

Turner, Whitney I - APHIS

From: ryehillfarms@comcast.net
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2012 11:46 AM
To: Cezar, Rachel - APHIS
Subject: Horse Protection Act Listening Sessions

Dear Dr. Cezar,

I attended the last Listening Session at the USDA APHIS Headquarters on April 10th, 2012. I am a flat shod TN Walking Horse owner. My first Walker came from TN. When she was around 15, I noticed that she would stumble, it became worse and I called in the vet. After x-rays it was determined that she had developed navicular disease in her front legs. The vet, knowing her history, believe that this was from the trauma of wearing packages as a weaning and yearling. We put keg bar shoes on her and the pain was eliminated. She went on to have a full life, teaching my grandchildren to ride. She was a healthy gal, but unfortunately broke her leg at 23 and had to be put down with an 18 month old at her side. I believed the vet about the cause of the navicular because of my own personal experience. I was a ballet dancer. I was on toe shoes at the age of 8. My feet and ankles to this day are paying the price of the harm all those percussive jumps and steps did to my feet in the 10 years that I was dancing daily. I believe that the packages are harmful to all horses because of the stress they put on the bones and ligaments; just as dancing on wood put on mine.

I heard a lot of talk about the padded horse and "saving an industry". This "industry" of inhumane treatment is not worth saving. I was appalled to hear someone, let alone a state senator stand up and say that she never met a person who sores horses, when her own trainer had an eight month suspension. This is just ludicrous. And another to be so concerned about the chemical regulations on what can and cannot go on the horse if they are not putting anything but water soluble fly spray on their horses? I was a member of a board for survivors of domestic violence. I went out and spoke to corporations that help to fund us and educate their employees. Denial is a big part of the perpetrators vocabulary. Listening to the rederic was like I was back there again. Abuse is abuse, no matter what form it takes and on what population it is happening to. I do not believe we will ever get close to a zero tolerance and still have the padded horse. The pads, bans, chains, tungsten shoes, and the plantation shoe needs to go. I would prefer to have everyone on keg shoes, but I'll give them the lite shod shoe. No young horse should be subjected to these heavier shoes until their legs have stopped growing; for some horses, this could be 4 years old or more. I have a filly that took 6 years to get to her full height of 16.1 hands.

I believe the UDSA has the power to put an end to this. You just have to use the power for the good of the horse. It is called the Horse Protection Act, so protect the horse, not the people. The HIOs that are doing a miserable job need to be decertified, now, not next year, but now. The DQP program needs to be run by the USDA. We pay for the services now; why not pay you instead of the HIO's. I am president of the PA Pleasure Walking Horse Association. The club is 80% trail riders and 20% show enthusiasts. I went to one show where there were padded horses. I saw one in such pain when a pad fell off; the hoof was bleeding and destroyed. I vowed then I'd never spend my money on a show that had the padded horse because I saw the pain and fear in the eyes of that animal. I'll never forget it.

This year our club, is going to have trouble with our show, NAPC, because of an incident that happened at the National Show last year. The show brings horses from 5 states with 500 entries, 2 DQP's. It funds our club's other activities. Our members have voted not to hire any HIO that works with the padded horse because it is against our mission statement. That leaves us with 3 HIO's, 1 is unacceptable because they do not honor anything but the keg shoe and one that we usually affiliate with is upsetting our members, that leaves the Missouri Fox Trotters and I'm not sure they want to do

business with us. So we know that doing the right thing can be difficult and there can be consequences. Our members have voted to stay with NWHHA, because they are closest to our mission statement, but we will probably lose many entries. For 30 years, we were founded in 1982, we have been working to stop the soring and promoting sound horsemanship and that is not going to stop. We are taking the High Road regardless of the cost.

It really can be so simple, if you make up your mind to do the right thing for the horse.

I am so glad that I was a part of the listening sessions. I will look forward to the computation of all that was said.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Marion G. Latshaw