



## International Carriage Drivers Association

### MEMORANDUM

To: Manuel Bandeira de Mello, Director of Driving FEI  
From: Marie de Ronde-Oudemans, Secretary General ICDA  
Date: January 23, 2025

Re: **Feedback on Draft General Protocol for the FEI Noseband Measuring Device**

Dear Manu,

Thank you very much for giving ICDA as FEI Stakeholder the opportunity to review the draft of the General Protocol for the FEI Measuring Device.

The following list of points is composed from the feedback we received from the ICDA committee members, including some recommendations regarding the discipline specific protocol / timings of the control.

- **Postponing implementation:** First and most important point is that as this new way of measuring tightness of the noseband will have great impact, the device should be made available to all NFs and athletes for a period of time to test this before implementation. The implementation of the device and the protocol should not be rushed before tested thoroughly. We suggest postponing of the implementation until January 2026 and have the device available for testing by officials and athletes at every FEI driving competition.
- **Use of measuring device:** The protocol, and the use of a measuring device, has been introduced to provide an objective assessment of an appropriately fitted noseband. The wording however, talks about the measuring device passing through “comfortably”. The meaning of “comfortably” is rather subjective. Either it passes through or not. There should not be room for interpretation/discussion about whether it passes through ‘comfortably’
- **Security / general:** The thickness of the device may not lead to the consequence that the noseband needs to be buckled in a way that compromises the classical principles of driving and riding. The distribution of pressure from the noseband must be even and appropriate, and while the noseband may not be too tight, it also may not fit too loose as the horse must be prevented from putting his tongue over the bit because that could produce a dangerous situation.
- **Horse selection:** The protocol is not sufficiently clear on how a horse is selected for the control is selected. Is this selection entirely at the discretion of the Chief Steward?
- **Consequences:** In a post competition control in which the device does not pass through comfortably the athlete is automatically eliminated and a yellow warning card is issued by a steward, although the FEI Driving Rules (art. 911) doesn’t include a steward to issue a yellow warning card. There is no appeal at the time or thereafter. So a steward has absolute discretion. There should therefore be a requirement to consult with the president of the jury and chief steward before such a yellow warning card is issued.
- Please note that if an athlete chooses to have a noseband measured before the warm up, then adjusts the noseband “for the purpose of performance” then it will need to be re measured before the start of the relevant competition. This is very challenging to assess whether further adjustments are for performance reasons or alternatively for comfort or welfare reasons so needs to be re thought.



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In addition two points driving related:

- **Noseband in driving:** Nosebands used in driving are generally more stiff than used in riding. Therefore it will be less flexible and more difficult for the device to pass comfortably.
- Athletes in H2 and H4 classes will have to have each horse measured. This is not practicable, even if the athlete has the right to determine at what point pre competition it is done. Post competition there is little option other than the normal checks that take place after Dressage, Marathon and Cones. There should be an additional provision stating that in case of particularly excitable and/or nervous horse, the control may be conducted in a quiet area such as the stable area and/or after the horse being taken out of the carriage.

Thank you - best regards. Marie

Marie de Ronde-Oudemans  
Secretary General ICDA