

## Swedish Trotting Association finances horse welfare research

**In a new, collaborative project the Swedish Trotting Association will finance a PhD student in horse welfare. The project is a collaboration between The Swedish Trotting Association, The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) and the University of Melbourne.**

The project is the equivalent of a four year full time research studies and will be carried out on part time by the PhD student Agneta Sandberg. The ambition is that the research will result in improved welfare for trotting horses, but also safer horse handling for grooms, drivers, riders and trainers.

It is immensely important in all horse sports to consider the needs of the horses, not least to keep the acceptance by the society, the so called social licence to operate. For horse sports to be sustainable the knowledge about both the horse welfare problems as well as the solutions need to increase. This project will utilise data that is continuously collected e.g. by the Trotter health welfare programme, at races, in training and in everyday life of the horses. Areas of focus may be e.g. the effect of control, risk factors connected to accidents, and horse welfare on racedays as well during “the other 23 hours”. A further area of interest is if there is a connection between horse welfare and performance.

In the supervisor group of Agneta Sandberg are associate professor Jenny Yngvesson, professor Agneta Egenvall, both at SLU, associate professor Peta Hitchens at the University of Melbourne and VMD Göran Åkerström, expert at FEI.

- We are very happy to be able to do this commitment for the sake of the horses. We look forward to scientific results as a part of the quality assurance of our systematic work for horse welfare. This will help in improving horse welfare as well as making our sport safer, says Mattias Falkbåge, head of the Horse welfare department at the Swedish Trotting Association.

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