

IN BRIEF

PROSECUTORS PAY HUNT CASE COSTS

A JUDGE has ruled that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has to bear the entire costs of a failed prosecution under the Hunting Act.

At a cost hearing on 27 April, the judge announced that the costs of £57,786 would be awarded against the CPS, after a failure to provide photographic evidence.

Three members of the Grove & Rufford were convicted in March 2017 of hunting a wild mammal with dogs but all were acquitted on appeal this March.

It was revealed that the prosecution had failed to show photographs that would have supported the defendants' case.

£50K GRANTS IN COUNTRY SCHEME

APPLICATIONS have opened for rural groups and charities to apply for grants of up to £50,000 from the Prince's Countryside Fund.

The fund supports a range of projects including grassroots schemes and community groups.

Fund director Claire Saunders said: "We want to hear from innovative and creative community-led projects that are responding to local needs."

• Visit princescountrysidefund.org.uk by 14 June

INSULIN RESPONSE IN OLDER EQUINES

EVEN healthy older horses may have higher insulin responses than younger equines, research indicates.

The study, carried out by feed manufacturer Spillers with the Michigan State University and scientific authority Waltham, was aimed at investigating the relationship between ageing, dietary adaptation and insulin dysregulation, which carries the risk of laminitis.

It measured insulin responses to meals rich in starch or sugar and starch, and found these increased with the age of the horse.

"This means restricting starch and sugar in [older horses'] diet, especially those with risk factors such as obesity or PPID [Cushing's]," said Spillers' Clare Barfoot.

Compensation clampdown could affect riders' claims



Calls have been made to exempt riders from the changes

A CHANGE in legislation could prevent riders from receiving compensation if they are injured in a road accident.

The Civil Liability Bill is aimed to clamp down on whiplash claims among motorists, and as part of the same reform package, the government plans to increase the small claims threshold.

This five-fold increase — from £1,000 to £5,000 — could pose difficulties for riders injured in a road accident as it would mean personal injury claims of up to £5,000 would be dealt with in a small claims court.

This means victims would be unable to reclaim the cost of legal representation, so it could discourage them from seeking compensation.

"Riders would therefore find it harder to obtain legal representation for claims in this £1,000 to £5,000 bracket, which can include more serious injuries such as a fractured

By RACHAEL TURNER

elbow, a punctured lung or broken ribs," Hanna Campbell of HorseSolicitor told *H&H*.

Catherine West, Labour MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, has put forward a motion to exempt

vulnerable road users from the planned changes.

"I want to see ministers apply common sense when it comes to law-making," she told *H&H*.

"Vulnerable road users should be protected on our roads, not punished by the government if they are unfortunate enough to have a non-fault accident.

"I hope that MPs on all sides will show their support and sign the motion."

British Horse Society director of safety Alan Hiscox told *H&H* the society "fully supports" such an exemption.

"We are actively informing the equine community, through our members and volunteers, about these potential changes," he said.

"We want them to be aware of this issue and what it could mean to them.

"This could have a real effect on horse riders following an accident; by working together with other vulnerable road users, we hope that we can influence a positive change for all."

FATAL COLLISION

CHARITY BRAKE recently recognised the efforts of Maria Caulfield, MP for Lewes, by awarding her a parliamentary road safety award.

Ms Caulfield has been working towards improving the safety of country lanes for all road users, following a serious collision involving East Sussex-based rider Beverley Berrill (horse and hound.co.uk, 11 November).

Ms Berrill spent 10 days in hospital after the collision and her horse was put down.

Ms Caulfield presented a petition in parliament signed by more than 1,500 people calling for measures including a reduced speed limit and increased signage warning drivers to be mindful of other road users, in Ditchling, Street and Westmeston.

"This is such an important issue," said Ms Caulfield. "I was pleased to be able to present this petition and show this strength of feeling in the House of Commons."

More training for show officials

JOB descriptions and training will be provided for FEI officials as part of a new code of conduct.

The FEI is also hoping to recruit more officials and plans to ensure they rotate around different events every few years.

It is working towards abolishing the upper age limits — which vary between roles, disciplines and countries — and instead introducing competency-based role-specific evaluations.

"Putting something else in

place is difficult, and taking more time than anticipated," said Mark Samuel, chairman of the FEI officials working group, at the FEI sports forum on 27 March.

He added officials' ability to do the job will be measured on competency rather than age.

FEI jumping course-director Frances Hekeith-Jones said the group is working on 110 job descriptions across disciplines.

"All the FEI disciplines have grown enormously over the years

and that means the expectations of officials have also grown," she said. "A lot of officials aren't clear what the expectations are, so we're setting them up to fail."

Mr Samuel added the job descriptions will give "clarity" to officials on their responsibilities, and gives a basis for evaluation.

The forum also heard English language training is available to officials on the FEI Campus site and a fund is being set up to support officials' development. LE