

EFFA'S PLANS TO DEVELOP A MASTER EUROFARRIER QUALIFICATION

At the 2015 Annual General Meeting, the national delegates were asked if they supported the idea of EFFA developing a Master Eurofarrier qualification to recognise those who had successfully completed a further programme of training and experience, and had passed a higher level examination. Delegates voted 17 to 3 in favour of the idea, with 15 to 5 supporting the idea of EFFA also running such an examination itself.

Following discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of EFFA seeking EU funding under the Erasmus programme, delegates were equally divided for and against. If a bid for Erasmus is successful, the EU will provide matched funding, but does require extensive paperwork to support any claims, and is very inflexible over alterations to the programme as work progresses and ideas change. Proceeding without EU support gives greater freedom to develop exactly what EFFA wants, but does mean that travel and other costs must be paid from EFFA's account. No decision has yet been taken on whether to apply to Erasmus.

Some national higher level qualifications include a requirement for business studies, while others do not. Delegates voted 13 to 5 that business studies should be included.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD), also known as Lifelong Learning, is a requirement for many professions. Delegates voted 17 to 1 that candidates should have to show evidence of completing a programme of CPD before being allowed to become a Master Eurofarrier, and voted 14 to 2 that ongoing CPD should be a requirement to remain a Master Eurofarrier.

Matters that will need further debate are the extent to which handmade shoes should feature, and whether candidates will be able to opt for electives (for example racing or heavy horses) or whether all candidates will have to take the same examination.

The immediate next steps are;

1. To establish a small multi-national working party to gather information on what already exists in the member nations, and to produce an action plan. Membership of the working party will probably be three farriers, one veterinary surgeon and one farriery college representative.
2. To make recommendations on whether EU funding through an Erasmus programme should be bid for or not. If a bid is submitted, there will be a need for identified partner nations.
3. To present recommendations to the 2016 Annual General Meeting in Ireland.