

The LG Bridle™ Mailer

Winter 2007 Feature:

Interview with Monika Lehmenkühler

Excerpt from Pegasus (German Magazine) on June 1st, 2007

Ms. Lehmenkühler, there are numerous bitless bridles on the market that look very similar. What is unique about the LG Bridle?

Monika Lehmenkühler: Correct, there are numerous bitless bridles on the market, which I have tested all over the years. Every one of them has its own drawback. The most common Hackamore bridles have too much leverage, resulting in the horse tucking in and therefore avoiding the influence of the rider. The lateral impact is very poor as well. The sidepull on the other hand allows for very good lateral control, but lacks in the vertical control, unless the rider is especially accomplished. Mostly however, the material used in sidepulls is too severe for establishing consistent contact with the reins, which is essential in classical riding (at least during basic training). The bridge of the nose is thus quickly injured. Newer inventions such as the 'Bitless Bridle' or even the 'Merothische bridle' desensitize the horse over time.

Why?

The pull on the reins shortens the leather extensions, which are designed to take effect on the poll and the side of the head. With the moving forward of the hands, after the horse's yielding, these do not immediately or even not at all release, whereby the reward for the horse fails to appear. The horse becomes dull. In comparison, the LG Bridle has a very small lever, and the horses do not as easily tuck in their head. The LG Bridle

also has excellent lateral control, which is even better understood by the horse than it is the case with bits. With the yielding of the rider's hands, any pressure is immediately eliminated. Additionally according to many customers' testimonials the LG Bridle is visually an enjoyment.

Where do you see the advantages and disadvantages to bitless equitation overall and in particular with the LG Bridle?

The advantages of bitless riding are obvious. The horse can breathe more easily. They are more focused. The hind quarters are clearly more active. One can't hurt the sensitive mouth, even with uncontrolled hands. A disadvantage could be, that the rider is punished more quickly by the horse, when working too much and hard with the hands (I see this as an advantage though!), because this bridle replaces the pain in a sensitive mouth with the uncomfortable pressure on nose, chin and poll.

Can one ride with the LG Bridle just like with a normal snaffle?

Yes, I have statements from an amazing amount of customers, who say that, when closing their eyes, it feels like riding with a bit.

Does the training of the horse look different?

Basically it is not any different than with a bitted bridle. However, one should bear in mind, that it is possible to quickly move the horse away from one's hand, just as well as it is supposed to work with bits.

You nearly criticize bits to be animal abuse. Hardly any rider wants to torture their horse. How is it though, that so many people, of all disciplines and at every level do ride their horse with snaffle or curb bit.

It is incomprehensible to me, that many riders simply ignore this problem. [When I claim that I love horses, I will try by all](#)

means to make it as pleasant as possible for the animal to cooperate with me. I can only explain this kind of ignorance with a dominating insecurity. After all, it was always this way, and a strong consciousness of tradition is very pronounced among 'horse people'. Could something that goes along with such an old tradition be wrong? The claim, that a horse can only be anatomically healthy ridden, when it assumes an optimum posture, which is supposedly only possible with bits, is a thought in many minds. I explicitly contradict this, and I can also prove it. I am hoping that a change will take place as this will become common knowledge. Just as ages ago, the switch from then used nose rings (today still used with bulls) to a more gentle and graceful bit happened.

Can a tortured animal perform well?

Yes, horses are innocent beings that put up with a lot without as much as a mutter, as they own the innocent intelligence of a small child. They suffer in quiet and are grateful for any praising gesture. Speaking of, this reminds me of a cute example, a little joke that appears rather cruel. A man is standing on a pasture, flinging around a dog by its tail, the dog whines. Someone comes by and lays into the guy, 'what are you doing there?' The dog owner replies: I want to give the dog some enjoyment every day, how pleased do you think he will be when I release him? *By the way, I don't ever use the word 'torture', as this is only the case when one knowingly acts out something, solely to inflict pain, and I would never imply that with a rider riding with bit.*

Why do so many horses react with discomfort to a bit?

It is to Professor Dr. Cook's credit, who has proven that a nonphysiological foreign object in the mouth of the horse is the cause for many behavioral problems and illnesses in horses. Dr. Cook has been working and researching in the USA for 25 years, where he has been given emeritus status in 1984 as Professor of Surgery at the Turf University of Boston. With more than 60 scientific

works, two dissertations, several book publications, and numerous articles in horse magazines, Dr. Cook has been considered worldwide an expert in diseases of the horse's mouth, as well as throat, nose and ear areas in the horse for many years.

Furthermore, here are a few words from a very accredited rider of this time, Mr. Phillippe Karl (excerpts from his book 'Horsemanship').

A horse is not born with iron in his mouth. That it feels uncomfortable and tense is only natural. To avoid the phenomenon of 'rejection', the implant has to be 'ingrown'. The hand has to calm the mouth, so that it will accept the foreign body and reaches the point to play with it instead of fearing it and fleeing from it. The bit affects the tongue, which consists of mucous membrane, a heavily blood supplied and nerved tissue, and therefore is especially sensitive. He who enjoys biting his own tongue shall argue to the contrary. This is no different in the horse from the human.

Most defiance is an expression of rejecting the foreign object in the mouth. The list is long, and it all depends on the temperament of the horse and the severity of the rider's mistakes.

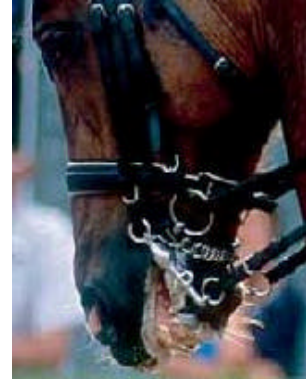
Tenseness in the jaw, clenching teeth, teeth grinding, over bridled, behind the bit, star gazing, head shaking, head tossing, tongue behind the bit, swallowing the tongue, tongue over the bit. At the height of its desperation, the horse might refuse to move forward at all or even rear.

Summary: Tension on the reins => Pressure of the mouth piece on the tongue => Pain => Tension and Blockage of the lower jaw => through transfer: Distribution of this tension over muscles of the neck and respectively the back and so on...

Monthly Message

Some Health Related Effects as a result of using bitted bridles:

- ❖ Muscle tension in the larynx
- ❖ Infection of the larynx
- ❖ Dorsal displacement of the soft palate
- ❖ Pain in the gums and teeth
- ❖ Blockages of the jaw
- ❖ Neck and back blockages
- ❖ Acute lack of oxygen
- ❖ Weakness of the heart muscle
- ❖ Bridle Lameness



Upcoming Events

Monika's team has put a new instructional DVD together. The DVD is being translated into English and made available to our US and UK riders shortly. If you want to make sure you receive one of the first copies sold on www.lgbridle.com, feel free to email us at lgbridle@gmail.com to let us know you want us to reserve a copy for you.

And The Last Word Goes To?

When I claim that I love horses, I will try by all means to make it as pleasant as possible for the animal to cooperate with me. (Monika Lehmenkühler)