



Press release

The 12th European Equine Health & Nutrition Congress!

By D.A. van Doorn, PhD & A.D. Ellis, PhD

Over 274 delegates from 20 countries attended the 12th edition of the European Equine Health & Nutrition Congress (EEHNC). Hosted by Utrecht University in the Netherlands, the congress took place from March 12th to the afternoon of March 15th. The event brought together internationally recognized specialists in nutrition, veterinary scientists, veterinarians, industry representatives, and equine professionals.

Debby Jaarsma, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, officially opened the 12th EEHNC.

It was a full house! Dr. David van Doorn (Utrecht University, Anivado Education & Training, Science4Animals), Secretary General of the EEHNC and organizer of the 12th edition's program, warmly welcomed the delegates.

Peter Bollen, President of the EEHNC, founder of Cavalor (Initiator of the EEHNC) expressed his gratitude to all speakers, scientific committee members, academic partners, and the hosting partner, Utrecht University. This edition of the congress was made possible with the support of over 70 experts and volunteers.

The 12th EEHNC featured a comprehensive program of workshops and demonstrations, including sessions on exercise physiology and gait analysis. This year's congress focused on the nutrition of both healthy performance horses and those with muscle disorders, with a particular emphasis on exercise physiology and 'Feeding the Muscle.'

The program also covered key updates on energy provision, electrolyte balance, thermoregulation, and clinical perspectives related to equine nutrition and performance. Multidisciplinary panel discussions provided attendees with valuable insights into the nutritional management of horses, with a focus on performance, muscle health, and diagnosing muscle-related issues. Additionally, the congress offered specialized tracks for veterinarians, addressing topics such as cardiology, respiratory health, muscle disorder diagnostics, parasitology, and insulin resistance.

Gastrointestinal health remained a key focus at our congress. This topic was explored in a dedicated research track presented by Robin van den Boom and Louis Penning (Utrecht University). On Saturday, a plenary session covered themes such as gastric ulcers and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). One key takeaway from Dr. Robin van den Boom and Lieuwke Kranenburg (Utrecht University) was that gluten intolerance—and possibly other (over)sensitivities—may play a role in some cases of IBD.

*(*see pictures below)*



Free Communications Award

Dr. Joe Pagan accepted the Free Communications Award on behalf of Iona Robinson who presented her study carried out with Kentucky Equine Research as part of her internship. Peter Bollen, president of the EEHNC provided the check to Joe Pagan.

The study looked at the effects of two cooling modalities on rectal, middle gluteal and pectoral muscle temperature recovery following treadmill exercise and concluded that hosing immediately post exercise shortened muscle temperature recovery rates.

GEHNA

A pre-congress special Industry Meeting was held on March 12, where a new initiative for global collaboration between the nutrition industry, scientists, and academics was launched. As founding members, Cavalor and Kentucky Equine Research invited attendees to join the Global Equine Health and Nutrition Association (GEHNA).

GEHNA's mission is to promote global unification and harmonization in equine health and nutrition. The association aims to foster a collaborative environment that drives impactful research and aligned practices, ultimately enhancing the health, care, and performance of horses worldwide.

Companies interested in shaping the future of equine health and nutrition are invited to join GEHNA as charter members.

📧 More info: <https://www.equine-congress.com/organisation/gehna>

12th EEHNC Proceedings:

If you are interested in the summaries provided by the speakers, the Proceedings of the 12th European Equine Health & Nutrition Congress are available as a booklet or as PDF. The proceedings contain full papers of invited speakers and abstracts from the poster session. The proceedings are available for purchase on the congress website www.equine-congress.com through the account section which can be accessed via the top right corner of every page. Registered participants can download a PDF version of the proceedings in the same account section, using their login and password they entered during registration.

Some experts have recorded take home messages that can be found on the EEHNC YouTube Channel.

For questions regarding this press release, please contact: registration@equine-congress.com or +32 (0) 9 242 82 29.



Pictures of the 12th EEHNC



Congratulations! 🏆 Peter Bollen, President of the EEHNC, presented the 12th EEHNC Free Communication Award—a €500 cheque—to the Kentucky Equine Research Group.



International renowned expert in muscle diagnostics Dr. Stephanie Valberg (ValbergNMDL.com) provide a dual presentation with nutrition expert Dr. Joe D. Pagan (President Kentucky Equine Research) about the role of Nutrition in Managing Exertional Rhabdomyolysis and Myofibrillar Myopathy (Picture). An important take home message was that in combination with exercise, nutrition is an essential component of managing horses with myopathies. The type of diet needed depends on the specific myopathy in question.



Internationally renowned consultant and veterinary specialist Rachel Murray delivered presentations on the importance of muscle development in conditioning the healthy horse. She also discussed current knowledge on rehabilitating horses with muscle problems, emphasizing how the type of muscle issue influences both the timing and approach to rehabilitation.



Internationally renowned expert Pat Harris (Waltham Petcare Science Institute) led an expert discussion on electrolyte supplementation for performance horses, featuring speakers Harold Schott (Michigan State University) and Michael Lindinger (Nutraceutical Alliance).



This year's congress showcased two exciting new technologies. A handheld NIRS analyzer for forage analysis was introduced, and participants had the opportunity to tour the Eurofins Agro laboratories in Wageningen. The tour provided insights into nutrient analysis using both traditional methods and the new handheld NIRS system.



Dr. Beerend Hierck from Utrecht University presented AvatarZOO, an augmented reality system designed to enhance the learning of spatial anatomy across various animal species, including horses. Participants had the opportunity to explore anatomical layers in a highly immersive, interactive 3D environment. The AvatarZOO XR technology has the potential to revolutionize veterinary education in the near future. For more information, visit <https://avatarzoo.sites.uu.nl>



*Lieuwke Kranenburg (Utrecht University) discussed the challenges that inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) presents for both equine **veterinarians** and **equine nutritionists**.*



Dr. Robin van den Boom (Utrecht University) presenting in the research track in which several research groups showcased the use of several in vitro technologies to evaluate the effect of nutrition on gastrointestinal health.

Track I: Nutrition & Performance: Warming up! Introduction in Energy metabolism of the performance horse and measuring performance



Tania Art and Irene Tosi (University of Liège) provided an overview of cutting-edge insights and fundamental principles in equine exercise physiology in their talk, Introduction to Energy Metabolism of the Performance Horse and Measuring Performance.

Track III: Internal medicine: Cardiology & Respiration

Dr. Cornélie Westermann, Astrid van den Brom – Spierenburg (Utrecht University), and Dr. Gunther Van Loon (UGent) demonstrated various techniques related to equine cardiology and respiratory health. The Utrecht University Clinic now offers dynamic video endoscopy, enabling the assessment of airway function in nearly any exercise environment.



Dr. Cornélie Westermann provided insights into new technologies in the Cardiology & Respiration track.



Dr. Gunther Van Loon (Ghent University) livestreamed demonstrations of various non-invasive techniques for assessing equine cardiac health.



Track IV: Research & Nutrition

Delegates attending the Research & Nutrition track (sponsored by Premier Nutrition) visited the Animal Nutrition Group (ANU) and the Respiration Chambers.

PhD student Mary Maxfield and Dr. Louis Penning (Utrecht University) provided updates on the BACIN2DLIVERproject, focusing on organoid research.



In the Premier Nutrition-sponsored track, PhD candidate Mary Maxfield updated delegates on the BACIN2DLIVERproject—an academia-industry collaboration supervised by Wageningen University (WUR) and Utrecht University.

Industry partners contributing to this project include Madbarn, PAVO, and Cavalor.



Dr. Wilbert Pellikaan (WUR) explaining the In vitro gas production technique in the Premier nutrition sponsored track.



Saskia van Laar from the **Animal Nutrition Laboratory** demonstrated the **in vitro gas production technique**.

As part of the **Premier Nutrition-sponsored track**, delegates also had the opportunity to practice sampling **methane** from the bottles.



Dr. Brian Nielsen and Dr. Robin van den Boom listened as **Sven Alferink (WUR)** explained the **research potential** of the **respiration chambers**.



During a tour at **Eurofins Agro**, delegates explored various applications of the **NIRS technique**, including the newly introduced **handheld NIRS device**, which allows for the **direct assessment of forage nutrient content** for horses

Track V: Technology & Performance Monitoring

In the Boehringer Ingelheim sponsored track Technology & Performance Monitoring, Carolien Munsters (Equine Integration, Picture), Esther Siegers demonstrated how fitness & workload can be monitored and controlled in practice. Filipe Bragança (Sleip, picture; Equine Gait Analysis Society (EGAS)) and Aagje Hardeman (DataHorse; EGAS) prepared a demonstration and a presentation regarding various gait analysis techniques.



In the **Boehringer Ingelheim-sponsored track, Technology & Performance Monitoring**, **Carolien Munsters** (Equine Integration) and **Esther Siegers** demonstrated how **fitness and workload** can be effectively monitored and managed in practice. Additionally, **Filipe Bragança** (Sleip; Equine Gait Analysis Society (EGAS)) and **Aagje Hardeman** (DataHorse; EGAS) presented and demonstrated **various gait analysis techniques**.



Track VI: Vets & Specialists



The Cavalor sponsored track Vets & Specialists
As part of the EEHNC program, Cavalor proudly sponsors the Vets and Specialists Track. This exclusive track dived deep into key aspects of sport horse health, featuring world-class experts who will share their latest insights and research findings.