

*Ernest Allen*

USDA Questions

1. Congress passed the Horse Protection act in 1970 to eliminate the cruel and inhumane practice of soring horses. How close are we to achieving the goal?

The goal has been achieved. As evident by fact that <sup>94-98</sup> ~~86~~ to 98 percent of the Walking Horse tested pass a most rigorist's test prior to entering the show and again upon exiting the show ring.

2. Can the industry achieve a consensus on to carry out a self-regulatory program to enforce the HPA in a consistent way?

Yes great progress has been made in this direction as evident by the formation of The Unity Committee.

3. What responsibilities should USDA – certified Horse Industry Organizations (HIO) has within the Industry?

They over-see the training and conduct of the DQP's. HIO's should also develop and enforce the HPA rules.

4. How can the industry reconcile its inherent competition aspect with ensuring compliance with the HPA?

The USDA has had huge hand in complicating the HPA. This entire act should revamp to protect all horse~~less~~. This act should be reviewed and simplified. The TWH industry would start to make better process ~~towards compliance~~ once the HPA enforced as it was written.

5. What can USDA do now and in the future to ensure compliance?

The USDA has done enough. The USDA needs to recognize that the THW industry is following the HPA rules. In those few cases were the rules are not being adhered to, those breaking the rules are fined and jailed. *Further indication on the process is working*

5. What respons<sup>ibilities</sup> should USDA have within the industry with respect to enforcement and what hinders oversight of the HIO's.

The USDA should not be in the enforcement business. Too many vague ~~rules~~ and subjective rules/ within the HPA reduces the efficiencies of the HIO's.

6. Should there be a prohibition of all action devices? *which*

No. Action devices are used in every equine discipline. Spurs are action devices, lunge whips are action device, and bits are action devices. Any action devices used properly are not inhumane.

7. Should there be a prohibition of pads?

No. Pads <sup>actually</sup> protect a horses hoof. Just look at boots/pads used to protect a horse's hoof when it is injured. It looks much like the pads used on Walking horses.