

THE SPORT HORSE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	INTRODUCTION
04	WHAT IS THE SHRF?
04	MISSION STATEMENT
05	OUR TEAM
08	ANALYTICS
08	2021 OBJECTIVES
09	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
09	HOW WE CAN HELP
10	PARTNERS



IMPROVE SPORT HORSE HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Sport Horse Research Foundation

Sport horses - defined as show jumper, hunter, dressage, and eventing equine athletes - are incredible animals who deserve to maximize their athletic potential with the support of relevant scientific research.

Unfortunately, the equine veterinary community doesn't have adequate funding or organization to conduct research to meet the needs of the sport horse industry. Most of the research that our veterinarians use to treat high performance horses is based on research

conducted for race and/or labor horses; comparatively very little research is geared directly towards sport horse medicine. The depth of our sport is amazing, and the lack of empirical research to diagnose, manage, and optimize horse performance is alarming.

In order to match the high performance standards of the horses, the Sport Horse Research Foundation has been established to raise funding and organize research directly for sport horses.

WHAT IS THE SPORT HORSE RESEARCH FOUNDATION?

The SHRF is a team comprised mostly of top sport horse veterinarians, who have set out to direct research projects specifically geared towards performance horse medicine, injuries/injury-prevention, and overall health.

Opening a collaborative dialogue between our industry stakeholders and scientific and veterinary researchers will maximize the careers and welfare of our horses. We envision a future where an increase in professional research and widespread information-sharing will measurably improve the health, welfare, and athletic potential of equine athletes at all levels.

Until now, equine athletes and the sport horse industry have been underserved by research. Currently it is difficult to obtain research funding specifically for sport horses and sport horse medicine. The SHRF seeks to change this by facilitating the knowledge and advancements scientific research yields.

We seek a future where knowledgeable equine sport horse stakeholders and professional researchers guide effective research that measurably improves the health, athletic potential, and career longevity of sport horses everywhere.



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to advance and direct scientific research and education that will enhance the health, athletic performance, and career longevity of sport horses.

MEET OUR TEAM



Dr. Sarah Puchalski, DVM, DACVR
Founding Director, Chairman of the Board, CEO

Board Certified by the American College of Veterinary Radiology, author of 40+ scientific articles and book chapters relating to diagnostic imaging in veterinary medicine, and founder of Puchalski Equine Inc.

"As a researcher in a traditional university setting and an avid amateur show jumper, **a critical gap was apparent between common research lines, funding bodies and the competitive sport horse industry.** The SHRF was founded to try to fill this void and keep sport horse related research from falling through the cracks. The SHRF is a critical organization designed to ensure that the needs and concerns of competitive sport horse stake holders are met with rigorous, high quality research."



Dr. Richard Wheeler, DVM
Founding Director, Treasurer

Partner of Palm Beach Equine Clinic, FEI Veterinary Delegate, board of the USHJA Horse and Rider Advocates Committee, several published articles on the topic of equine sports medicine

"Our aim is to provide a conduit between sport horse stakeholders, with questions about equine sport medicine, and the best researchers, who are able to provide high quality answers, aiming to protect and enhance sport horse performance. We have assembled an exceptional team, with broad experience both in equestrian sports and scientific research. This will give us the ability to provide directional oversight, in addition to funding, to meet our stakeholder's goals."

MEET OUR TEAM



Dr. Philippe Benoit, DVM, DACVSMR
Director

Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Sport Medicine and Rehabilitation, veterinarian for the French Team from 1992-2000, French Olympic Team in 2004, and Saudi Arabian Olympic Team in 2012, founder PHB Consulting

"The SHRF is bridging the demand of horse owners, riders, trainers, veterinarians, physiotherapists and caretakers with the science and research in our equine world. We strive to have practical output in a short time for our every day concerns such as prevention of injuries, footing, and climate impact on our horses. **It's all about contributing to our dear horses' welfare.**"



Dr. Timothy Ober, DVM
Director

US Team Veterinarian for Show Jumping since 1999, Partner of John R Steele & Associates, renowned sports medicine veterinarian of Show Jumpers, Hunters, and Dressage athletes

"The Sport Horse Research Foundation brings together industry participants and scientific researchers in order to focus research projects towards improving the care and performance of sport horses of all disciplines and all levels of competition. **The goal is to combine quality science with the fundamentals of horsemanship to improve the quality of life of the sport horse.**"

MEET OUR TEAM



Dr. Tim Worden, PhD

Director

Researcher at Equine Analytics LLC, Founder of Tim Worden Consulting, works with FEI riders to provide performance analytics, content creator for numerous equestrian publications

"As members of the equestrian community, we care deeply about promoting good health and ensuring our horses can perform at their best. Research plays a vital role in advancing these areas. The Sport Horse Research Foundation provides funding to support investigators who are **carrying out transformative research that will positively impact sport horse health and athletic performance.**"



Megan McDermott

Director of Marketing and Development

Professional International Show jumper riding and training horses to the FEI level, Founder of Counter Balance LLC, and Founder Darondo Productions to produce video, photo, and branded design content

"Sport horses are absolutely incredible and should be valiantly protected by medicine and science with the same regard as top athletes in the other olympic sports. **The SHRF is finally addressing the gaps in research in our industry and funding projects to accurately identify and solve the sport's most pressing medical obstacles.** We can and will improve the sport though increased research and practical application of findings to enhance our horse's careers, health, and safety."



ANALYTICS

- At present, the foundation has raised **\$96,601.86**
- Our goal for this year is to raise **\$300,000.00**
- Donation Amount Range: **\$25.00 to \$50,000.00**
- The average cost of rehabbing a typical Deep Digital Flexor Tendon injury in a competitive sport horse: **\$30,000.00 - \$44,000.00**
 - Guarded prognosis for return to full function
- The average cost of rehabbing a moderate Suspensory Branch injury in a competitive sport horse: **\$30,000.00 - \$40,000.00**
 - Fair prognosis for return to full function, high risk of re-injury
- The average cost of rehabbing a moderate Bone Bruise injury in a competitive sport horse: **\$18,600.00 - \$37,000.00**
 - Good prognosis for return to full function
- Sustaining an injury usually has a detrimental effect on resale value.
- Current number of research projects completed: **3**
- Current research objectives in queue: **6**
- **NO** salary support is associated with any donation. We focus our resources *entirely* towards supporting research.

2021 PRIORITY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- 1)** Does competing or training on varied footings have a positive effect on career longevity, reducing generalized soreness, and injury prevention?
- 2)** Can we measure the effect of different training programs (e.g. frequency of competing, time spent in the paddock, schedules, types of work, and so on) on performance, health and career longevity?
- 3)** What are the recommendations for giving elite sport horses a break from work (e.g. length, time of year)?
- 4)** Can we establish a data collection platform that will allow for the analysis and sharing of information between riders, vets, grooms, and therapists?
- 5)** What is the effect of FEI stabling on stress and performance?



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The success of the SHRF will rely on working proactively with external stakeholder partners. The ability to best identify and address issues can only be accomplished by bringing together the expertise, knowledge, and passion of many organizations and individuals. Only by working cooperatively with stakeholders can SHRF achieve the greatest positive impact for sport horses and the industry as a whole. Our stakeholders include:

- Professional and amateur riders
- Sport horse owners
- Sport horse trainers
- Horse Show organizers and governing bodies
- Veterinarians, farriers and therapists
- Research scientists and institutions

HOW WE CAN HELP

The SHRF has the potential to improve the way the sport horse industry operates – from the management, training, showing, diagnoses, and treatment, to the rehabilitation of equine athletes.

An increase in scientific information and widespread knowledge can make for a healthier and safer sport. Similar to the evolution of human medicine that has come to embrace a holistic view of achieving optimal health and performance, the research we fund has the potential to revolutionize the sport horse industry and equine athletes.

Initially, the SHRF will focus funding research specifically targeted on show jumping and dressage. In the future, we envision funding meaningful research for the benefit of each sport horse discipline.

Much needed research can facilitate more accurate and early diagnosis of injuries, more effective treatment, minimize physical risk while training, and directed rehabilitation of sport horse injury to increase career longevity. This will lead to a better understanding of sport horse injury risk and risk management to thereby enhance injury prevention.

PARTNERS

We would like to thank and recognize those who have become champions of The Sport Horse Research Foundation by making a contribution of \$1,000 or more. Partners, you ensure a greater impact funding lasting, transformative research for the health, athletic potential, and career longevity of sport horses.

Individuals

Diane McNulty

Jodi Nunnari

Judith S. Rockefeller

Kathleen Von Ertfelda

Marilyn H. Hite

Raphael de la Gueronniere

Jason Applebaum

Leslie Nelson

Patricia Tait

Tuny Page

Foundation & Corporate Donors

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The MacArthur Foundation

Mad River Foundation

The William & Inez Mabie Family
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