

USDA

**Horse Protection Act Review
of
National Walking Horse Association
Lexington, Kentucky**

January 29, 2009



U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
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Executive Summary

On January 29, 2009, a representative from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Review and Analysis Branch (RAB) conducted a review of the 2007 and 2008 show records of the National Walking Horse Association (NWHHA) in Lexington, Kentucky. The review covered the NWHHA rule book, the NWHHA organizational structure, Designated Qualified Person (DQP) personnel files, DQP training requirements and qualifications, DQP reports, and show records. NWHHA is not a signatory to the Horse Protection Operating Plan which is in effect 2007-2009; this means NWHHA did not create additional rules or regulations to ensure the enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA). All tickets written in violation of the HPA become automatic Federal Cases bypassing the HPA Coordinator.

NWHHA conducted 38 affiliated shows in 2007 reporting six violations. During the 2008 show season NWHHA conducted forty-three affiliated shows reporting no violations. USDA attended no shows for the 2007 or 2008 show season. Based upon the review, it was determined that there were no significant issues to be addressed. NWHHA had no prior year findings.

Background

The HPA (Pub. L. 91-540) was enacted by Congress in 1970 in response to public concerns about soring of horses¹. As a Federal law (15 U.S.C. §1821 et seq.), the HPA prohibits sored horses from participating in exhibitions, sales, shows, or auctions. The HPA also prohibits persons from transporting sored horses to compete in shows. APHIS is responsible for enforcing the HPA. RAB is responsible for evaluating APHIS programs and activities for overall effectiveness and efficiency in meeting their objectives. RAB conducts regular reviews of all nine Horse Industry Organizations (HIOs).

Purpose

The objective of this review is to ensure all NWHHA policies and procedures for the 2007 - 2008 show seasons were in compliance with the Horse Protection Act of 1970 (Pub. L. 91-540), as amended by the Horse Protection Act Amendments of 1976 (Pub. L. 94-360), 15 U.S.C. §1821 et seq., and any legislation amendatory thereof.

Methodology

RAB met with the NWHHA records coordinator, Vanessa Crowe, in Lexington, KY to analyze the NWHHA show documents for January 2007 through December 2008. The documents analyzed included the NWHHA rule book, NWHHA organizational structure, DQP personnel files, DQP reports, show records, violations issued, and suspension list. RAB conducted an exit conference which ended the review.

¹ USDA, Horse Protection Act (1970), (Pub. L. 91-540)

Areas of Review

NWHA Rule Book

NWHA provided an up-to-date copy of their rule book. NWHA explained the rule book is identical to the Horse Protection Act. The rule book had previously been approved by APHIS, Animal Care in accordance with the established Horse Protection Act Rules and Regulations.

NWHA Committee Structure

There were no changes to the NWHA Board of Directors. The Board of Directors' directory lists the board members, their titles, and contact information all of which are located in their website.

DQP Reports

NWHA had 19 licensed DQPs and two apprentice DQPs who inspected horse shows as assigned by the HIO. RAB reviewed the DQP reports submitted to APHIS. The reports were complete and in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the USDA Horse Protection Act.

Conflict Resolutions

There were no conflict resolutions in 2007 or in 2008. NWHA has removed this option from their rule book. Each DQP is held to the final decision of the USDA Veterinary Medical Officer.

Show Records

RAB reviewed all NWHA show records; each record was adequate and meets all requirements. Show records included the calendar of events, class sheets, and qualifying events. NWHA show records were received by APHIS in a timely manner.

DQP Qualifications

In order for a DQP to be designated as qualified, he/she must fulfill their yearly training requirements. NWHA stated all DQPs completed the required training held during the NWHA Annual Meeting on March 10, 2007, and February 16, 2008. NWHA went further in presenting a sign-in sheet which detailed the names of each DQP present. NWHA also presented an agenda which detailed the training delivered. The agenda include a session to review NWHAs rule book and Code of Conduct as required by the Horse Protection Regulations.

DQP Records

NWHA DQP records contained adequate documentation of DQP performance standards. Each record was complete with show manager name, exhibitor name, owner and trainer name, and detailed each horse examined.

DQP Personnel Files

NWHA maintains individual files for each DQP. All DQPs have an initial application in their file along with a yearly renewal form. In addition NWHA documented evaluations on the performance and conduct of each DQP. NWHA had two new applicants in 2007 – 2008.

Violations

NWHA reported six violations for the 2007 show season but reported none for the 2008 show season. NWHA has created an adequate violation reporting system. Each violation is numbered making referencing and reconciliation simple.

Suspension List

When NWHA has a violation to report, it prepares a current suspension list, which is distributed to both the National Horse Show Commission (NHSC) for consolidation and to all other HIOs. The suspension list is prepared on a weekly basis, as necessary. Once NWHA receives the consolidated suspension list from NHSC, NWHA distributes it to each of its DQPs to use at current events. Due to the necessity of receiving timely information, the requirement exists for a “real-time” violation reporting system and instant access to the most up-to-date information.