

## **'BETTER BEGININGS FOR A BETTER LIFE' BHF CONFERENCE 2024**

### **THE 2- TO 4-YEAR-OLD HORSE**

The British Horse Foundation (BHF) will be holding their second Better Beginnings Conference on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2024. This year the focus is on the 2- to 4-year-old horse. Better Beginnings is an ongoing initiative by the BHF to promote sustainable breeding, young stock management, and development practices which will allow us to produce horses and ponies that are happy, healthy athletes, promoting a sustainable future for equestrian sport.

We are delighted to have been again offered use of the excellent facilities at Weatherby's for the conference, which will see a gathering of 40 influential figures from the equine industry together with 40 past and present Pony Club A-Test holders who typically go on to shape the future of the industry. While the event may be invitation only, we are excited to announce that this year we are able to offer live streaming for the event, enabling reach to a wider public audience.

This year's packed program will hold an interactive format and we are incredibly fortunate to have two of our Trustees, Richard Davison and Yogi Breisner joined by Pippa Funnell acting as our celebrity hosts to stimulate engaging discussions with our expert presenters. The programme will kick off with a presentation about the importance of positive mental attitude in the youngster for wellbeing, training, and long-term welfare, delivered by Ass. Prof. Brad Hill, from Nottingham University Vet school. The importance of these concepts in early training for long-term wellbeing, performance and social licence will be discussed and brought to life through Yogi Breisner's extensive experience working with our GB World Class teams. The conference then moves to Diane Fisher's talk exploring the impact of saddling the youngster on long-term sustainability, where imbalance or discomfort can affect wellbeing and crucial early musculo-skeletal development.

The afternoon sessions are opened by Dr. Rachel Murry who will explain the risks of repetition and repetitive strain injury during early training and, is followed by Dr. Jan Birch who will discuss how the sustainable management practices of the 'other 23h' affect youngstock wellbeing. The final presentation of the day will reflect upon the future as Dr. Richard Newton will outline how climate change may impact global biosecurity for the equine industry.

We are fortunate to be generously supported by numerous industry sponsors and we very much welcome their input alongside our invited guests in the final reflections session where we will consider the key take home messages from the day, including thoughts for the future.

[www.britishhorsefoundation.org.uk](http://www.britishhorsefoundation.org.uk)