

LISTENING SESSION

April 4, 2012

Duane Rector

My name is Duane Rector. I am 63 years old and have been involved in the Tennessee Walking Horse business for fifty years. I have been an Amateur Owned and Trained for over forty years. I have had horses with other trainers. I have stood a Stallion before. I have owned broodmares. I have had a judge's license with various organizations for over thirty years. I have served on various organizations for over 30 years. I have served on various HIO boards for seven years. I have been the DQP Coordinator for PRIDE and currently hold a DQP license with Pride. I have shod professional for over thirty five years. I have attended HIO conferences in the past 7 years. My profession is building cherry furniture at Rector's Cherry Furniture Shop in Bowling Green KY.

Having been involved in all these aspects of the Tennessee Walking Horse business, I feel a sense of frustration at how little I know about the future of the industry. I feel sure this frustration is shared by many in this industry who have less access to information than I do.

My first issue concerns the HIO'S, HIO stands for horse industry organization. This is the correct order of things, the horse is first, the industry is second and the organization is third. In my opinion if the organizations concentrated on what is best for the first two this industry could move forward.

Too many shows are being put in the positions of having to choose a HIO with the threat of a boycott by supporters of a competing HIO. Failure to support shows because of their affiliation or because the judge does not suit you may lead to the; loss of shows this year.

Many of these smaller shows are used as a fund raiser for local groups. Using my local show at Smiths Grove KY as an example, the local Lions Club Horse Show has sponsored a horse show for 54 years. They are attempting to carry on a tradition that their fathers and grandfathers started. Last year the show manager told me the show is now scheduled on a year to

year basis. Because of the expenses and time required to put on a show and the reduced attendance there is very little profit. I believe his statement was we can make just as much money on a pancake breakfast on Saturday morning than we do the horse show and the only complaint we get is if the pancakes are overcooked so we cook another batch of pancakes.

The HIO purpose is to provide DQP's trained under USDA supervision to horse shows to protect show managers by insuring non-compliant horse do not show. Why must shows bear the additional cost of extra DQP's to watch barns, trailer areas or warm up areas. I challenge the trainers and owners to police themselves in these areas.

Dr. Gipson tells of the time at the Celebration he was ~~sitting~~ in his civilian clothes. He walked down to a barn and stepped in the walkway and watched people get their horses ready to show. Suddenly someone recognized him and they said in a loud voice, Dr. Gipson, How are you? He stated in a very diplomatic way he was escorted outside of the area. I ask this question, when are we going to reach a point that we invite Dr. Gipson to watch us prepare our horses for the DQP?

My second thought is that we must recognize that society is changing. When this breed was started we were in a rural based economy. Many of these horses served other purposes, they were not just show horses.

Now we have become more of an urban society. The horse has been moved from the livestock to more of the pet category. In these hard economic times last year the US citizens spent more on their pets than any time in history. Whether the facts are correct or not any claims of abuse to animals bring a very critical response.

Even in the livestock industry there is increased pressure for more humane birthing, confinement, handling and processing of pork, beef and poultry. If these giant industries are subject to these pressures how can we expect any less?

Even large grain farmers are faced with more regulations due to water contamination by pesticides and fertilizers. They face issues pertaining to child labor laws of children of farmers.

As residential developments have encroached on farm land this has lead to complaints of dust and noise at planting and harvest times. Many farmers have banded together in an effort to get passed right to farm ordinances laws in many states and counties.

This is an effort to ensure that future generations may carry on as their preceding generations have With this being said is there not any way for the trainers, owners, breeders and HIO's to work together to promote this industry or are we going to continuously fight for an even smaller slice of the pie?