Flaherty
Chairman
New Zealand Equine Research Foundation