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March 19, 2012

Dr. Rachel Cezar
USDA Horse Protection
USDA/APHIS
4700 River Road, Unit 84
Riverdale, MD 20737

Dear Dr. Cezar:

Thank you for having the “listening event” at the Kentucky Horse Park on Thursday. The event was useful. You did not get many constructive suggestions from the audience, but it is important and useful to get out in the field and assess the public’s reaction to the policies of the USDA. Thanks.

The main point I made in my presentation was to strongly advise the USDA to get rid of all the HIOs who refuse to enforce the minimum mandated penalties issued by the USDA. As long as the USDA permits HIOs to minimize, overlook, and fail to enforce the rules, the rules of the HPA will have marginal success.

In Kentucky a substantial number of walking horse shows employ non-compliant HIOs, DQPs and judges. As long as this type of action is permitted by the USDA, the ability of the compliant HIOs and horse shows to compete in an industry which has years and years of violations, it will be extremely difficult to rid the business of those trainers and owners who want to campaign the “big lick” horses and have no feeling for the horse.

The Kentucky Racing Commission wants the USDA to be successful in its protection of the horse, but its “carrot” approach can only be successful if the non-compliant HIOs are put out of business. The Kentucky Racing Commission can only do so much to help the cause. Your organization has the power and should exercise it more forcefully. I recognize your fiscal limitations. However, you can be more forceful in the administration of the rules.

I see no evidence of your legal staff bringing actions against violators of your rules. On the other hand, the district attorney’s office in Tennessee has produced national headlines by indicting and convicting violators of the HPA. This is a very important step forward for you. However, if these are only isolated prosecutions, the awards are still worth the risk. As a long time attorney for the USEF and prosecutor of cruelty violations and drug violations, I know you are going to need a greater presence at the horse shows. I know the fight that you have with the

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Appropriation Committee and other politicians and am very sympathetic. Further, I applaud you and the USDA for your efforts.

I have received a copy of a letter dated February 24 addressed to you from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) which goes into detail about a number of potential improvements in your enforcement policies. See attached. I support each of their recommendations and look forward to actions from your organization to implement these recommendations.

If I, Jamie Eads or the Kentucky Racing Commission can assist you in any manner, please have no hesitancy in calling upon us.

Sincerely,



Edward S. Bonnie
Chairman, Rules Committee
Kentucky Horse Racing Commission

Attachment (AVMA letter)

Cc : Jamie Eads
Walter Herd
Frank Penn
Tom Conway
Burr Travis
Bob Beck
Susan Speckert

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