



Global Aftercare

Issue 10

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IN THE NEWS



Dr Eliot Forbes Named New IFAR Chair

Following its successful conference held in Sapporo, Japan, the Steering Committee of the International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses (IFAR) is pleased to provide further details on its recent leadership changes.

During the conference, it was

Eighth IFAR Successfully Held in Sapporo, Japan

The eighth International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses (IFAR) took place in front of a full house on 27 August in Sapporo, Japan. It offered a full day programme incorporating a conference and a local facility visit, showcasing off-the-track Thoroughbreds.

Both events were hosted by the Japan Racing Association (JRA) and supported by the Asian Racing Federation (ARF).

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Welcome to the 10th edition of Global Aftercare

Introduction by IFAR Chair Dr Eliot Forbes

It is an honour to step into the role of Chair of the International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses (IFAR). I would like to acknowledge outgoing Chair, Di Arbuthnot, who has been an outstanding leader and IFAR would not be where it is today without her vision and dedication.

Our recent conference in Sapporo, Japan, was a tremendous success, showcasing the progress we've made globally in advancing Thoroughbred aftercare. I'd like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Japan Racing Association (JRA) for hosting us and to the Asian Racing Federation (ARF) for its continued support in allowing IFAR to conduct our conference alongside the Asian Racing Conference (ARC).

The visit to Sapporo Racecourse equestrian center was a real highlight, offering an opportunity to witness firsthand how the JRA is transitioning retired racehorses into second careers and the important role these horses are playing in equestrian communities. We were fortunate to have world-renowned jockey Christophe Lemaire share his insights on horsemanship, further emphasizing the significance of aftercare in the racing industry.

Throughout the day, we heard from a range of experts, including former footballer Michael Owen, whose keynote address resonated with many. His reflections reinforced our shared mission: wherever we are in the world, aftercare must be a priority, and we must remain committed to supporting horses beyond their racing careers.

We were also privileged to hear from our other distinguished speakers, whose insights into aftercare and welfare provided a broad range of perspectives. I want to extend my sincere thanks to all of them for their valuable contributions and to the conference moderator David Eades. You can find all of the presentations and video replays from the conference on the [IFHA website](#) and our [YouTube channel](#).

As I take on the role of Chair, my focus will be on several key areas to build on the momentum we have achieved so far. One of the primary areas of focus will be strengthening our networks across the racing, aftercare, and equestrian communities. Collaboration between these sectors is critical to ensuring that best practices are shared and that there is widespread recognition that aftercare is a non-negotiable industry responsibility.



Another important area is enhancing IFAR's organisational capability. The pleasing response to our newly introduced membership model is a testament to the growing priority that racing community is directing towards aftercare. As we continue to grow, it's vital that IFAR remains equipped to support this increased engagement. Expanding our membership and fostering deeper involvement from stakeholders will be essential in driving our future success.

IFAR's role as a thought leader will become even more important in the coming years. We must continue to lead discussions within the racing industry about the significance of aftercare and advocate for sustainable, long-term solutions. Our ability to influence positive change and promote better welfare outcomes worldwide will be a critical measure of our success.

As I take on this new role, I am both excited and optimistic about the future. IFAR is uniquely positioned to continue to make a meaningful impact. The dedication and passion evident in our global network create a strong foundation for our continued success. Together, we will ensure that aftercare remains a priority and that every Thoroughbred is afforded an opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling life after their racing careers.

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Forbes Named Chair cont.

announced Di Arbuthnot was stepping down from the committee following the conclusion of two terms in the role of chair. She had led the organisation since its inception in 2016. Dr Eliot Forbes, who previously served as chair of IFAR's Conference Organising Committee, is her successor.

"It has been an honour and privilege to help build IFAR into what it is today," said Arbuthnot. "The aftercare of racehorses is something that is incredibly important to me personally, and it is vitally important for the future of the industry. I am confident in Eliot's abilities to lead and grow IFAR in the coming years."

IFAR's Steering Committee unanimously elected Forbes to serve as the new chair. Forbes, who is also the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Racing Integrity Board in New Zealand, has been an integral part of IFAR for years.

"I am deeply honoured to step into the role of Chair at IFAR as we embark on this exciting new chapter of growth," said Forbes. "Di has been an outstanding leader, and IFAR would not be where it is today without her vision and dedication. She has been a true pioneer, guiding the organisation with both passion and poise.

"The overwhelming response to our recent membership launch has been truly humbling, and our committee is fully committed to expanding our international network and amplifying our positive impact for the benefit of horses around the world."

Forbes has over 30 years of veterinary, racing, and wagering experience, across Australasia, the United Kingdom, and the Middle East.

Additionally, he chaired Racing Australia's Retirement of Racehorses Committee (2013 – 2016) and was a member of the Veterinary and Analyst Committees (VAC) for each of the three codes of Australian racing.

Eighth IFAR cont.

"It has become increasingly important for the racing industry to properly address the issue of horse welfare," said JRA President and CEO Masayoshi Yoshida, who officially opened the conference. "Horse racing is an exciting and enjoyable sport with a very long history. I believe that addressing the issue of welfare and aftercare of racehorses is an unavoidable challenge that must be met to sustain the sport and sports betting worldwide."

The IFAR conference took place in conjunction with the 40th Asian Racing Conference (ARC), which was organised by the ARF and was held 27 August-1 September.

IFAR participants began their day with a visit to Sapporo Racecourse, which is one of many of the JRA's equestrian facilities that works with retired racehorses. Delegates experienced first-hand how the JRA-supported programmes fulfill an important community role and help prepare the next generation of Japanese equestrians.

This multi-faceted excursion showcased how the JRA supports and transitions off-the-track Thoroughbreds across a range of second careers. Among those taking part was world renowned jockey Christophe Lemaire.

Attendees then travelled to Sapporo Convention Center, where the afternoon portion of the conference commenced. Following the official welcome by Yoshida, IFAR Chair Di Arbuthnot also warmly greeted the crowd.

"I want to thank the JRA for all of their commitments to IFAR," said Arbuthnot. "We would not be here today without them. Moving forward, the equestrian world and racing must work together. I am talking both in terms of bodies working together within individual

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Eighth IFAR cont.

jurisdictions and of the overarching international authorities coming together to listen and learn from one another.”

It was at this time Arbuthnot also announced she was stepping down following the conclusion of two terms in the role of chair. She has led the organisation since its inception in 2016. Dr Eliot Forbes, who previously served as chair of IFAR’s Conference Organising Committee, has been named her successor.

English football legend and Thoroughbred enthusiast Michael Owen then delivered the keynote address via video, and renowned broadcaster David Eades served as moderator.

“Any athlete has got to, at some point, retire,” said Owen. “There will always be many different needs and approaches to aftercare. As the well-worn racing phrase goes, it’s horses for courses, and it will often depend on where you are across the racing world. But the important thing is that wherever you are, aftercare is recognised as a shared responsibility that owners, breeders, participants, and the authorities take seriously.”

Following the keynote address, Dr Atsushi Kikuta, Director of Equine and Stewards Department for the JRA, presented on the second careers of Thoroughbreds in Japan. The JRA currently uses retired racehorses in a number of ways, including as lead horses and as ambassadors to help



educate people interested in working in the horse racing industry. It also continues to expand its programs for retired racehorses.

Dr Roly Owers, Chief Executive of World Horse Welfare, then discussed the emerging perspectives on community trust.

“We need to continue to learn, to be open to challenge and change, and to expand our evidence base with high quality research,” said Owers. “Equally, we must remember that sharing our values with those of the general public is even more important when it comes to moving the public acceptance dial.

“But above all, if we treat the horse as the most important stakeholder, we will go a long way to maintaining public acceptance. If, when, we do this well, we can turn the current challenge into an opportunity for growth, just as other industries have done.”

The audience then enjoyed an aftercare highlight video featuring multiple Olympian Boyd Martin, who led a retired racehorse retraining clinic at Baji Koen Equestrian Park, the Tokyo Olympic venue.

“I can’t think of another animal that has so much heart,” said Martin. “When you ride a Thoroughbred, they absolutely give you their all. This is hugely important in sport horses. Having a horse that just keeps trying and trying and trying for you no matter the conditions or no matter the event is a wonderful, wonderful feeling.”

Next, Helena Flynn and Dr Jane Williams discussed tracking the traceability of British Thoroughbreds. Flynn is the Programme Director at the Horse Welfare Board, while Williams is a professor and Head of Research at Hartpury University.

“The census has resulted in a number of recommendations being shared with British

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Eighth IFAR cont.

racing and wider equestrian stakeholders,” said Flynn. “It was an important first step to enable us to put a marker in the sand for where Great British Thoroughbred numbers are and to help us gain intelligence to support future initiatives to attain our goal of 100% Thoroughbred traceability.”

Sarah Coleman, Executive Director of the Kentucky Horse Council, then presented on developing safety net programs which can help assist retiring racehorses.

“We want to lead, educate, and protect,” said Coleman. “The number one thing we do is try to meet people where they are. It is hard for horse people to ask for help. We try very diligently to make sure that people are not afraid to come to us with a problem. You want to be a place of trust and not judgement.”

The final presentation was given by Natasha Rose, Executive Manager, Equestrian Affairs Projects for the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC), who discussed equestrian industry views on Thoroughbred suitability and versatility.

“We should be accountable for what we do,” said Rose. “It’s crucial to understand equestrian industry views in order to successfully maintain a sustainable aftercare sector. Further work is needed to communicate and educate in order to dispel misconceptions which may deter people from considering a retired Thoroughbred.”

Highlighting the versatility of the Thoroughbred was a central theme of the final video featured at the event. The Center for Racehorse Retraining (CRR), which is based out of Wyoming in the United States, showcased its unique approach to second careers.

“They’re out there running around barefoot on rocky terrain and living on prairie grass in the middle of Wyoming blizzards, and they are doing great,” said Kate Anderson, the Executive Director at CRR. “We realised how adaptable even Thoroughbreds are and how little we actually, I

think, know about keeping domestic horses.”

The forum then featured a panel, which brought back all of the speakers on stage for a spirited and informative discussion as well as questions from the audience. Lastly, closing remarks were delivered by Forbes.

“I can’t begin to express how proud we are to hold this conference in Japan, generously hosted by our very good friends at the Japan Racing Association,” Forbes said. “For anyone who has loved a horse, it is not hard to elicit an emotional response when we hear about the magnificent work that is being undertaken around the world, from the wild plains of Wyoming through to the heart of an urbanized country like Japan.

“Any racing sustainability strategy must include welfare elements, with a particular focus on aftercare. IFAR’s work to share best practice, advocate for aftercare and facilitate these gatherings now becomes more important than ever before.”

The conference received assistance from the JRA, which has entered into a multi-year sponsorship agreement to support IFAR. A replay and all of the presentations from the conference are available on the [IFAR website](#) and its [YouTube channel](#).



News from around the globe



Retired Racehorse Project's 2024 Thoroughbred Makeover Welcomes Over 280 Horses

The Retired Racehorse Project's 2024 Thoroughbred Makeover and National Symposium, presented by Thoroughbred Charities of America, took place at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington on October 9-12, and it welcomed over 280 horses for four days of competition, education and celebration of everything the Thoroughbred breed has to offer beyond racing.

Horses, which included both retiring racehorses with no more than 10 months of retraining since racing, and former broodmares transitioning out of the breeding industry, and their trainers competed in one or two of 10 riding sports over two days of preliminary competition.

The five top-placed horses in each discipline returned for Saturday's Finale Championships, competing on blank-slate scores for top honors and a piece of the \$100,000 total prize money.

From the pool of 10 discipline champions, a panel consisting of all of the discipline judges selected Big Fame, trained by Angela Carmitchel, as the overall Thoroughbred Makeover Champion.

The event drew spectators and volunteers from all across North America, including former connections of the entered horses, who came out to cheer their Thoroughbreds home again.

All horses also underwent an industry-leading Arrival Exam, which ensured a baseline of health for all competing animals including a minimum Henneke Body Condition Score of 4 and a walking soundness exam so horses could move around the Horse Park comfortably.

Learn more at theRRP.org. Please note that 2025 dates and rules will be released before December 1.



Equimillion Returns For Its Second Year; Attracts Australian Stars



This year marked the second year of Australia's Equimillion, which showcases the versatility and suitability of Thoroughbreds for careers outside of racing.

Equimillion 2024 featured over 35 individual classes, and it was held at Sydney International Equestrian Centre from October 4-7. Superstar racehorses who participated included the likes of Nature Strip and Zaaki, and all of the Thoroughbreds entered competed for prize money of over AUD\$1 million.

Equimillion is a component of the Racing NSW Equine Welfare Program built on the principles that all Thoroughbred horses should be treated equally irrespective of success or ability and that all Thoroughbred horses should find a suitable new home following their racing careers.



Gentleman At Arms and Tapaïdh Frankie crowned champions at The Jockey Club RoR National Championships

Six days of strong competition at The Jockey Club RoR National Championships concluded at the end of August with the announcement of the winners of The Tattersalls RoR Ridden Showing Supreme Champion and The Hamilton Tarmac RoR Elite Performance Award for Dressage.

The culmination of a day of hotly contested classes saw the winners of all the prestige qualifying showing classes line up before the judges and it was the 7-year-old gelding Gentleman At Arms, ridden by Harriet Edmunds, who was awarded the Tattersalls RoR Ridden Showing Supreme Champion title. Runner up and Reserve Champion were Madeleine Cantrill and Robin Roe.

Gentleman At Arms was trained by Harriet's father Stuart Edmunds and won six races accumulating over £90,000 during his racing career. His final win came at Aintree in November 2023 where he has returned to win big in his new career having only retired from racing six months ago. Harriet, who rode him at home while in training, said: "It's completely surreal, I'm just enjoying the whole experience. I always dreamt of having him [when he retired], but never thought the day would come."



A total of 306 former racehorses were entered to compete at Aintree International Equestrian Centre over the six days in classes for dressage, arena eventing, showjumping and showing at Europe's largest event exclusively for retrained racehorses. Among those competing, names familiar to racegoers were Balthazar King, Definitely Red, Duc Des Genievres, Kalashnikov, Lalor, and Smad Place.

The event also hosted the RoR National Dressage Championships, and this year's Hamilton Tarmac RoR Elite Performance Award for Dressage went to Tapaïdh Frankie and Tracy Thirlwall. The 15-year-old mare was formerly trained by Simon West and ran only five times during her racing career, never managing to get her head in front. Tracy purchased her eight years ago and together they have risen through the dressage ranks.

Tracy said: "She's my first thoroughbred so it was a steep learning curve, I'm totally sold on them now and hooked on dressage. I think I'd be incredibly lucky to find another one like her."

Rupert Arnold, Executive Consultant for RoR said: "This was a very special event with an amazing atmosphere. To see so many former racehorses in one place looking so well and competing in such a diverse array of disciplines not only showcases what these horses are capable of outside of their racing careers, but also the love and dedication of their owners."



Vazirabad Parades at Longchamp During Arc Promise



Millionaire Vazirabad, an ambassador for Au-Dela des Pistes (ADDP), paraded on Oct. 6, during the fifth Arc Promise, a drive to attract donations across French racing's biggest weekend of the year.



The Korea Retired Thoroughbred Championship (KRTC) Has Been Launched

The Korea Retired Thoroughbred Championship (KRTC) has been launched in Korea for the first time in 2024, supported by the Thoroughbred Welfare Fund established by the Korea Racing Authority (KRA) and Horseowners Associations.

It has been benchmarking best practices for aftercare from around the world, such as the Equimillion event in New South Wales, Australia, and the Retired Racehorse Project in the United States. KRA has reviewed various aftercare cases based on the Aftercare toolkits and then modified them to introduce the Championship in Korea.

The first championship was held at the Gumi-si Horseback Riding Center from June 1st to June 2nd. The total prize money for the equestrian competition was approximately 80 million KRW, which is around 60,000 USD.

The second championship took place at the KRA's 86th and 88th Olympic horse-riding grounds in Gwacheon, Gyeonggi-do, from October 4th to October 5th. The total prize money for this equestrian competition was approximately 100 million KRW, which is around 74,000 USD.

The Championship comprised a total of seven equestrian events: two entry-level horse shows (one riding show and one non-riding show), two dressage events, and three show jumping competitions. A horse judging competition called Wellbeing Horse Korea, allowing attendees and the general public to vote for the best-managed and healthiest horse online using a QR code to showcase horses on-site, was also introduced.

At the second Championship, 55 horses and 28 riders participated in the equestrian competition, with a total of 30 horses placing in the seven equestrian disciplines and five horses placing in the Wellbeing Horse Korea. As a side event, activities such as a horse parade, making horse puppets, coloring horse mobiles, and quizzes provided enjoyment and engagement for general participants and children.

All participants completed the KRA's online education on horse welfare, which included a lecture by Dr. Eliot regarding IFAR and the Aftercare toolkits. With the participants' consent, the competition was held without the use of whips.

Since this is the early stage of introducing the equestrian competition, the main focus was not on retired racehorses competing for excellence, but on expanding the opportunities for them to be used as riding horses for a second career. The goal is to encourage greater participation in the equestrian industry, promote the transition of retired racehorses into riding horses, and improve awareness about retired racehorses.



IFAR'S Vision

- All horses are treated in a humane and ethical manner every day of their life.
- All suitable horses find a home after racing.
- Every industry participant, administrator, owner and breeder recognises and embraces their responsibility towards Thoroughbred aftercare.
- All racing jurisdictions have effective and well-funded aftercare, traceability and education programmes in place.
- Thoroughbreds are valued and sought-after athletes by the equestrian community.
- IFAR leads a highly-engaged and global community of horse professionals advocating for Thoroughbred aftercare.



Dates for the Diary 2024

Australia

16th-19th November - TSHA National Titles

2nd-3rd December - SSJC End of Year Championships

7th-10th December - JNSW Summer Show

France

9th-11th November - Jumping and Exhibitions in Angers

17th-19th November - Auteuil Pledge – Parade

Great Britain

25th January 2025 - RoR Awards

19th-25th August 2025 - RoR National Championships

Ireland

12th December - Treo Eile Christmas Show

Japan

29th November-1st December - Retired Racehorse Cup Final, sponsored by the Japan Racing Association

United States

24th-27th October - TIP Championships

1st-2nd November - New Vocations Breeders' Cup Pledge

Follow us on our social media platforms



Interested in becoming an IFAR Member or Supporter?

- Membership costs US\$2,000/year (additional contributions are welcomed)
- Includes an opportunity to participate on committees, when vacancies are available, as well as full voting and nomination rights and the opportunity to display IFAR's logo.
- Membership requests reviewed on a quarterly basis
- Those unable to contribute financially should consider becoming an IFAR Supporter, which is free (but does not include membership rights)
- Click [HERE](#) to access the membership application form and charter

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How IFAR can support you

IFAR comprises members with significant knowledge and expertise and is ready to assist those seeking help. This assistance may be general advice or guidance or it may be tailored to specific issues relating to the welfare of Thoroughbred racehorses and how to develop aftercare provision in their countries, taking into account cultural differences.