

Comments to the USDA/APHIS Listening Session on HORSE SORING
USDA/APHIS Headquarters, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737
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I want to ask the USDA to please continue undeterred in increasing its efforts to protect horses from the obscene practice of torture called soring. The Horse Protection Act was passed to prohibit this cruelty, but it is completely useless unless it is enforced, and it cannot be enforced without inspections by the USDA to rout out and punish the perpetrators. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting that the USDA institute the following course of action:

1. Funding must be provided for a massive increase in USDA soring inspections at all horse shows. Currently, the majority of soring inspections are undertaken by those involved in and benefitting from the soring culture. Clearly this is a conflict of interest that makes a mockery of the Horse Protection Act. Soring inspections must be performed only by USDA agents or USDA duly approved and trained independent inspectors.
2. Criminal prosecution of perpetrators must be vigorously pursued with stricter sentences and penalties.
3. Absolutely any and all devices, methods, and materials applied to horses in an effort to elicit exaggerated movements of any kind by inflicting pain must be completely banned, made illegal, and their use punished by criminal prosecution.
4. Ban, make illegal, and criminally prosecute the "Big Lick". I submit that this is the root cause of the plague of soring. How anyone can even bare to watch these hideous grotesque contortions forced upon an obviously suffering horse is beyond my comprehension. Yet prizes are awarded for the most exaggerated contortions. This is akin to rewarding the best sadist. The very source of these movements comes solely from the infliction of pain. The most pain inflicted elicits the most exaggerated contortions. Hence the best sadist wins the prize. Tennessee Walking horses are gentle beautiful animals with an elegant natural gait that is light and smooth and easy. The "Big Lick" is an artificial, hard, ugly, painful perversion inflicted on helpless animals. It cannot stand.

I know you need money to do these things, and I know money is not easy to come by these days. But, save money by cutting back on paper clips and new office chairs, not by surrendering defenseless beings to torture. These horses are suffering in agony, alone, terrified, helpless and desperate. They can't do anything to make it stop. They can't even cry out for help. I am crying out to you for them. Please help them. You are their only hope. Please.