



International Carriage Drivers Association

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

President's Report

I am delighted to present this first President's Report to the 2025 AGM of the International Carriage Drivers Association ("ICDA").

It is less than one year since the FEI Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with ICDA. Under the terms of the MOU, ICDA is recognised as the the sole international organisation representing the collective views of international drivers. Under its Statutes ICDA 's objectives are to support the growth of carriage driving as as integral part of the FEI's mission to develop equestrian sport globally, to ensure that drivers views on the development of the sport, rules and regulations are represented directly to the sport's governing bodies and to promote respect for the welfare of the horse across all driving disciplines.

The Committee, which includes representatives of all driving classes, has been very active on behalf of its members. As at September 2025 there are 662 members including supporters. Members are drawn from all driving disciplines.

The Committee's focus has been to ensure that the feedback from the Survey conducted at the beginning of 2025 is incorporated into the recommendations for the Full Rules Review which will be finalised at the FEI's General Assembly in November of this year. Our goal has been to address the financial challenges faced by athletes and their support teams, to make the sport more accessible, to address issues of fairness and to simplify where possible the rules. ICDA has also been actively involved in trying to resolve the unforeseen consequences of rules introduced in haste for the 2025 season.

National Federations have long provided an effective means of communicating with the FEI. There are situations though where an organisation like ICDA is able to move swiftly to mobilise support and make representation on a broad basis to the FEI. ICDA was, for example, able quickly to secure letters from four carriage manufacturers pointing out that the Appendix XI rules on carriage measurement, approved by the FEI Board in November 2024 would require significant costs and delays given the number of carriages affected. The FEI subsequently suspended implementation of this rule which is now being re considered as part of the 2025-2026 rules change.

ICDA has also sought to seek clarification on other rule changes introduced this season most notably the way in which the noseband measuring device is applied and tested during competition and the way in which heart checks on arrival at competitions are monitored. Practical solutions have been found in both cases in response to the concerns raised.

Members have expressed a wish to see more active management of the competition calendar. In particular the lack of competitions in August and September in a non Championship year is an issue for drivers in the pony and H1 classes in particular. This season, ICDA has worked with a sponsor, the French Federation and the organisers of the Le Touquet event to introduce a CAI3* class for its event in September. ICDA will work on options for the Pony classes for 2026.

As I write this report, The FEI Driving Committee is reviewing the feedback from the National Federations and ICDA to its proposed rule changes for 2025-2026. ICDA submitted more than 50 rule changes. ICDA has tried to focus on the key issues raised in the Survey conducted at the end of last year. Full details can be found on the website.



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Key areas of attention have been:

- the entry system for championships (for Horses, Ponies and Para driving);
- the dressage draw, the issue which attracted more comment than almost any other in the Survey;
- simplification of the warm up and cool down has been a major priority as has been:
- a proposal to move the First Horse Inspection to an In Harness Inspection prior to the Dressage;
- ICDA is proposing that dressage scores are presented percentages to help spectators and sponsors better understand the scoring system.
- ICDA has been monitoring closely the proposed changes to the Cones Competition. Our recommendation is:
 - o i) to test the new cones in competition before fully rolling out and
 - o ii) to delay the reduction in cone widths for Pony Singles and Horse Singles.
- Athlete safety has been an important topic. The proposed Medical Services Protocol goes some way to addressing some of the gaps in medical coverage at competitions.
- ICDA supports the FEI proposal to recommend the use of helmets whenever on the carriage but not to enforce any further changes to the helmet rules.

Membership of ICDA is currently free. We are fortunate that we have found sponsors who have funded the start up costs. As we move forward we believe that the association needs to be funded in part by its members and make a recommendation to the AGM to introduce a membership fee in 2026.

I would particularly like to thank all the members for their support and in particular for the very extensive feedback from the Survey which has been hugely important in helping the Committee form its views on the Rule Changes.

Boyd Exell, President ICDA
September 17, 2025