

Turner, Whitney I - APHIS

From: Gina Vehige <gvehige@prodigy.net>
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 4:53 PM
To: Cezar, Rachel - APHIS
Subject: pads, bands, action devices and "Plantation Shoes"

Dear Dr. Cezar:

I want to add to my previously submitted comments some information from the experience of GaitWay Horse Association (GWHHA, Inc.) a 501 (c) (3). Many years ago (at least 7) we were the first organization in Missouri to ban pads, bands, action devices, and plantation shoes from our Tennessee Walking Horse (TWH) shows. We haven't had a sore horse at our shows / sponsored events since. I truly believe when you ban the "gimmicks", you cut down on 90% of the soring. If TWH owners simply don't find an advantage to showing sore or gimmicked, they either stop showing or stop soring. Either way, the horse gets a break.

I also want to encourage the USDA to stop thinking "education" will help the folks who sore. It is a waste of my money as a tax payer. There are plenty of private sector venues for learning horsemanship without gimmicks or soring. They've had plenty of education. They don't care. It is illegal to sore and the only action I expect as a taxpayer at this point is for FULL ENFORCEMENT of the HPA and FURTHER REGULATION of those items / techniques known to be associated with a high rate of soring. The USDA need look no further than its own data to identify that the overwhelming majority of horses ticketed for scars or soring are heavy shod horses. Take away the pads, bands, action devices and anything over the size of a "regulation lite shod shoe" and you will solve 90% of the problem.

Thank you again for listening. You have my full support to enforce the HPA and continue identifying further regulations and efforts to stop soring.

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