

Turner, Whitney I - APHIS

From: Diane Steed <muleygirl@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2012 8:10 PM
To: Cezar, Rachel - APHIS
Subject: HPA Listening Sessions- Albany, OR

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond to the state of HPA. I am unable to attend the Albany listening session, so will summarize my thoughts here.

I have owned/currently own 4 TWH, 2 of which were previously padded, one previously sored, with extensive pastern scarring. I believe what they are doing with TWH is cruel and damaging to the horse, even just using pads, much less soring. I do not feel that there has been any significant improvement in the industry, they are just getting more clever with avoiding getting caught. I do not feel that the HIOs can police themselves, they have had years to do so, and have failed, since it is somewhat like the fox guarding the henhouse.

In my opinion, the only reason soring goes on is because pads and action devices are allowed, and excessive animation is rewarded in the show ring. Until you take that away, there is a multi-generational group of people that will continue what they are doing indefinitely. Here in Oregon, we have 2 TWH groups, one that has padded horses at their shows, and the group that I belong to that is just flat shod. There have been moves many times to try to unite the groups, but we will never do it because of the padded horses. The inspection protocols have driven lots of people from showing, since many are over 40, and cannot saddle and unsaddle multiple times a day for inspections. This is all due to a small group of cruel people who refuse to change their ways. It is ridiculous that it is necessary that we have to be inspected by the government just to show our horses. I know they claim that there is no long term damage to these horses, but I can tell you that with my two, there were mental issues from the abusive training methods that were used, that never go away. And also looking at the feet of horses that were shod at a young age with pads, their feet permanently form in a elongated shape. This is very apparent when I compare my mare's feet with my homebred horses feet. Not to mention the damage to stifles and hocks from the distorted movement. I am also sick of having people look at me like I have 3 heads when I tell them I have TWH. They think that I ride padded horses that go around in circles. I realize your focus is strictly soring, but the reality is that this is a cultural problem that needs a big hammer to change things, because it will never change from the inside. If excessive animation were not the goal, there would be no reason to sore, whether it is a padded horse, or a flat shod horse. So there needs to be some change on what judges are rewarding as well. The TWH needs to go back to what it once was, an amazing utility horse that could do many things. We have morphed so far away from that because of the padded horses, it has affected the industry in a negative way. I am heartened by the recent arrests and exposure of those that abuse horses, and please keep up the pressure! You have my total support.

Diane Steed