

Questions for USDA Listening Session

March 29, 2012

Starkville, Mississippi

By Jo Anne Dempsey

**Congress passed the Horse Protection Act in 1970 to eliminate the cruel and inhumane practice of soaring horses. How close are we to achieving that goal?**

The USDA established HIO's to regulate and to inspect the Tennessee Walking Horse Industry. The USDA approves the rulebooks and the penalty structure for each HIO. In doing so the department has given approval of what the HIO's have done in the past and to what each is currently doing. According to recent figures released on the five major HIO's in the Tennessee Walking Horse Industry, the following statistics on the horse protection act were released for the show season of 2011:

Total Horses Inspected	53,783
Total Violations	955
Compliance rate for 2011	98.3% or 1.7% noncompliance with the HPA.

While 100% compliance would be perfection, no industry, no individual, no agency, no organization, and for that matter not one thing in this world neither operates nor exists that is 100%.

Using this data, one must recognize that these statistics prove that the USDA has indeed achieved its goal of eliminating the practice of soaring horses. To say less would be to say that the USDA has not done the work expected by the taxpayers of this Nation by one of our governmental agencies.

**Can the industry achieve a consensus on how to carry out a self-regulatory program to enforce the Horse Protection Act in a consistent way?**

At the current time, all HIO's recognize the suspensions of others. When an individual is found guilty of violating a rule with one HIO, they can not show at another sanctioned horse show until they have completed their suspension. This agreement between the HIO's has achieved the consensus on uniformity between the HIO's and is very consistent. This and this alone proves that the industry, through the use of HIO's who are trained to recognize violations of the HPA, and who work together can and do have a program in place where by the industry can self-regulate to enforce the Horse Protection Act in a very consistent manner.

**How can the industry reconcile its inherent competition aspect with ensuring compliance with the Horse Protection Act?**

How does any breed of horse that competes against each other for any award reconcile the competition aspect and ensure compliance with the Horse Protection Act or for that matter, the rules of any breed organization. There will always be individuals who want an unfair advantage no matter what type competition is involved. One need only look at the recent exposure of the New Orleans Saints pro- football team and the fact that they were paying players to hurt players on the opposing team to know that where there is competition there will be those who cheat. The industry has only one way to reconcile this issue. Those who cheat must be caught and if the HIO's are doing the work that they are employed to do in the inspection area cheaters will be caught and suffer the consequences of their actions. That is happening now. One would have to say that the industry has this under control now. This is a question that has no answer other than strict enforcement of all rules at all times.

### **What can the USDA do now and in the future to insure compliance?**

The USDA's role in insuring compliance is now and should be in the future the role of observer. The USDA should only attend shows, observe HIO's and their actions and be sure that the HIO is doing their job properly. If the USDA feels the HIO is not effectuating the HPA then they should require that HIO to retrain their DQP's and observe them in action again. If they are still not doing things correctly the USDA should have something in place to penalize the HIO. The industry should be the one in charge of making sure that our breed is in compliance. What is happening now is a total waste of taxpayer's money at a time when our government is talking about having to reduce medical care to both our senior citizens, and to the poor. A horse needs be inspected one time by a competent inspector. This breed of horse is the most inspected, double checked and triple checked animal in the world and it is mostly because activists want to use this breed as a poster child to raise funds for their coffers.

### **Should there be a prohibition of pads?**

Why would we limit or prohibit our pads? Other breeds use pads. Are all breeds to be prohibited from using pads? We have scientific proof in the Auburn Study that proves that the pad does not harm the horse nor does it sore a horse. We as an industry do need to aid the public in being more knowledgably about our pads and the entire shoeing process of our Padded Performance Horse. This is a place where the industry has let the Padded Performance Horse down. The shoe looks strange to many. I recently saw a shoe worn by a dressage horse in Spain that is the most unusual shoe I have ever seen. It looks like what we would call a bar that is under the horses hoof. Shaped like a flying saucer and made of metal with screws. This would be illegal in our breed and yet the dressage world sings its praises. If the dressage horse in both Europe and the United States can use this type shoe then there is not one thing wrong with our pads. In fact I would say our pads are much safer for the animal, more comfortable to the

bottom of the horses hoof and serve to better protect to both leg muscles and the health of the hoof itself.

**Should there be a prohibition of all action devices?**

No. Again we have scientific proof from the Auburn Study that the 6oz. chain does no harm to a horse and it does not sore them in anyway. In a recent article about a study being done in collaboration between the Chair of Equine Sports Medicine at Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine and equine physical therapists at the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Institute in Laxahatchie, Florida, it has been found that chains of up to 24 oz. aid in the rehabilitation of horses with issues to their stifles and aid in strengthening both lower and upper leg muscles. Chains are being used in equine physical therapy. This alone proves that the chain itself does not cause harm, but can and is being used for good. It also proves that the use of it on the front legs of our horses would only improve gait and would lend to strength building in the animal. This is the real reason why our Padded Horses have a high stepping way of going. It has nothing to do with soaring and everything to do with conditioning of the animal over time and the natural ability of the animal to do the proper gait. Why should we prohibit our action device or stimulation device from being used? It is the lift and angle of the pads and the stimulation of the 6 oz. action device to the sensors in the legs above the hock that give the padded performance horse its high stepping gait. It is physical science 101. Take away the pads and action device and the Tennessee Walking Show Horse is gone and with it the breed. People do not attend shows to see flat-shod pleasure horses. There is no reason to register a flat-shod trail mount or a flat-shod horse that shows at a local club show. People come to sanctioned horse shows to be excited by the high stepping padded performance horse. The HPA states that nothing should be done to harm this breed or the industry. The removal of the pads and action devices and the mandatory penalties will destroy this breed of horse.

## bush capital horse forum

**Health and Wellbeing => General Health => Topic started by: Snafflebit on November 10, 2011, 09:39:19 PM**

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Title: **Leg Weights Help Rehabilitate Hind Limb Gait Issues**

Post by: **Snafflebit on November 10, 2011, 09:39:19 PM**

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This is interesting - I've seen the weights used on Totilas' front legs in training & they certainly work in that case!

Leg Weights Help Rehabilitate Hind Limb Gait Issues by: Stacey Oke, DVM, MSc  
November 04 2011

Unlike in human medicine, where physical therapy (PT) is widely embraced and an abundance of science supports the use of various PT techniques and tools, the science supporting PT in horses is lacking. This leaves veterinarians and horse owners alike wondering what works and what doesn't.

"In an attempt to provide a scientific basis for the use of PT and rehabilitation in the equine industry, I focused my research efforts on evidence-based research studies in this area," said Hilary Clayton, BVMS, PhD, MRCVS, Mary Anne McPhail Dressage Chair in Equine Sports Medicine at Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine and Vice President of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Clayton, together with equine physical therapist Narelle Stubbs, BAppSc (Phty), MAnimST (Animal Physiotherapy) of the Animal Rehabilitation Institute, in Loxahatchee, Fla., has published several studies assessing how PT might improve toe dragging and short striding in horses. In these studies researchers attached bracelets or light leg weights around horses' pasterns to stimulate receptors in the skin.

"This simulation results in activation of specific muscles that change the horse's movement pattern," Clayton explained. "With practice, these changes can reestablish normal coordination patterns and strengthen muscles that have become inactivated during lameness. Stimulation of the hind pastern results in a reflex response involving contraction of the hock muscles, which results in flexion of both the hock and stifle joints."

In one study published in the April 2010 edition of the Equine Veterinary Journal, Clayton and Stubbs stimulated horses' pastern skin using bracelets consisting of a loose strap with lightweight chains (less than 2 ounces) that brushed gently against the skin of the pastern and coronet as the hoof moved. Motion analysis showed that when the horses were wearing the bracelets the height of the hind hoof during the swing phase (i.e., when the foot is off the ground) increased as much as threefold at a trot due to increased flexion primarily at the stifle and hock joints.

"This (increased flexion) was due primarily to increased activation of the flexors and extensor muscles of the hock," Clayton relayed. "Thus, this technique appears beneficial for toe dragging, but because there was no change in hip flexion, this technique would not be expected to improve short striding."

In another study published in the March 2011 edition of the Equine Veterinary Journal the researchers evaluated using 24-ounce ankle weights wrapped around the hind pasterns.

"The response was similar to the bracelets in that increased flexion of the stifle and hock causing a threefold increase in hoof elevation in the swing phase was noted," Clayton said. "Unlike the bracelets, the flexor muscles had to work harder to overcome the greater resistance of the weighted limb and pull the hoof off the ground into the swing phase. Then, in late swing the extensor muscles have to work harder to slow the forward motion. Together these findings indicate that leg weights are useful for muscle strengthening."

In Happy Trails, veteran horseman and author Les Sellnow uses his firsthand knowledge of training and riding the trail horse to prepare every horse enthusiast for this fast-growing American recreational activity.

Most recently, Clayton, Stubbs, and colleagues compared the effects of four different types of stimulation devices attached to the hind feet of trotting horses. These devices included loose, 10-gram straps, lightweight (55 grams) stimulators, a limb weight (700 grams), and a combination of a limb weight with a lightweight stimulator.

"We found that both the type and weight of the foot stimulators affected the hock and stifle joints differently, suggesting that different types of foot stimulators are appropriate for the rehabilitation of specific hind limb gait issues such as toe dragging and short striding," concluded Clayton. "We are now evaluating the value of trotting over rails as a way to activate the hip musculature and increase stride length."

The study, "Evaluation of biomechanical effects of four stimulation devices placed on the hind feet of trotting horses," was published in the November 2011 edition of The American Journal of Veterinary Research.

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Title: **Re: Leg Weights Help Rehabilitate Hind Limb Gait Issues**

Post by: **Oedin** on **November 10, 2011, 10:08:47 PM**

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will need to read this again tomorrow when my brain works, but it sounds interesting!

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Title: **Re: Leg Weights Help Rehabilitate Hind Limb Gait Issues**

Post by: **Anokino** on **November 11, 2011, 06:23:15 AM**

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Very interesting.

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Title: **Re: Leg Weights Help Rehabilitate Hind Limb Gait Issues**

Post by: **heifer** on **November 11, 2011, 11:34:44 AM**

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I read that yesterday, and then discussed it with my vet. He liked the idea of using poles/cavallettis more.



PubMed

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AVMA

[Am J Vet Res. 2011 Nov;72\(11\):1489-95.](#)

## Evaluation of biomechanical effects of four stimulation devices placed on the hind feet of trotting horses.

[Clayton HM](#), [Lavagnino M](#), [Kaiser LJ](#), [Stubbs NC](#).

Mary Anne McPhail Equine Performance Center, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA. [claytonh@cvm.msu.edu](mailto:claytonh@cvm.msu.edu)

### Abstract

**OBJECTIVE:** To compare effects of 4 types of stimulation devices attached to the hind feet on hoof flight, joint angles, and net joint powers of trotting horses.

**ANIMALS:** 8 clinically normal horses.

**PROCEDURES:** Horses were evaluated under 5 conditions in random order: no stimulators, loose straps (10 g), lightweight tactile stimulators (55 g), limb weights (700 g), and limb weights with tactile stimulators (700 g). Reflective markers on the hind limbs were tracked during the swing phase of 6 trotting trials performed at consistent speed to determine peak hoof heights and flexion angles of the hip, stifle, tarsal, and metatarsophalangeal joints. Inverse dynamic analysis was used to calculate net joint energies. Comparisons among stimulators were made.

**RESULTS:** Peak hoof height was lowest for no stimulators (mean  $\pm$  SD, 5.42  $\pm$  1.38 cm) and loose straps (6.72  $\pm$  2.19 cm), intermediate for tactile stimulators (14.13  $\pm$  7.33 cm) and limb weights (16.86  $\pm$  15.93 cm), and highest for limb weights plus tactile stimulators (24.35  $\pm$  13.06 cm). Compared with no stimulators, net tarsal energy generation increased for tactile stimulators, limb weights, and limb weights plus tactile stimulators, but only the weighted conditions increased net energy generation across the hip joint.

**CONCLUSIONS AND CLINICAL RELEVANCE:** The type and weight of foot stimulators affected the magnitude of the kinematic and kinetic responses and the joints affected. These findings suggest that different types of foot stimulators are appropriate for rehabilitation of specific hind limb gait deficits, such as toe dragging and a short stride.

PMID: 22023127 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

**Publication Types, MeSH Terms**

**LinkOut - more resources**



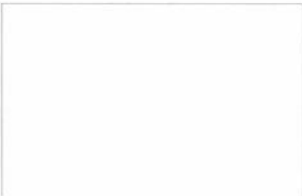
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2011

## Dressage, Fuego-Style: It's What's Underneath That Counts as Euro Rocker Shoes Score for Spain

Update: The horseshoe explained in this article is the subject of an update post published 18 February 2012 with a dressage horse in California. Be sure to click on this link after you read this original story: [ON THE \(Dressage\) CASE: Euro Rock 'n Roll Horseshoe Evolves with Vet-Farrier Collaboration, California Style](#)



Fuego XII, now known as Fuego de Cardenas, is one of the top ten FEI dressage horses in the world, and probably the most successful FEI dressage horse in Spanish history. Spanish horses are usually short-backed and great at piaffe but lack the extension of the northern European warmbloods. But the Spaniards are working on that... (Mrs. Flax photo)



When the great Spanish dressage horse enters the arena at an FEI musical freestyle event, you know who it is. You hear that staccato Spanish flamenco music and he starts piaffing in perfect time.

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**Fran Jurga**  
On Gloucester Harbor,  
Massachusetts,

United States

Hoofcare Publishing chronicles progress in the art and science of preventing, recognizing and treating lameness problems in horses. Written for and by the dedicated professionals from all fields who are at work in this rewarding pursuit, Hoofcare supports a diverse worldwide community of subscribing professionals via an award-



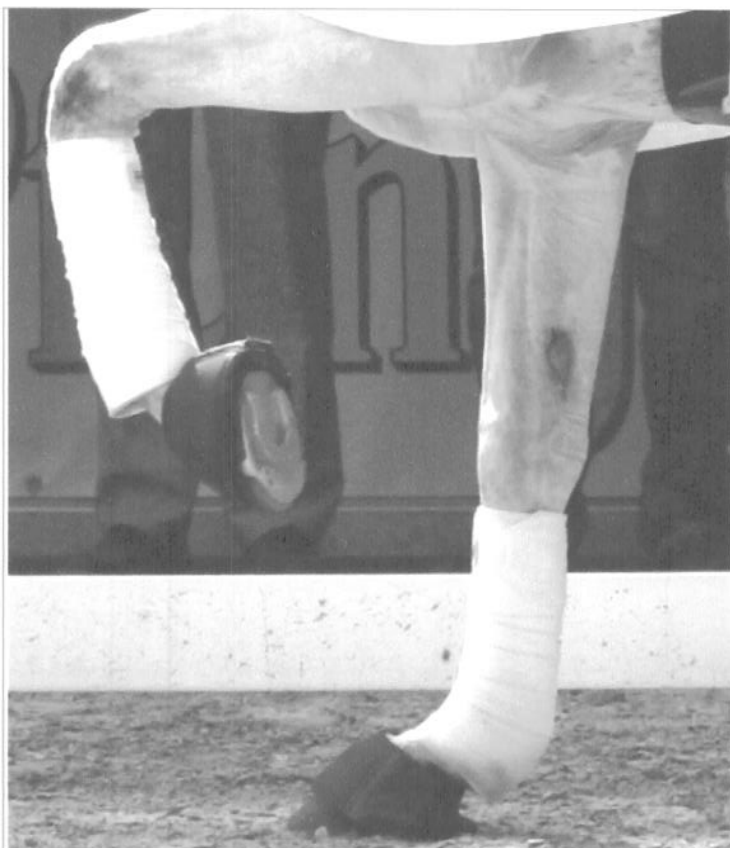


Every champion seems to have a special shoe. This horse wears an open-frog rock 'n roll.

But underneath, that horse is pure rock n roll.

Although someone suggested that, when it came time for *The Hoof Blog* to show his shoes, the soundtrack should change to the theme from *Twilight Zone*.

In the past, we've shared the news that the USA's top dressage horse, Ravel, ridden by California's Steffen Peters, won the FEI World Cup in high-tech plastic Epona shoes. And that when triple-world champion Totilas left The Netherlands, his new German management team switched his minimalist steel Rob Renirie open-heeled shoes for heart bars.



Like all FEI dressage horses, Fuego is wrapped and wears bell boots except when he is the ring. Who'd ever know what's under those bell boots? (Closeup of top image, by Mrs Flax)

At the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games in Lexington, Kentucky last year, it wasn't only the Dutch superhorse Totilas who captivated the audience. No one was counting on the big gray Spanish PRE stallion Fuego XII (now known as Fuego de Cardenas). He and his rider, Juan Manuel Munoz Diaz, had the crowd roaring and clapping. Their music was contagious.

The rider played to the crowd and showboated with some one-handed

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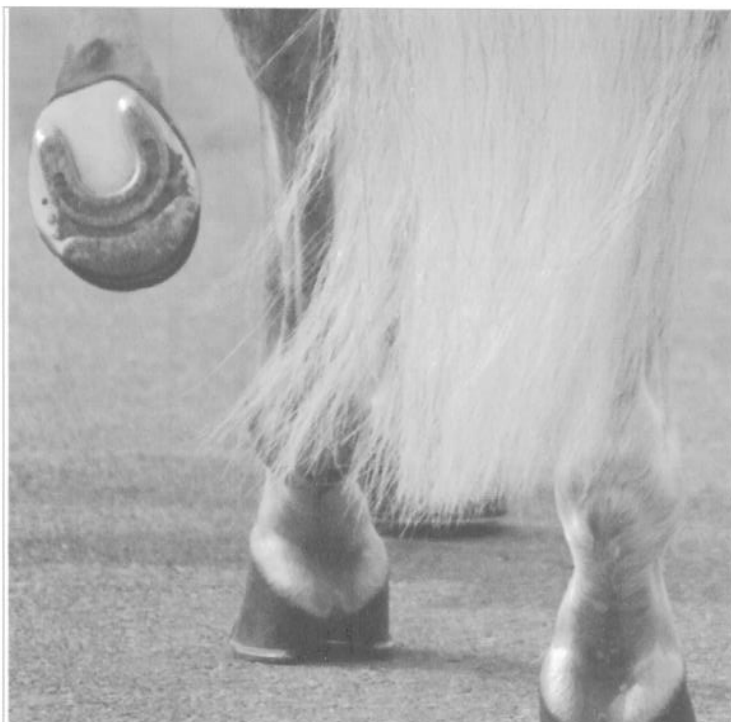


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changes down the center line, and the horse just had that *look*, even if his movements weren't as fluidly extravagant as Totilas or as precisionist as the USA's Ravel. (Watch Fuego's WEG freestyle video [here](#).)

A star was born. And back home in Spain, a superstar was confirmed.



Fuego at the start of the Alltech 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games. No one seemed to notice his unusual shoes except journalist Erin Ryder of Kentucky Equine Research. Luckily, she thought they were unusual enough to record. (photo courtesy of Erin Ryder)

That could be the end of the story right there, except that the horse had a secret weapon. His hooves were shod with a special shoe rarely seen in the USA. It was featured in an article a few years ago in *Hoofcare & Lameness*, so dust off your back issues and re-read *Rock n Roll Flying Saucers* by Hans Castelijn.

Luckily for us, our friend Erin Ryder of Kentucky Equine Research happened to snap a couple of photos of Fuego's feet when his bell boots were off during the dressage trot-up inspection.

But once the Games were over, attempts to contact the rider and talk about the shoes weren't successful. It's not good form to expose a horse's feet after the fact, since he might have been wearing the shoes only for that competition. So the story of Fuego's fancy feet languished in the *Hoof Blog* incubator for a year.

Call it a cooling-off period.



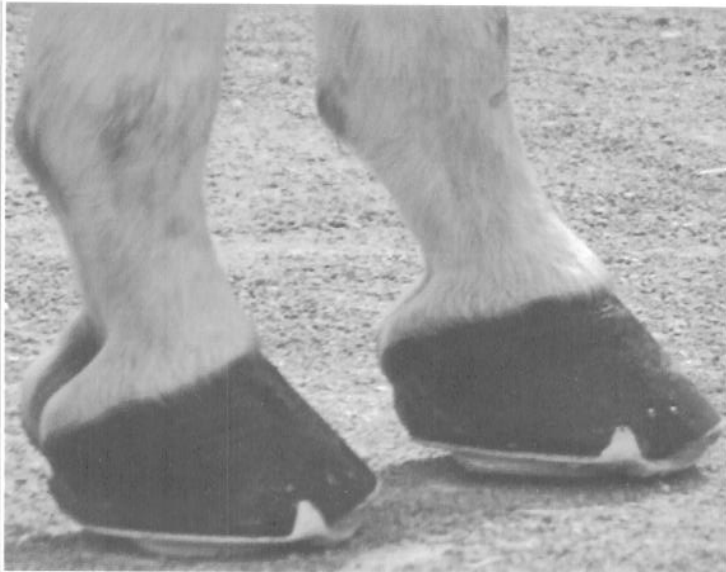
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How did Erin Ryder happen to notice that Fuego's shoes were different? The trot-up for the veterinary inspection is conducted on a hard surface, not a soft deformable footing. When Fuego stands on a hard surface, it's obvious that he's bearing weight somewhere other than his hoof walls. (Photo courtesy of Erin Ryder)

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Meanwhile, Fuego has continued to compete on the world stage and has continued to make top-ten finishes. In June, he won the CDI4\* Grand Prix at Wiesbaden in Germany and his performance at the FEI European Championships earned Spain a place at the London 2012 Olympics.

Enter a raft of new photos and videos of Fuego and evidence that he is still wearing those crazy shoes.

Fuego's time had come. And maybe those shoes weren't so crazy after all.

I decided to approach the story from the angle of the shoes and updating the article rather than the famous horse, so I contacted the author, Italian vet/farrier Hans Castelijns.



A closed-heel 3-D rock n roll shoe.  
(© Hans Castelijns photo)

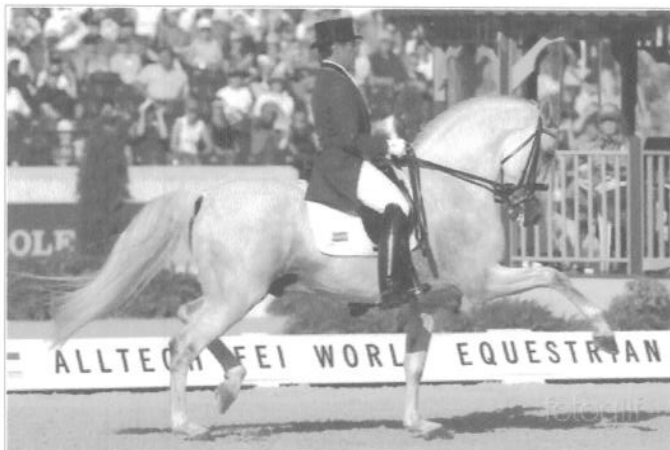
I don't usually call people overseas without setting up an appointment first by email, but this was an exception. I fired up Skype and dialed his cell phone number. To my embarrassment, he answered and said that he was sorry he couldn't speak with me, he was traveling. He was in the beautiful city of Seville, Spain, as a matter of fact, and enjoying a fabulous dinner. Could he speak

with me another time?

Of course. Seville. What a coincidence that I was calling an Italian vet about a Spanish horse and he was in Spain.

It turned out that he wasn't just on holiday in Spain; he was working there. Shoeing a horse. And the horse was Fuego.

Cue the *Twilight Zone* theme. What are the chances of *that*?



CAREN FIROUZ/Reuters/Fotoglif

As it turns out, Hans Castelijns has been shoeing the big gray horse for almost three years.

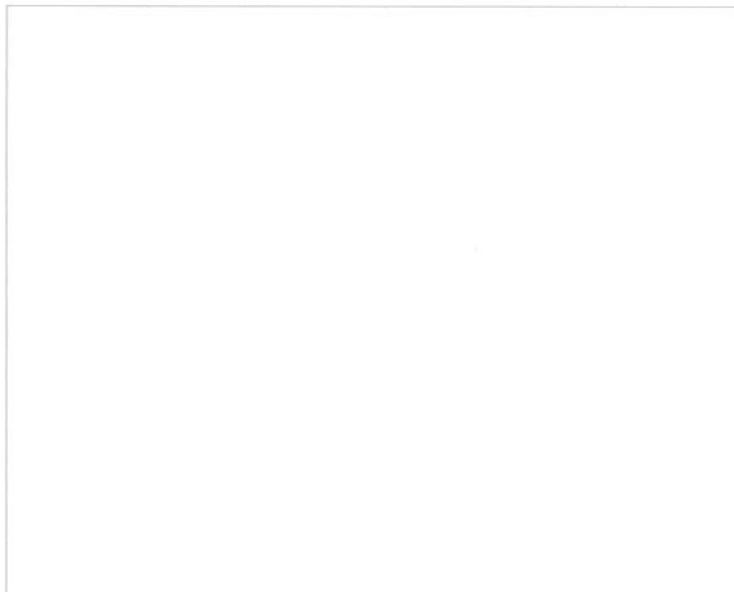
He explained the shoe this way: "Contrary to what is known as the (Ric Redden) "Rock'n Roll" shoe in the U.S., these (European rock 'n roll) shoes do not only work in the sagittal plane (toe to heel), but also in the latero-medial sense.

"They are more appropriately classified as belonging to the "full rolling motion" family of shoes: They have a large ground surface, which is, however, concentrated under the middle of the foot, away from the outer edges of the hoof.



Hans Castelijns, DVM, Farrier  
(Fran Jurga/Hoofcare archive)

"The same concept exists at least since the Middle Ages and is also explained in the "old" (edition of) *Adams Lameness in Horses*. The novelty is perhaps only in the use of lightweight aluminum alloys."



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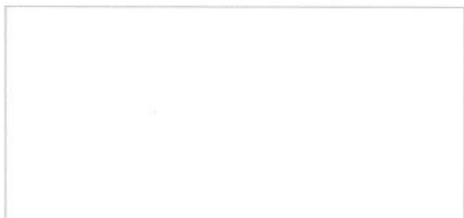
A different type of full rolling motion shoe in aluminum from the case photos of Michael Wildenstein, probably an Equi+. Notice the dome effect. (© Hoofcare Publishing and Michael Wildenstein)

- Dr. Chris Pollitt's Laminitis Research site
- Dr Chris Pollitt's Wild Horse Research Studies
- HOOF PROJECT: Dr. David Hood's Hoof Research Site
- McPhail Center for Equine Performance, home page of Dr. Hilary Clayton
- Animal Health Foundation Laminitis Information
- Equine Science Update News from Hoofcare's British affiliate
- Dr. Lisa Lancaster's hoof consultation web site
- Forging Ahead, home page of Paul Goodness and his group farrier practice
- The Jurga Report: Fran's blog for Equus Magazine
- AAPF: professionalfarriers.com

Up to now, the only place in America I have seen the Euro rock n roll shoes is hanging on the wall at the Rood and Riddle Podiatry Center and in Michael Wildenstein's arsenal at Cornell vet school. This is in spite of Hans Castelijns' ambitious worldwide lecture schedule and evangelical enthusiasm for the concept of a full rolling motion of performance horses that need some help. He does a very good job of explaining the mechanical principles of the shoe, but the takers are few.

Hans continues, "As the competition arenas become stiffer (less penetrable) due to the use of geotextile-type surfaces, the large amount of sideways work dressage horses perform (pirouette, small circles, shoulder-in etc.) can, in selected cases, be facilitated by the use of these shoes.

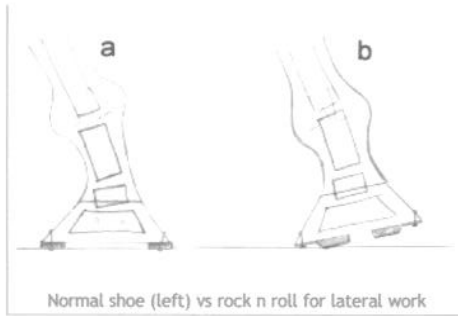
"Reining arenas are not very deep, either (as they have to enable sliding stops) and some reiners at the top level also benefit from these shoes. This seems logical as these horses also have to excel at lateral movements, like the spin. Italy was very successful at the European championships in Austria (shod this way)."



But the shoe looks like a flying saucer. What it does is take the horse's directional gear box out of the way of the external hoof wall and place it

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Normal shoe (left) vs rock n roll for lateral work

squarely under the horse's center of weightbearing.

*Illustration at left courtesy of Dr. Hans Castelijn.*

In doing so, it creates a pivot under the foot. It's been touted as being very

kind to a horse with any type of ringbone issues, but you can also see that the plate-like platform fitted to the full foot, along with the aluminum-dense inner pivot shoe, keep the hoof wall out of first-impact with the footing in a dressage arena. Many horses might take very kindly to that change.



Where the horseshoe meets the footing: I love this display of horseshoes and footing samples used to explain why and how horseshoes function differently on, for instance, soft but firm (synthetic) vs soft and yielding (sand) arenas. Features that enhance a shoe for one surface may be a liability on another. Horse foot shape (especially width) and pastern length and angle also affect how the foot interacts with different surfaces. This is an area deserving much, much more study. (Note Euro rock 'n roll shoe at far right, in front of case.) Photo courtesy of Germany's Loic Entwistle.

*Note: there is a shoe design in the United States, also called a rock 'n roll shoe, but it is based on different mechanics and was popularized by Dr. Ric Redden. The European rock 'n roll shoe is made in Italy by a company called Colleoni.*

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The end result: Here's Fuego doing a special performance in the SICAM arena this winter. He's the most popular horse in Spain right now, with good reason. At the otherwise-staid freestyle during the World Equestrian Games, no one was expecting one-tempi changes on a left-handed circle and a dare-devil one-handed one-tempi parade up the center line. Juanma and Fuego woke up the audience, and perhaps even woke up the sport of dressage a little bit.

What part of his success is owed to his shoes? Who knows, but he has been amazingly consistent in his scoring and persistent in his appearances at major events. Something is keeping this horse going strong. The Spaniards dare to be different in the performance of the required movements and carry that difference all the way down to the horse's hooves.

And all the way to bringing in someone who will dare to try things that might help a horse get around the arena with less effort, less stress on his joints and soft tissue, and more points on the scoreboard.

*Thanks, as always, to Dr Hans Castelijns for making us think, and for testing and proving his theories with good work. He could easily have let it be known he was behind this horse but he modestly let me figure it out. I have a feeling he knew I would line up the dots, sooner or later. I'm just sorry it was so much later.*

*Dare to be different, readers and friends. No one's ever made fun of Totilas, Ravel and Fuego because they are amazed that such supremely talented horses would be shod differently--whether it was Totilas' minimalism at WEG or his heart-bars this spring or Fuego and Ravel's eclectic choice of footwear. It worked for them. Maybe it's true that there an ideal shoe and an ideal trim for every horse; the trick is to find it and fine tune it and let the horse's soundness reward your independent thinking.*

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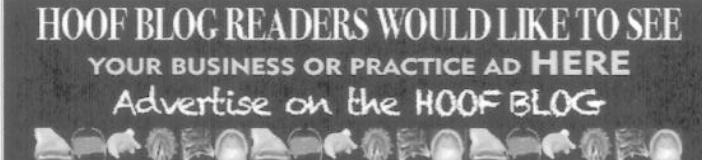
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Castelijns, Hans: Flying saucers and rock n' roll: Full rolling motion shoes in equine podiatry: Hoofcare + Lameness 78.

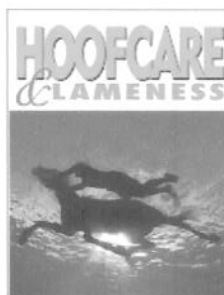
Castelijns, Hans: Shoeing for Palmar Hoof Pain (and many other papers) at <http://www.farriery.eu>

Caudron et al: Radiological assessment of the effects of a full rolling motion shoe during asymmetrical bearing: Equine Veterinary Journal Suppl. 23 (1997)

Russell, William; *Scientific Horseshoeing*, various editions, discusses the benefits of rolling motion shoes for conformational and lameness compensation.



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