



Missouri Fox Trotting Horse Breed Association, Inc.

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Dr. Chester Gipson, Deputy Director
USDA-APHIS
4700 River Road, Suite 84
Riverdale, MD. 20737-1234

February 25, 2009

Dear Dr. Gipson:

The new requirement that all tack be removed from every horse before DQP inspection has caused concern by many in our industry, and especially for those hobby and amateur exhibitors that attend shows alone, and have no help to handle their tack, and who often show in multiple classes.

As you are aware, your proposed requirements will necessitate someone to handle the horse while another person removes the saddle and other tack. As we stated, many only attend shows by themselves or have limited physical help, and this will cause a hardship for these exhibitors. Expensive tack will be left unattended with the possibility of theft or damage.

These same concerns hold true for professional or amateur trainers. We understand your trepidation in the past and limiting the number of people in the inspection area. There will have to be more help to secure the saddles and tack as horses are initially inspected and also during post show inspection as more people will be required for the removal of all tack, and to control the horse. There are safety concerns with this procedure. By removing the tack there is a potential for unsafe situations where either a horse or person may become injured.

We fully understand your concerns and propose a compromise that shows can continue in a timely manner, and VMO/DQPs can be assured that all horses are thoroughly inspected. We propose that saddles be left on horses as they enter the inspection area. The girth would be dropped, and saddle raised to allow inspection. Inspecting the horses in such a manner will insure compliance, and at the same time relieve the need for additional people while also allowing the shows to proceed at a normal pace and in a safer environment.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and recommendation. We look forward to your timely response. Of course you or your staff is welcome in our meetings at any time.

Sincerely,


Board of Directors

Missouri Fox Trotting Horse Breed Association