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Richard F. Ziegler
Senior Vice President
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3M Corporate Headquarters
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Dear Mr. Ziegler,

My name is CuChullaine O'Reilly and I am writing you today in regards to what I fear is a complex attempt to deliberately mis-market a patented 3 M product in a manner which it not designed for, the result of which is the immediate injury of valuable horses all over the world.

I am one of the Founding Members of The Long Riders' Guild, the world's largest international association of equestrian explorers and long distance travellers. The Guild has Members in 32 countries, all of whom have ridden a minimum of 1,000 continual miles.

Some of our Members include:

English Long Rider Gordon Naysmith, who rode 20,000 kilometers from South Africa to Austria.
Swiss Long Rider Catherine Waridel, who rode 8,000 miles alone from the Crimea to Mongolia.
Scottish Long Rider George Patterson, who rode over the Himalayas in the winter of 1949 to warn the world that Tibet was being invaded by the Red Chinese.
And Russian Long Rider Vladimir Fissenko, who rode 19,000 miles from Patagonia to the top of Alaska.

The Long Riders' Guild hosts the largest collection of equestrian travel information in human history, more than a thousand pages and still growing, at this open-source website - www.thelongridersguild.com

In addition, The Guild maintains its own publishing arm - www.horsetravelbooks.com
At this site readers will discover more than one hundred equestrian travel titles, available in five languages, making it the largest collection of this focused equestrian knowledge in history.

Which brings me to the reason why I am writing you today, Mr. Ziegler.

The Guild's global mission is to protect and promote equestrian knowledge. Because ours is an academic, not a commercial endeavor, this knowledge is presented on our free website as a public service to equine enthusiasts, scientists, journalists, and authors around the world. One critical aspect of our work is the testing of equestrian travel equipment.

Because of the severity, length and danger associated with a grueling field trial done by a Long Rider, an endorsement from The Long Riders' Guild translates into the highest form of equestrian endorsement.

The Equipment section of The Guild's massive website explains our philosophy in terms of our research work in this area.

"The Long Riders' Guild does not accept advertising revenue, or any type of outside funding, from anyone - ever. In other words, you can't buy your way on to this website. We're not for sale!

The opinions expressed here by the various Long Riders are unvarnished, sometimes harsh, often complimentary, but always spoken from the heart. They have to be.

Unlike ring riders, our lives and those of our horses depend on our gear. If a piece of equipment fails in the middle of the Amazon jungle, while riding over the Himalayas, or fording a Russian river, we can't load up our pony and go home. You don't get ribbons or trophies when you're a Long Rider. If you do it right, you and your horse make it through in one piece.

When something breaks down, or doesn't work, Long Riders suffer and their horses become injured. Occasionally a Long Rider or his horse will die. When the death is due to natural causes, brigands, etc., that's one issue. But when it happens because a vital piece of equipment failed, that is an avoidable accident - one we wish to stop from ever happening again. Therefore the need to discuss the subject of equestrian travel equipment has been an overdue priority for everyone in our global community for many years."

With that stated philosophy as a background, allow me to say that The Long Riders' Guild has grave concerns that the 3M corporation has been unwittingly involved in one of the most deliberate acts of equine deception perpetrated in modern history.

We base this statement on the following series of events and discoveries.

In 2004 The Long Riders' Guild was informed of a remarkable "new" saddle pad, one which claimed to keep the horse cooler, thereby ensuring a healthier, happier animal. Moreover, the company producing the saddle pad promised the public that their product was "as soft and comfortable as an old flannel shirt."

Given the hostile deserts and extreme climates traversed by Long Riders, this was a startling statement, one which warranted our full attention.

The product in question is marketed as the "Dixie Midnight No Sweat Vent Pad" and in a telephone call the man who claims to have invented this revolutionary saddle pad unfolded an interesting story regarding its development.

He told me that while attending a rodeo in Florida a few years back he noticed a local cowboy and horse performing exceptionally well in that state's notorious summer heat. Upon questioning, the cowboy contestant attributed his success to the special saddle pad his horse was using. This was a burlap bag filled with soft Spanish moss obtained from local cypress trees. The loosely woven Spanish moss allowed the air to circulate under the regular saddle pad, thus keeping the horse cooler and ultimately, it was claimed, permitting the horse and rider to out perform their competitors.

Having been struck by this demonstration, the "inventor" of the No-Sweat pad informed me that he used the same principles, of a soft, horse-friendly, loosely woven material, when he created his own man-made version of the Spanish moss saddle pad.

Three of the world's most respected equestrian explorers soon decided to field test the reliability of this man's new saddle pad.

Stan Perdue was riding through some of the hottest parts of the USA, from Georgia to Arizona, when he bought two of the Dixie Midnight No Sweat Pads directly from the company's owner. Here is a link to information regarding Stan's expedition -<http://www.thelongridersguild.com/perdue.htm>

Colonel Gene Glasscock was on a 20,000 mile journey to all 48 state capitals in the continental USA, when he received two of the pads as a donation from the company's owner. Here is a link to information regarding Colonel Glasscock's expedition - <http://www.thelongridersguild.com/Glasscock-2.htm>

Tim Cope, Australia's most famous explorer, was in the midst of riding 8,000 miles alone from Mongolia to Hungary, a journey that took him across the deserts of Kazakhstan in the hoof-prints of Genghis Khan, when he learned of the new sweat pad. Here is a link to information regarding Tim's expedition - <http://www.thelongridersguild.com/cope.htm>

All three of these talented Long Riders took the owner at his word, placed his product on their horse's backs, and thereby inadvertently opened themselves and their horses up to disaster.

The Long Riders' Guild learned the truth about the origin of this saddle pad because of a remarkable coincidence. Because of his long term study of equestrian travel equipment, the English Long Rider, Keith Clark, is in charge of the research and development section of The Guild's equipment department.

Imagine Keith's surprise, therefore, when he walked into a supermarket in Chile and saw the "no-sweat saddle pad" performing its intended purpose – LYING ON THE FLOOR AND BEING USED AS A DOORMAT !

A quick interview with the local supermarket manager prompted an emergency telephone call to their corporate headquarters. These people kindly informed Keith that they had no knowledge of any horse saddle pad and that the product sitting in front of the supermarket's front door was a licensed 3M product.

Armed with this clue, Keith used the internet to determine that the "Dixie Midnight No Sweat Saddle Pad" appeared to match every component of the well-known 3M product licensed and sold as the "Safety-Walk Wet Area Matting 1500."

Sadly, by the time Keith made this alarming discovery the three Long Riders, and their horses, were the ones who had come to grief and harm.

Stan Perdue was the first to report problems.

Despite its claim to keep the horse cool in hot weather, when the No-Sweat Pad became wet and sweaty, it slipped out from underneath the pack saddle, taking the regular pad with it. The Long Rider happened to notice that his pack saddle was about to fall off and discovered the "missing" pads 30 yards back down the road.

Even worse, Stan discovered the second no-sweat pad had "injured my riding horse, rubbing off his hair and friction burning him right down to the skin."

The next to report in was Colonel Gene Glasscock.

A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Colonel Glasscock is considered the North American equestrian explorer emeritus because of his solo ride from the Arctic Circle in Canada to the Equator in Ecuador, a 12,000 mile journey which has never been duplicated. Though he is now in his early 70s, Colonel Glasscock has nearly completed another record-breaking journey, a 20,000 mile ride across every state in the continental USA.

Colonel Glasscock learned to his dismay that the no-sweat pad had another drawback, one which endangered his life.

"Unless the riding horse is cinched excessively tight, the no-sweat pad often slips completely out from underneath the riding saddle. When this occurs, as it did on April 27th, 2005 at St. Regis, Montana, the no-sweat pad took the regular saddle pad with it. I took a bad fall on that day because the no-sweat pad worked it's way free from under the cinch, leaving my saddle loose. When I started to dismount, the saddle swung completely underneath my horse's stomach and I was thrown to the ground quite hard. I wasn't injured but I took a bad spill that was completely avoidable," he reported to The Guild.

However, the worse was still to come when Australian Long Rider Tim Cope put what he believed was a genuine equestrian product on the backs of his two valuable Altai horses.

Tim contacted The Guild via satellite telephone to issue an immediate warning to other Long Riders.

"The no-sweat pad worked really well for the first two weeks, while the weather in Kazakhstan was still cold. But as soon as the weather got hot, my horses ran into trouble," he reported.

"My route took me across 120 kilometers of desert, which I had to cross in two days. The horses were sweaty and working hard. That's when the trouble started with the no-sweat pad. Any part of the pad that was not tightly cinched down caused friction. First it rubbed the hair off my horses. Then it rubbed them right down to the skin. My horses ended up with raw spots where the no-sweat pad rubbed them so badly," Tim wrote.

Despite his best efforts, one of these friction burns has now developed into an open sore and Tim's historic journey, one which is being closely monitored by the media in the USA, Western Europe and Australia, is now in danger of collapsing due to this questionable saddle pad.

Both Colonel Glasscock and Tim Cope have expressed their immense disappointment at learning that a 3M product may be at the heart of this equestrian controversy.

"I've been traveling from Mongolia to Hungary since June, 2004 and I spent the first four months of this journey riding across Mongolia in very hot weather. But this is the first time I've experienced this kind of problem with saddle pads rubbing my horses like sand paper. Since then, I've stopped using the no-sweat pads because now my horses are injured and need time to heal. That's going to be difficult with many thousands of miles still left to cover on my journey. I think it's immoral for a business to pretend they invented a product, knowing it comes from another company and was designed for another purpose," Tim wrote to The Guild in an email from his camp in Kazakhstan.

Colonel Glasscock summed up his feelings by saying, "I am upset to learn that the no-sweat pad is not what it we have been told. Don't get me wrong. I don't mind when people make an honest profit. But I don't like it when a company lies to the public. You can't make an honest decision on any product if the company isn't being above board with you."

With these remarks in mind, The Long Riders' Guild first made a careful study of both the 3M and the Dixie No Sweat Pad websites, trying to ascertain the truth of the situation before I wrote this letter to you, Mr. Ziegler. What we discovered only confirmed our deep suspicions.

Anyone visiting the 3M website can quickly learn that your fine company does in fact produce several qualified equestrian products covering such diverse subjects as infection prevention, diagnostic systems, wound management and surgical procedures. However we were unable to locate any 3M equestrian product which remotely resembled a saddle pad.

Yet to our alarm we confirmed Keith Clark's Chilean discovery when we read information regarding the 3M product known as the "Safety-Walk Wet Area Matting1500." A quick visual comparison between the Wet Area Matting 1500 and the No Sweat Pad indicated that we were looking at the very same blue coloured material, albeit with a different label. Here is a link to your company's description of this product - <http://cms.3m.com/cms/GB/en/2-131/kuuczFA/view.jhtml>

Of even greater concern was our subsequent discovery that the surface of the 3M product known as the "Scotch-Brite Medium Duty Scrub Sponge," a product 3M describes as being a "durable nylon abrasive" also closely resembled the no-sweat saddle pad. Here is a link to your company's description of this product - http://products3.3m.com/catalog/us/en001/healthcare/animal_care/node_14H802Z2GDbe/root_GST1T4S9TCgv/vroot_PZ8MXGQSQDge/gvel_XT547F1ZDWgl/theme_us_animalcare_3_0/command_AbcPageHandler/output_html

As any knowledgeable horseman will tell you, Mr. Ziegler, the skin on a horse's back is so sensitive that he is able to detect a fly walking along his spine, and flick it off by moving this sensitive membrane. The thought of an abrasive substance being knowingly placed on a horse's back is thus a serious equestrian ethical issue.

We thereafter visited the website of the Dixie Midnight No Sweat Pad company in search of answers. Here is link to this website - www.dixiemidnight.com

What we discovered there were some carefully worded statements designed to give what we believe is a misleading impression to a trusting equestrian public.

Did Dixie Midnight "invent" the no-sweat pad, as I had been told on the telephone?

Their website states, "We've been building the Genuine, Original Dixie Midnight No-Sweat pads for a lot of years now."

"Building" is not the same as "inventing." The Dixie Midnight company seems to have avoided informing the public that the product in question might well originate from a 3M plant and have been intended for another, non-equestrian, purpose.

Does Dixie Midnight construct the product themselves, or does it originate elsewhere?

Their website states, "We still make 'em right here on the Broken Buck Ranch, just like always. We still use the finest materials, our own formulations, and our own equipment."

By saying they "make" the product The Long Riders' Guild believes the Dixie Midnight company is implying a manufacturing process. However a careful reading of this information might also inform the knowledgeable reader of much more.

Could it be that the Dixie Midnight company is purchasing a 3M floor mat and then "making" it, using their "formulations, and "our own equipment," by doing nothing more than cutting up pieces of 3M matting, thus "making" it, cutting it to predetermined sizes to fit most saddles, thus "using our own formulations," and incorporating a pair of scissors into the process, thus "using our own equipment"?

We believe that all three portions of this statement are designed to deceive the public into believing that the no-sweat saddle pad is a product conceived and constructed by the Dixie Midnight company, all the while hiding the notorious fact that the original product was designed to withstand the rigors of heavy, muddy pedestrian foot traffic.

This situation, as described, is already bad enough to warrant immediate public action upon the part of The Long Riders' Guild. However, a new piece of evidence has just come to light which is of even graver concern, and that is our discovery that this piece of fraudulent equestrian equipment is now being marketed on an international basis.

We can now confirm that a no-sweat pad style saddle pad is being sold to the English riding public by what we believe are unsuspecting saddle shop owners.

Of even more concern to us is the fact that an Australian company is now importing no-sweat saddle pads from the United States, advertising the same unsubstantiated results and misleading horse owners on a third continent.

Here is a link to an Australian website which describes what we believe is the 3M product, as well as providing the statement, "Imported from the USA."
<http://www.dixonsmith.com.au/ecgb.html>

Discovery of this new Australian market leads us to fear that the Dixie Midnight company, or at least it's idea, is now spreading rapidly throughout the developed world's equestrian cultures.

I began this letter, Mr. Ziegler, by stressing the academic mission of The Long Riders' Guild. I would like to reiterate our desire to promote, protect and preserve the ancient legacy of equestrian travel. We do this by bringing together the most valuable knowledge of the best Long Riders, alive and deceased, and providing it for free to the planet's population.

Yet our work as equestrian explorers is based on the concept that our primary duty is to our horses. We are collectively upset to discover what we believe is an act of clever deception, one which has certainly caused harm to great traveling horses, and almost certainly injured countless other horses beyond our knowledge.

On behalf of all the Long Riders in 32 countries, I am writing to ask if your corporation will immediately:

- a) investigate our discoveries -
- b) confirm our fears that the 3M product known as the Safety Walk Wet Area Matting 1500 is being marketed as the Dixie Midnight No Sweat Saddle Pad -
- c) confirm our fears that the same 3M product is also being mis-marketed in England and Australia -
- d) confirm our suspicion that 3M had no prior knowledge of their safety product being marketed as a saddle pad
- e) inform The Long Riders' Guild of plans by 3M to attempt to stop your corporations' product from being mislabeled and sold under false pretences to the equestrian public.

To help you investigate the matters raised in this letter, I have included the following documents:

- a) copies of all the pages available from the Dixie Midnight website -
- b) a copy of the promotional material for the Australian no-sweat saddle pad -
- c) a copy of the original flyer sent to The Long Riders' Guild by the owner of the Dixie Midnight company -
- d) a copy of the receipt provided by the owner of the Dixie Midnight company, wherein he provided a sample of the no-sweat pad to The Guild.
- e) two photographs demonstrating how the No Sweat Pad is supposed to sit underneath the regular saddle pad.

Finally, I am also enclosing a Dixie Midnight No Sweat Pad, the same one described in this letter by Colonel Gene Glasscock, which nearly caused him to be injured. This item is now the property of The Long Riders' Guild and is being sent to you, and the 3M Corporation, on loan so as to provide your legal department with first hand physical evidence. After you have inspected it, we would appreciate the return of this item to The Long Riders' Guild.

In conclusion, I must tell you, Mr. Ziegler, that I am an equestrian explorer, not a legal authority, a corporate executive, nor a marketing expert. I can only go on the evidence sent here to Guild HQ. And the overwhelmingly important thing to me, a Long Rider, is the fact that I can now verify that horses are

being injured by what I suspect is deliberate deception. These sort of sharp practices have no place in the horse world, Mr. Ziegler, where these trusting animals, who give us so much, cannot even warn us when they have been placed in harm's way by a faulty product.

As the head of the 3M Legal Affairs department I suspect that you may not have a deep acquaintance with equestrian matters. However, as any Long Rider will tell you, regardless of their national origin, all human beings speak "horse."

I hope therefore, that saddle experienced or not, you and your department will assist The Long Riders' Guild in determining the truth of this matter and thereby help us to protect the horses whose trust we enjoy.

Sincerely yours

CuChullaine O'Reilly, FRGS
Founder – The Long Riders' Guild
www.thelongridersguild.com
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