

CENTRAL VIRGINIA COMBINED TRAINING ASSOCIATION

2009 FALL EDITION

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all our hard working members who have volunteered countless hours to help make each and every event successful! To date we have hosted four Combined Tests and Dressage Shows, a Hunter Pace, a Mock Trial, a Jumping Clinic, a Dressage Fix a Test Clinic, and a Pace Clinic. All of our events have been well attended and we are well on our way to establishing the club as a well respected organization. We have had a number of excel-

lent speakers on a wide variety of topics.

At this time, we are looking forward the Kim Severson Stadium Clinic and the Preview of the New Eventing Dressage Test Clinic.

As you know there will be new dressage tests effective January 1, 2010 and the club has voted to pursue a preview of the tests clinic format. The clinic is set for Sunday January 10th at Plain Dealing Farm in Scottsville. Check the website for

details.

The club could not have done these events without your assistance and the generosity of those who volunteered their facilities.

Thank you again!

Please don't be shy about volunteering, your board members are excellent at offering advice and assistance to newbie organizers.

Inside this issue:

Safety	2
Biting	3-4
The 13 things	6
Picnic pictures	5
Appendix 4 USEA rules	5
EV115 Saddlery USEA	4
	4

YEAR END AWARDS AND SUCH

It's nearing that time again!!!

If you received an engraved award last year, please return it to Beth Schooley at the December meeting so that we can add the 2009 recipients information.

Beth must receive all scores and volunteer hours forms no later than December 15, 2009 to be counted towards this year. Forms are available on the club website. If you were unable to get the show secretary's signature on the form, you may submit a printed copy of the official

results of the show from their website (or the USEA website if it's a recognized event).

Anne Salisbury will again be offering the Volunteer of the Year Awards. Please be thinking of who you want to suggest for this awards. We will send out nomination forms in late November, early December for those.

I would also love to have someone to take over the newsletter next year. Please let me know if you are interested in this project.



Please review the final draft version of the bylaws. The Board has been hard at work tweaking the document that was presented by Taska Parker, Molly Armentrout and Mary Milheiser. Please review them and forward comments and concerns to any Board member. We would like to vote on them in December.

Special points of interest:

- We will be electing the 2010 board at our December meeting. Please be there to vote!
- Kim Severson jumping clinic is scheduled for November 22nd.

Let's Talk Safety

In June we were treated to a wonderful lecture on safety from member Cindi Highfill. The presentation was excellent and we were given some great literature. She brought with her the latest EMSA newsletter. For those of you who don't know it, the EMSA (Equestrian Medical Safety Association) is dedicated to the philosophy, principles and application of the safety of people in equestrian activities. <http://www.emsaonline.net/>

Their purpose is achieved through education, research and providing resources. The newsletter had some excellent information about concussion and second impact and goes a step further than the USEA issued Concussion brochure. www.useventing.com/resources/files/docs/Concussion-Brochure.pdf

Second impact occurs when you have a second injury to an already compromised brain. Reactions to this impact can be disproportionate to its seeming severity at the time. It is essential that we all know and understand the Green/Red/Yellow lights for continuing to ride or returning to ride. The USEA recommends that all fallen riders complete a "Key Signs Assessment" before allowing anyone to remount and continue.

But what about safety equipment? The ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) is an organization comprised of thousands of skilled volunteers including doctors, engineers and physicists. It is the job of the ASTM to set standards for many types of safety equipment. The ASTM has created standards for horseback riding helmets. These standards are summarized in ASTM F 1163. The SEI (Safety Equipment Institute) is an independent laboratory that tests helmets to ensure they meet the ASTM standard. Information on the standard is available on line at <http://www.astm.org/Standards/F1163.htm>

I bet that you didn't know that both your vest and helmet should be replaced five years after their "birth dates"! Helmets in which you have taken a fall should be replaced immediately as the foam inside the helmet, which is design to compress upon impact has been compromised. To find out the age of your brain bucket, turn it over and look at the ASTM/SEI tag inside it. It has its birth date stamped on it. Imagine my surprise when I looked in my spare helmet and its birth date was 1995. Oops! FYI, the newest version of the Tipperary Sportage fits more like the original :-). Some other tips..... Don't leave your helmet in extreme

temperatures (the hot car trunk) as doing so can degrade the foam, as can hairspray and other hair care products. This is just one more reason not to primp before going to the barn!

Another little tidbit about your safety vest: it is designed to dissipate the force of impact, hopefully allowing you to sustain a bad bruise and not a bruised kidney. Nothing can protect you if your horse falls on you, so remember that it's not a steel cage and you're not bullet proof just because you are wearing it. Fit is very important, take the time to be fitted properly. The Fall 2009 issue of the EMSA magazine contains a one page summary on how to fit a vest. http://www.emsaonline.net/news_archive.html

We did manage a few laughs though. Cindi brought in information about her latest find, the hit-air vest. It's an inflatable vest. You clip the cord to the saddle and if you 'come a cropper, the cord activates the air-bladders and you become a big puffy ball. Words of warning...it appears to make a hissing sound when it inflates in the videos, so all bets are off on whether your horse will stick around after it inflates or not! <http://www.air-vest.com/>

ANNOUNCING THE SLATE FOR 2010 BOARD MEMBERS

CVACTA 2010 BOARD Nominations the meeting and vote!

President: Kristine Slovis
 Vice President: Hollyn Mangione
 Treasurer: Taska Parker
 Secretary: Cindi Highfill
 Membership Coordinator: Laurel Loukx
 Events Coordinator: Nancy Sheaffer
 Marketing Coordinator: Gigi Carillo
 Year End Awards/Scores Coordinator: Brenda Simpson

Thank you so much to everyone who agreed to be on the slate this year. We will be voting to accept the slate at the December meeting. Please come to

Thank you again to the 2009 board. You guys ROCK!

If anyone is interested in assisting a board member or being on a committee, please do not hesitate to speak up. We need all the help we can get.



Members and friends out for a good time!

THE MYSTERIES OF BITTING

. Folks, here are my notes from the Meeting where Nancy Covert spoke to us about biting.

Nancy Covert - Biting Discussion
 May 2009

Nancy started out by dividing bits into three types: Snaffle, Curb, and Gag.

Each of the three has a different action in the mouth.

- **Snaffle**- Acts on the bars of the mouth. Direct from the arm through the rein to the mouth. Sometimes it may also act on the tongue.
- **Curb**- Leverage against jaw, just behind jaw. Examples are: Kimberwick or Pelham and they have either a curb chain or strap. Nancy also showed us where the leather curb chain holder strap goes.
- **Gag**- Action on the poll. Usually made up of a rope or leather piece that slides through the bit rings and acts on the cheek piece.

We then discussed the **snaffle** in more detail. The snaffle has two parts, the mouthpiece and the rings.
 Types of rings or side pieces.

Full Cheek- can't pull through the mouth. Putting the cheek pieces in keepers, adds a bit of leverage. Nancy added that a full cheek, egg butt or D ring can also provide some stability for the horse to use for sup-

port for steadier head carriage vs a loose ring. Some young horses need this stability.

Boucher - a little bit of leverage and provides stability. Can hold the bit slightly off the mouth.

Fulmer- loose ring w/full cheek, offers stability, keeps the rings away from the face. This looks a lot like a full cheek, but the rings are further away from the face.

Types of mouthpieces: no joint, single jointed, double jointed. Sometimes using a textured mouth piece can back the horse off the bit some. Examples are: slow twist, knife edge, puzzle. Mouthpieces can be of metal or rubber or plastic.

Single joints- One of the main differences in single jointed snaffles is the variations in thickness of the mouthpiece. Comfort depends on horse's mouth. Bits that have moving pieces can keep a horse from setting their jaw against the bit. (you used to see a lot of key bits a few years ago.) A good rule of thumb is that if the horse can't close its mouth, the bit is too fat. A thick bit isn't always the best bit for your horse. Each horse is an individual, so experiment and find what they are the most comfortable in. The thickness of the lips and tongue may influence comfort. The size of a horse's mouth will also have an influence on what will be most comfortable for him. Some horses find that a port in the bit offers them a comfortable

place to put their tongue.

Double Jointed- Examples of which are French Link, quarter moon (the center piece is a small curved port), bean bit (most often associated with the KK), and Dr. Bristol (which should be used with the flat piece against the tongue. Using it the other way puts the bar against the roof of the mouth and can be very uncomfortable).

A puzzle bit (snaffle) has lots of parts. For a horse that leans on the bit, it has the direct effect of a snaffle, with a bit more bite. It can improve the snaffle's effectiveness without necessitating bumping up to a different action (e.g. curb or gag). Other horses may respond to snaffles with moveable parts, like rollers. Another interesting snaffle is a Waterford. It's the bit that looks like a bunch of balls strung together and is often used for horses who tend to lean heavily on the bit.

Curb bits tend to have smooth mouth pieces (no twist or texture). The mouthpiece can be a straight bar, a port, or in rare instances, a broken mouth. The tightness of the chain makes the action stronger. Length of the shank also determines the leverage. A Tom Thumb has a short arm and therefore less leverage than other pelhams.

A Pelham is made to have two reins. With a Pelham you have the option of using only the top, or snaffle rein. The bottom rein is the curb rein. This is why often times you may see someone riding with a

MORE ON BITTING

looser lower rein; the curb only comes into play when needed. It does require some skill and fineness to use the bit in this manner, but it's a good alternative for some horses. When you put the leather bit converters on a Pelham so that you can only use one set of reins, you lose the ability to use the snaffle and curb rein separately.

A Kimberwicke has short arms, and uses only one rein (always the curb) and may also have some poll action. This bit is sometimes referred to as the lazy man's Pelham.

Gag- This bit offers leverage against the poll.

Mylar bits – Their action is poll leverage—although less than your traditional gag bit. An elevator bit also has poll leverage. Nancy had us look at the way the Mylar typically fits into the bridle and sits at a fixed location at the cheek. The reins are also attached in a fixed manner.

Hackamore- This bit also works through poll leverage. Typically they have long shanks. There are lots of different types of hackamores, from a bosal to an English hackamore, so if you have a horse with mouth issues that can no longer wear a bit, you have a number of options to try.

General Comments:

A bit is only as good as the hands that hold it.

Barring against past tooth issues, *head problems are usually hind end problems.* But with that being said we should try to make the horse as comfortable as possible. Biting strategy is based on what we are looking to affect, stable with his head or set with his head. Different bits may be required for different styles of riding. Lower level dressage is different than the upper levels where you are required to ride in a double bridle. Western pleasure horses must go differently in the bridle than jumpers. In eventing, it's not unusual to use different bits for different phases.

A bit (change) is usually an intermediary step in a training issue. Use the bit you need, but continue to work on the training issue. You can bump up and down in bit strength and action as warranted. Don't sacrifice your safety or your horse's safety by not using the appropriate bit. Nancy stressed that we should not be afraid to make a change when needed.

All bits measure differently. There is a tool you can purchase to use to measure for size. You can also hold the bit straight in the horse's mouth and check to see if you have about a pinkie's worth of room between the rings/shanks and the horse's lips.

If your bit rubs, check the size (may be too small) then you can add Vaseline or a bit guard to try to mitigate the rubbing. Where the bit sits in your horse's mouth may make a difference in size needed. It is not unusual to go up 1/4 inch in size when going from a stationary side piece (D ring, eggbutt) to a loose ring. The Happy Mouth bits also may run a bit smaller than your standard sizes, so be don't hesitate to take your current bit with you when bit shopping.

Before stepping up the bit, also check the noseband. In many cases you have the option to tighten it or add a flash attachment. If really tightening, get a padded crank noseband so that the pressure is better distributed. Alternatively, if they are fussy with their head, you can try taking the flash away. The flash vs figure 8 debate. The grackle (figure 8 with the fixed rings) came first. You have infinite adjustability with the figure 8. This evens out the pressure. With a flash, the top part must be tight or the flash can't work. Both a flash and figure 8 are meant to bring pressure above the nasal passages. Some people think that the figure 8 offers the horse more movement in his jaw. A drop noseband sits lower and is harder to fit. It should be used in dressage only. It must really be fitted properly to be comfortable as it keeps them from opening their mouths. Can restrict the intake of air into the lungs, which is why it is not used for jumping and other strenuous activity.

Nancy suggests having a good trainer help you fit this noseband if you want to try one. Why keep the horse from opening their mouth? It shows acceptance of the bridle and sets a limit to the amount of movement of the mouth. They can still chew, but can't escape the pressure. We briefly mentioned the kinetin nosebands, which offer a leverage action on the bit.

I hope this is fairly representative of the talk she gave and discussion that was generated.

Now, how do we make sense of all of this in light of the USEA rules? Well, for jumping, you can go with or without a bit and there is no regulation of the biting. Although I'm pretty sure a tack noseband isn't allowed.

Here is some information from the 2009 USEA rulebook about biting.

EV115 Saddlery.

1. EXERCISE AREAS. The following restrictions begin at 3:00 p.m. of the day prior to the start of the entire competition and continue throughout the duration of the event. The following are compulsory: an English type saddle and any form of bridle, including double bridle, snaffle, gag or

hackamores. Running martingales with rein stops, Irish martingales, bit guards, boots, bandages, fly shields, nose covers, and seat covers are permitted. Side reins are permitted only while lunging an unmounted horse, as are running reins and chambons. Other martingales, any form of gadget (such as a bearing, running or balancing reins, etc.) and any form of blinkers, are forbidden, under penalty of disqualification.

2. DRESSAGE TEST.

a. The following are compulsory: an English type saddle and a permitted bridle.

b. A double bridle with cavesson noseband, i.e. bridoon and curb bits with curb chain (made of metal or leather), is permitted for some tests.

(1) Cavesson noseband may never be so tightly fastened as to harm the horse.

(2) Lipstrap and rubber or leather covers for the curb chain are optional.

(3) Bridoon and curb must be made of metal or rigid plastic and may be covered with rubber (flexible rubber bridoons and/or curbs are not allowed).

(4) The lever arm of the curb bit is limited to 10 cm (length below the mouth piece).

(5) If the curb has a sliding mouthpiece, the lever arm of the curb bit below the mouthpiece must not measure more than 10 cm when the mouthpiece is in the uppermost position.

(6) The diameter of the ring of the bridoon must be such as to not hurt the horse.

c. A snaffle bit made of metal, leather, rubber or plastic material is permitted for all tests.

(1) It may have a cavesson noseband, dropped noseband, crossed noseband, or flash noseband.

(2) The noseband must be made entirely of leather or leather like material, except for a small disc of sheepskin, which may be used in the intersection of the two leather straps of a crossed noseband.

d. A breast plate may be used. For drawings of permitted bits and nosebands see

Appendix 4. Permitted bits for attachments, any kind of boots or leg bandages and any form of blinkers, including earmuffs, earplugs, hoods, fly shields, nose covers and seat covers are, under penalty of elimination, strictly forbidden. However, under exceptional circumstances, fly shields may be permitted by the Ground Jury.

3. CROSS-COUNTRY TEST AND JUMPING TEST.

a. The type of saddlery is optional with the exception of any form of blinkers, which are forbidden.

b. Only unrestricted running martingales with rein stops or Irish martingales are allowed. Reins must be free of any loops or hand attachments and must be attached to the bit(s) or directly to the bridle. Exception: u-shaped bit converters may be used so that a bit designed for use with two reins may be controlled with a single rein. Gags or hackamores are allowed. In the interest of safety, the stirrup iron and stirrup leathers must hang free from the bar of the saddle and outside the flap. There must be no other restrictions or attachments of any kind.

4. INSPECTION OF SADDLERY.

a. A steward should be appointed to check the saddlery of each horse before it enters the arena or starts a Test.

b. In the Dressage Test, the checking of the bridle must be done with the greatest caution.

When bit inspections require actual contact with the inside of the horse's mouth, the inspector must use a clean protective glove for each horse. If the competitor so requests, the bridle and bit may be checked immediately after the test has been completed. However, should the bridle or bit in such a case be found not to be permitted, the competitor shall be eliminated.

<http://useventing.com/competitions.php?section=rulebook&id=1815>

Illustrations can be found on the USEA website in the rule book.

APPENDIX 4 - EVENTING— PERMITTED SADDLERY FOR DRESSAGE

Permitted Bridoon bits

Various Bridoon Bits:

1. Ordinary bridoon bit
2. Bridoon bit with two joints
3. Egg-butt bridoon bit
4. Bridoon bit with cheeks
5. D-ring bridoon

(or racing snaffle)

Note: All bridoon bits shown on the plate of permitted bits are for the Dressage either as a snaffle or as part of a double bridle. A double bridle should always consist of a broken (simple or double) and a straight bit. Bits can be made out of plastic or metal. Any of the rings or cheeks shown on these plates is permitted with any of the bits.

Various types of curb bits:

6. Half moon curb bit
7. Curb bit with curved cheeks and port
8. Curb bit with loops for lipstrap on the cheeks and with port
9. Curb bit with port and sliding mouthpiece (Weymouth)
10. Curb chain
11. Lipstrap
12. Rubber or leather cover for curb chain

Permitted Snaffles

An ordinary snaffle is a plain snaffle with a straight bar or joint in the center. If a snaffle has two joints, all parts must be rounded and smooth..

In addition, the following types of snaffle are permitted:

1. Ordinary snaffle with double-jointed mouthpiece
2. Ordinary snaffle with double-jointed mouthpiece
3. Ordinary snaffle with jointed mouthpiece
4. Racing snaffle
5. Egg-butt snaffle: (a) with cheeks, (b) without cheeks
6. Other type of snaffle with cheeks
7. Fulmer
8. Snaffle with upper cheeks only
9. Rubber or leather snaffle jointed (a) or unjointed (b)
10. Unjointed snaffle
11. Hanging cheek snaffle
12. Dr. Bristol
13. Happy Mouth (includes loose ring, round ring, dee-ring, flat ring, egg butt, and full cheek styles)
14. Ordinary snaffle with double-jointed mouth piece with lozenge
15. Ordinary snaffle with rotating mouth piece
16. Snaffle with rotating middle piece. **Only as illustrated. BOD 1/13/08 Effective 12/1/08**

Picnic pictures!



THE 13 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT STADIUM.....

1. When the bell sounds, a competitor has 45 seconds to commence his stadium round. Failure to start during this period results in elimination. The Ground Jury has the right to interrupt the 45-second countdown if unforeseen circumstances occur. Disobediences, falls, etc., occurring between the signal to start and the moment the competitor crosses the starting line in the correct direction, are not penalized. After the bell has rung, crossing the starting line in the correct direction for a second time before jumping the first obstacle is counted as disobedience.
2. A regular circle or group of circles, no matter where on the course or for whatever reason, constitutes a disobedience and shall be penalized accordingly.
3. In stadium (unlike XC) one can be eliminated for jumping an obstacle that is not part of the course.
4. If a horse stops in front of a jump and then jumps from a standstill it will not be a refusal. However, if the halt is prolonged or the horse steps back, there is a refusal.
5. A horse is considered to have fallen if his shoulder and hind quarters have touched the ground or the obstacle and the ground.
6. Any help given to a mounted competitor to adjust his saddlery or hand him a whip during his round constitutes outside assistance and results in elimination. Handing a rider his head gear or glasses during a round does not constitute elimination.
7. First disobedience results in a four (4) point penalty. Second disobedience for BN, N, and T penalty is eight (8) penalty points. At preliminary and above the second disobedience results in elimination.
8. Any obstacle knocked down results in a four (4) point penalty.
9. With any elimination, other than due to a fall, the competitor has the right to jump one single obstacle of the course before leaving the ring.
10. Exceeding the time allowed (optimum time) results in one (1) penalty point for each second or fraction of a second exceeding the time. Exceeding the time limit (which is defined as two times the time allowed) results in elimination.
11. The rider is eliminated if found to be using a whip longer than 75 centimeters (29.5 inches) in length.
12. A rider may be eliminated in the warm up arena for jumping one of the warm up fences in the wrong direction. Remember: red on the RIGHT!
13. Only unrestricted running martingales with rein stops or Irish martingales are allowed. Reins must be free of any loops or hand attachments and must be attached to the bit(s) or directly to the bridle. Exception: u-shaped bit converters may be used so that a bit designed for use with two reins may be controlled with a single rein. Gags or hackamores are allowed.

MOLLY BULL'S TALK ON STUDS AND LEG PROTECTION

(I have reprinted Molly's notes for those of you who could not attend the meeting)

Tonight I'm going to talk about studs - we'll go over why to use them, what the different types are and when to use each type, how to put together your stud kit, and some safety suggestions.

Studs are also sometimes called caulks, and they are the metal devices that you screw into the bottom of your horse's shoes. They can be used in all 3 phases to help provide traction and thus help your horse go more confidently. I use them in dressage and show jumping only when we're competing on grass, like at CDCTA or Seneca, for example. Some people use studs for sj even in sand, but I personally don't feel that's necessary.

Like any tool, studs help your horse when used correctly but can cause harm if they're not. It's a good idea to ask a trainer or experienced rider to help you choose your studs the first few times you use them. One potential danger is using bigger studs than you need - this can hinder your horse's normal stride and put him at greater risk of tearing off a shoe or wrenching a tendon. Studs that are too big also jar your horse's legs. Think of walking around in high heels when you're used to wearing sneakers - that's a little what you're doing to your horse, so you want to make sure to start conservatively.

For the same reason, you also want to make sure to take the studs out as soon as possible after you're done with your ride. I also try not to lead or ride my horses on concrete once their studs are in. There are some places where you have to ride on a paved surface to get to the xc course, like at the Va Horse Center. It's ok to walk them on a road when you have to, but make sure if there's a choice that you choose the grass.

Some sources say to never trailer your horse in studs. I have done this before and know other riders who have. If you're going to do it, just make sure the trailer ride is a short one, and use protective leg wraps and put bedding in your trailer. If you're putting your studs in at a show where you have a stall, you want to make sure he doesn't roll once you've put

them in, so either tie him up in the stall or keep a good eye on him. If he rolled in his studs he could cut himself. For the same reason I like to go ahead and put on protective boots once the studs are in.

If you've never used studs before, you'll need to ask your farrier to drill stud holes in your horse's shoes. You won't need special shoes, holes can be drilled in any type of shoe. It usually costs an extra \$10 - \$15 per shoeing. Your farrier may also suggest using toe clips or side clips if you don't already have them as these can help hold the shoes on against the added stopping force of studs.

Generally studs are used in pairs, with one on each side of the hoof. It is possible when using very small studs to only put one on the outside. I've done this before when schooling or competing in really good footing, on a low level horse. It's also possible to use the same kind of stud in all 4 shoes, which is a simple way to get started with using studs. Usually we use a slightly larger stud on the outside than the inside, and bigger still on the hind legs than the front. I'm going to go over the types of studs in a few minutes, but I will say now that you want to use something fairly flat on the inside hole all the way around, because horses are more likely to wound themselves by interfering when you have a pointier stud on the inside. You also always want to use studs of a similar height so you don't strain your horse's legs by having the hoof sitting unevenly on the ground. Slightly smaller on the inside is fine, but you don't want a really big difference. I'll go over examples of good choices to pair together and show you what I mean, but before we get to that let's talk about putting together your stud kit.

You'll need:

a selection of studs

a horseshoe nail or ice pick to remove the plugs

a bag of replacement plugs - I prefer cotton plugs

a tap - I prefer the round safety tap - you use the tap to clean the threads so the studs go in more easily (show them how to prevent cross threading)

a wrench to tighten and remove studs - any kind is fine

a magnetic dish is super helpful but not essential

stud cleaner/lubricant - I prefer WD-40 - this helps prevent rust and makes your studs last longer - it's a good idea to clean the studs after each use

a rag

Now let's talk about the kinds of studs - there are basically 3 types, although some sources divide them a little differently. Most agree that there are Road studs, Grass tips, and Mud studs. Roads are the smallest studs and are recommended for beginner users. Roads are the flattest, bluntest studs - they got their name in England, where riders ride on roads and wanted something for extra traction. Despite their name they also have lots of uses in grass footing. They are usually used on the inside hole in all different types of footing, and can be used all the way around when the footing is pretty good.

Grass tips are narrow, pointed studs that dig into the ground. They are longer and sharper than roads and are good to use when the ground is hard and dry. They also work well on footing that was hard and dry but has a slick, greasy layer on top, like when a little rain has fallen on dry ground. Again, generally use them on the outside hole and stick to a road on the inside.

Mud studs are the biggest of the studs. They are used in deep, muddy going, like at Fair Hill in October or at VAHT last weekend, if you went on Sunday rather than Saturday. Some sources also call them "Olympic" studs, I guess because of their size. Bullets are a type of mud stud, except maybe the smallest bullets could be classified as a grass tip. Different sources classify the same studs in different places so it can be a bit confusing. It's most important to learn which ones to use in which types of weather rather than to worry too much about which category a particular stud would go into.

I don't see too much difference between squares and hexagonal shaped studs if they are roughly the same height. I don't think you can really feel the difference, so I would choose the studs more for their height and shape on top rather than worrying about how many sides they have.

A few safety reminders:

Never turn your horse out in studs.

Don't use them if your horse is lame (in which case I would also recommend not riding him).

Don't put yourself in a position where your horse can step on you when he's wearing studs as you could break a toe (I would really try to do this whether your horse is wearing studs or not).

Be careful if you have a horse that kicks out - and warn those around you.

Tips to remember:

Use blunt studs on the inside.

Use studs of similar height.

Remove studs as soon as possible after riding.

Always use the smallest studs you can, considering the conditions.

Try The Stud Book by Malcolm Kelly for more information.

