

International Thoroughbred Breeders Federation (ITBF) Webinar featuring Equine Grass Sickness.

The International Thoroughbred Breeders Federation's (ITBF) live webinar, held 18th January 2024, affirmed an outstanding 933 individuals from the Thoroughbred industry, veterinary profession, and the lay enthusiast, all registering to attend. The expansive audience from 44 countries on 6 continents spanned time-zones from: -7hrs to +11hrs London GMT, with all being catered for through a video-recording provision following the live event.

'An International Bloodstock Journey', charted the truly fascinating story of Kirsten Rausing, Owner and General Manager of Lanwades. A purpose made film offered an exclusive insight into Miss Rausing's lifelong passion and her accrued knowledge of breeding. The audience is privy to her teenage zeal on all things Thoroughbred, through to producing 4th generation Lanwades-bred ALPINISTA, and the ensuing 2022 Arc victory. Kirsten Rausing then answered live questions posed by participants, with her characteristic encyclopaedic breeding knowledge and viewpoint on the future of the industry.

The veterinary topic of **Equine Grass Sickness** had never previously been given a global platform, nor to such an extensive and relevant audience - combining vets, breeders, and owners.

Speaking informatively on the subject and participating in a live Q&A session, were experts Dr Richard Newton, Director of Epidemiology & Disease Surveillance from University of Cambridge and Principal Research Scientist, Dr Beth Wells from Moredun Research Institute.

They conveyed what has been learnt to date on this 80% fatal disease, that largely remains a mystery. The emphasis was on how globally we can aid critical research that will lead to an understanding of the triggers and causes of the disease – and ultimately save equine lives in the future. Owners, breeders, and veterinarians across the world are now invited to submit data (including historic cases) via a Biobank www.grasssickness.org.uk/biobank/ (with a guarantee of individual case anonymity). This will unquestionably help to propel forward research and piece together the jigsaw puzzle.

EIDS (Equine Infectious Disease Surveillance) and their 'ITBF initiated' disease reporting system, has revolutionised the control in the spread of infectious diseases from country to country. EIDS now propose to include Equine Grass Sickness in their reports, asking for country submissions (specifying only the general/local region of cases) www.equinesurveillance.org. Together the industry looks forward to communicating effectively and conquering EGS.

The ITBF webinar video-recording has now been opened up for all to view <https://www.international-tbf.com/2024/01/19/2024-itbf-webinar-video-recording/>