

## STATEMENT BY MANUEL BANDEIRA DE MELLO - FEI HEAD OF ENDURANCE.

“The equine fatality at Al Wathba (UAE) on Saturday was the result of an accident as the horse collided with the perimeter fence and fell, breaking its leg in the process. Sadly the severity of the injury meant that the horse had to be euthanised. The full details and cause of the accident are being investigated by the National Federation, in close cooperation with the FEI.

“Tragically, we have had reports of five other equine fatalities in national events in the UAE since the start of the new season in mid-October. Four of these horses were euthanised following catastrophic injuries and one was a sudden death out on the course.

“It is abundantly clear that speed is a major factor in these incidents and that it is necessary to introduce measures to slow down the horses in order to reduce the number of catastrophic injuries. **The FEI is in urgent discussions with the Emirates Equestrian Federation (EEF) and individual event organisers to introduce similar protocols to those used so successfully at the recent event in Bou Thib to reduce the speed.**

“Clearly the FEI views any equine fatality as an extremely serious issue and post mortems are always carried out to establish the cause of death. Additionally, samples are taken from all fatalities to check for prohibited substances. Post mortems and sampling were not previously carried out at national events in the UAE, but these now have to be done under the terms of the agreement between the FEI and the UAE which resulted in the lifting of the UAE suspension. Additionally, the FEI is now notified about all fatalities in national events, which was not the case in the past.

“At a similar point in the UAE season last year, there had been three equine fatalities in international events so the number of deaths at international level has been reduced, but it is clear that we would like to see a similar reduction at national level. The official vets are now eliminating more horses at the vet gates, meaning that the completion rates are lower, but this has not yet had the effect of reducing the level of catastrophic injuries at national events.

“While there were some high profile fatalities at national events, such as the death last year of Splitters Creek Bundy, prior to the agreement with the UAE National Federation the FEI was unable to get full details of all fatalities at national events. It is now obligatory for the Emirates Equestrian Federation to provide detailed information on all fatalities, regardless of whether these occur at national or international level.”