

Kurt vision a boost for valley - and even Pipe seems sweet on it



Kurtsystems: horse whisperer Monty Roberts said its potential was amazing

Graham Dunn

1 of 2

By James Burn6:00PM, JUL 29 2017

Racing has a reputation for being a conservative sport and change is not always welcomed, so it was interesting to see the latest innovation unveiled at Kingwood Stud in Lambourn recently.

Located close to Owen Burrows' Kingwood House operation, Kurtsystems is the brainchild of Turkish businessman Mehmet Kurt, who has interests in the property, construction, textile and agricultural sectors, but is also a man of the turf having won his country's Derby twice as an owner.

He first pioneered the technology in his homeland 25 years ago in an attempt to reduce the injuries his horses suffered in the early stages of their careers.



Mick Fitzgerald and Martin Pipe take a closer look inside one of the cabins

The multi-million-pound Lambourn model is more sophisticated and allows ten riderless horses to be exercised right- or left-handed on a six-furlong artificial surface with the aim of enhancing physical and mental strength before traditional training methods are employed.

A cast of racing's great and good gathered for the unveiling of the state-of-the-art technology, which includes heart and bone monitors, and the reception has been mostly positive.

Renowned horse whisperer Monty Roberts said its potential was amazing, a word 20-time champion jump jockey Sir Anthony McCoy used when he saw the structure that may look like a theme-park ride from a distance.

Whether it works or not remains to be seen, but either way it is hard to disagree with Newbury MP Richard Benyon, who described the project as a huge vote of confidence in the valley, while Lambourn trainer Jamie Osborne said it would be a great asset not only to the village but also to the wider racing community.



Mehmet Kurt unveils his new training technology

Graham Dunn

Ten people are employed whose work is connected to the system and it perhaps serves as a reminder that Newmarket is not necessarily the epicentre of British racing. Kurt, who is offering free trials of his pride and joy, explored the idea of building it there although Lambourn's jumping pedigree may have sealed the deal as its potential to help the rehabilitation of older horses, who may need bringing back slowly after serious injury, has also been noted.

Much will depend on trainers, owners and breeders if Kurtsystems does become a gamechanger in racing, although Martin Pipe – largely credited with revolutionising training methods in Britain in the 1980s – did joke he might have trained a few more than the 4,000-odd winners he saddled had he been able to get his hands on the equipment all those years ago.