

Following last week's Cheltenham Festival and in advance of the start of the turf flat season at Doncaster on Saturday, the Horseracing Bettors Forum is calling for British racing to up its game regarding correct reporting of the state of the going.

The official going description at the start of Cheltenham was given as "soft, heavy in places" despite a pre-racing going stick reading that was easily the lowest (softest) at the course on record.

That official description was altered to primarily "heavy" ground only after two races had been run in times that indicated exceptionally testing conditions, and without rain having fallen in the meantime.

In effect, the Clerk at Cheltenham conceded that he got the initial going description wrong, but those first two races will appear in most Form Books as primarily "soft" until the end of time.

At the very least, there should be a system in place to alter official going descriptions retrospectively when the evidence suggests they are wrong. More than that, though, greater efforts should be made to describe the surface correctly and objectively at the time.

Independent assessors disagree regularly with official going descriptions, on turf and all-weather, sometimes on a daily basis.

Punters and racing professionals deserve better, and their lack of confidence in official assessments has been communicated loud and clear in all surveying that HBF has conducted on the subject over the best part of a decade now.

HBF finds it most disappointing, and frankly unacceptable, that there has been no apparent progress in this area despite the horseracing public's clear concerns.

Confidence in the accuracy of fundamental data is paramount in order that people continue to fund the sport through their betting activity.