

The Bit

Anna-Kaisa Maurer, Germany

Letter to the Editor of (German horse magazine – will fill in name soon)

Dear Editor,

Unfortunately your article concerning the right bit for the horse was only about metal bits. But since several years there are painless alternatives, for example the Bitless Bridle of Dr. Cook or the "Glücksrad=Wheel of Fortune" of Monika Lehmenkühler. With these bridles the rider can ride the horse just as well – perhaps even better – than with a bit, provided that there is genuine trust between the rider and the horse. As trust should go without saying when it comes to rider/horse relationships, it should not fail because of that...

Riders of all disciplines demonstrate that all the performances a horse is able to show can also be achieved without metal in the horse's mouth. To mention some well known names: Fred Rai is an example for all trail riders, Jürgen Krakow shows that even jumping is possible without metal in the horse's mouth and Monika Lehmenkühler performs even difficult lessons in classic dressage without a metal bit. Regrettably the metal bit exists already since thousands of years, the aforementioned painless alternatives since only about ten years. And **"a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right"**.

I find it important that the results of Dr. Cook's research, which scientifically prove the damages metal bits cause horses, become better known. His book "Metal in the Mouth" is absolutely to be recommended. **There is no need to talk about feelings or opinions anymore, as proved facts exist.**

I think that it is a pity if riders, in spite of these findings, still consider a bit as acceptable "means of communication" between horse and rider. This can only be explained with a motto **"I have my view, please do not confuse me with facts"**. But I am confident that the number of horse friends who take these facts to heart will increase. I would be pleased, if you would add to publishing the damaging impacts of metal bits and the scientific research on these. I have subscribed your magazine from the beginning on and read it with delight. **Now I greatly hope that you would help to eradicate the erroneous belief one could use a bit without hurting the horse in his mouth or causing him other organic disturbances.**

Apart from the fact that a horse looks much more beautiful and graceful without that ugly object in his mouth anyway.

Remark of the editor:

Dear Ms Maurer, Thank you very much for your letter. **You are right, bitless riding is a gentle way of communicating with the horse which must not be disregarded.** However, there are numerous riders who use a bit because of various reasons. The article "The bit – gentle communication or edged weapon" was about using the bit and it was not meant as a recommendation for different mouthpieces or bridles. The article was to inform riders who use a bit and help them to handle it being as fair to the horse as possible.