

**My name is Gale Monahan. I am a retired Public Health Analyst from the Federal Government. I now live in East Tennessee. I have had TWHs since 1983 and am here because I find the issue of soring to be atrocious and cannot believe humans are still causing pain to horses for profit.**

**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?**

We are not close at all in eliminating the cruel and inhuman practice of soring. The first prosecution in 20 years occurred only last month, February 2012 where Barney Davis testified that "every Walking Horse that enters into a show ring is sored. ... They've got to be sored to walk. There ain't no good way to put it, but that's how it is." We have yet to see the outcome of the 52 count Federal criminal indictments against Jackie McConnell and his employees. I have also heard from another person who no longer shows his horses that very same sentiment, that the horses need to be sored in order to compete.

There is NO denying that the gaited horse is still being tortured and abused through soring after 42 years!!

**Can the industry achieve a consensus on how to carry out a self-regulatory program to enforce the Horse Protection Act in a consistent way?**

Self regulation by Horse Industry Organizations has absolutely NOT worked and has been disastrous for the gaited show horse for the last 40+ years, enabling the continued soring abuse of gaited show horses. The two sides are diametrically opposed—there are those who violate the HPA by continuing to cruelly abuse horses through mechanical and chemical soring and those who abide by the HPA, treating their horses with dignity and respect.

**To illustrate--Researchers at Eastern Kentucky University analyzed data from the USDA website and compared violation rates over 3 years for horse shows (2008, 2009, 2010). They compared results from shows that were inspected by USDA Veterinary Medical Officers (VMOs) with those inspected by the DQPs. This analysis included data from 1,400 shows and 240,000 horse inspections. The data indicated that VMOs found 12 to 30 times more violations at shows than those determined by DQP inspectors. If VMO inspectors had made all of the inspections, there would have been 62,387 violations rather than the 3,932 that were actually made. The data also demonstrated that out of 9,090 total HPA violations, 50% were for 1,157 repeat offenders. (American Farriers Journal, July/August 2011)**

People who intentionally sore horses are animal torturers. People who break the law and constantly look for ways to continue unlawful behavior without detection are criminals. **Criminals are incapable of self-regulation.**

### **What responsibilities should USDA-certified Horse Industry Organizations (HIOs) have within the industry?**

HIOs should be responsible for rulebooks for competitions that espouse a NO TOLERANCE policy for soring. Self regulation by the HIOs has NOT worked. THE USDA should be responsible for all DQP Inspections and enforcing the Horse Protection Act.

### **How should the USDA ensure compliance?**

The USDA should ensure compliance by imposing stronger penalties for animal abuse against trainers, owners and HIOs (including decertification). Stronger penalties include lifetime suspensions of individuals with multiple violations and suspensions of sored horses from the show ring. The USDA must also be willing to enforce punitive penalties for these violations and prosecute criminal cases quickly and efficiently.

**The possibility of being federally prosecuted, sustaining criminal convictions—felonies and misdemeanors, and the prospect of jail time will serve to make people think twice before violating the law.**

The USDA needs to establish new protocols to stop sore horses at the inspection. With violators developing new methods to sore, there is no reason the USDA cannot pull shoes and pads, establish weight limits for shoes, implement drug testing, etc.

### **Should there be a prohibition of all action devices and pads?**

**Action devices and pads should absolutely be outlawed.** They go hand in hand with soring.

APHIS stated in a 1979 Federal Register Final Notice that the agency would seriously consider prohibiting all action devices and pads except protective boots, if the self-regulatory program did not succeed in eliminating the sore horse problem within a reasonable time. That was Thirty-three years ago, and we still have sore horses.

At the **2011 Celebration**: 100% of the 52 total samples, tested positive for foreign substances, and 71.2% tested positive for a numbing agent.

At the **2011 Trainers Show**: 92% of the 13 samples, tested positive for foreign substances, and (54%) tested positive for numbing agents

At the **2011 Fun Show**: 95 % of the 20 total samples tested positive for foreign substances, and 60% tested positive for numbing agents.

Of the 80 shows the USDA attended from 2008-2010, there was a total of 14,376 horse entries with 51% of these entries padded horses and 49% flat shod.

13.7% of the padded horse entries had violations. Only 1.6% of the flat shod horses had violations.

Of the 387 unilateral violations, the padded unilateral violation rate was 760% higher than for flat shod horses.

Of the 150 bilateral violations, the padded bilateral violation rate was 900% higher than for flat shod horses.

Of the 417 scar rule violations, the padded horse scar violations were 1800% greater than for flat shod horses.

Although 51% of the entries were padded; 90% of all HPA violations were written on padded horses. **The violation rate was 500% higher on the padded entries.**

Research conducted by Dr. Molly Nicodemus at MSU demonstrated there is less than a 5% stride difference unless an action device weighs 10 oz or more. A stride difference of less than 5% is not perceptible to the human eye. This means that the exaggerated gaits of the performance horse must be achieved with something else. That something else is soring. Pads, chains and soring go hand in hand.

[http://s1084.photobucket.com/albums/j418/forthetnwalkinghorse/Gait%20Analysis%20by%20Dr%20Molly%20Nicodemus/?action=view&ot=23\\_GaitAnalysisByDrMollyNicodemus.jpg](http://s1084.photobucket.com/albums/j418/forthetnwalkinghorse/Gait%20Analysis%20by%20Dr%20Molly%20Nicodemus/?action=view&ot=23_GaitAnalysisByDrMollyNicodemus.jpg)

According to **Olin K Balch, DVM, Sound Horse Conference 2009.** Weighted shoes alter the landing orientation of the pastern and the hoof at the time of initial ground contact. The irregular limb positioning at initial ground contact may help explain the high incidence of ringbone and sidebone historically described in gaited show horses.

<http://soundhorseconference.com/GaitedHorseBiomechanics&HoofStructure.html>

**According to Dr. Stephen O'Grady, DVM. Sound Horse conference 2008.** Pressure shoeing is an "abusive, unethical method of farriery used to enhance animation in an attempt to gain a competitive advantage.

<http://soundhorseconference.com/PressureShoeing.html>

**According to Kevin K. Haussler, DVM. At the 2008 Sound Horse Conference.** Regarding the Posture and stance of Big Lick horses. The Stance: Exaggerated pelvic limb retraction. The Gait: Exaggerated thoracic limb flexion and protraction; exaggerated pelvic limb protraction; altered joint biomechanics and increased tissue strain; altered spinal movements—change from passive to active role. The Rider: Altered rider position—change in center of gravity.

<http://soundhorseconference.com/ProposedResearchfortheFuture.html>

**WITHOUT A DOUBT, IT IS TIME TO PROHIBIT ALL ACTION DEVICES AND PADS!!!**

**Currently the Horse Protection regulations have a shoe weight limit on yearlings. Should there now be a shoe weight limit for all aged horses?**

**There should POSITIVELY be a weight limit on shoes.**

The USDA must implement rules to address the growing problem of horses wearing tungsten shoes that can easily weigh over eight pounds each. The weight of these shoes can rip the hoof off a horse. A horse does not have the biomechanical structure to carry 8 pound shoes. At the time the HPA was enacted, no one would have dreamed a tungsten shoe would be possible weighing 8 pounds. It is the USDA's responsibility to enforce the HPA which means new rules and guidelines as new methods are continually being developed to sore horses and create exaggerated and unnatural performance.

Harmful effects of distal loading on front feet results in excessive stretching of muscles and tendons leading to injury documented by the study on **THE ENERGETIC AND KINEMATIC CONSEQUENCES OF WEIGHTING THE DISTAL LIMB** at California State Polytechnic University and Michigan State University.

to give you an idea...

A 1pound "keg" shoe = 136.89 foot pounds per second.

An 8 pound "heavy plantation shoe = 1095.12 foot pounds per second

**About an 87% increase in stress to the limb over a keg shoe!**

Submitted by Steve to FOSH Friends yahoo Group on 8/22/2011 ([ten\\_sc\\_walker@yahoo.com](mailto:ten_sc_walker@yahoo.com))

According to **Dr. Tracy Turner, DVM, and equine lameness expert, at the 2010 Sound Horse,** the 1978 Big Lick shoe package was 4.5 pounds. In the mid 1990's it was 8 pounds. He conclusively showed through radiographs and thermography that performance horses were imbalanced on 4 levels. Abnormal balance causes problems with movement and other physical issues. The act of shoeing directly affects the coffin bone and all associated structures. The effect of increasing the hoof angle: coffin and



pastern joint flexion is compromised; minimal fetlock extension; decreases DDFT strain; increases suspensory strain; promotes heel first landing; increases the speed of break over; and increases pressure on the hoof capsule. The length and weight of the stack package magnifies the biomechanics. <http://soundhorseconference.com/conference/secured.php>

**The USDA should absolutely limit the shoe weight for all horses to protect the horse. A shoe should never be put on a yearling. For more information on equine structural growth rates visit [www.equinestudies.org](http://www.equinestudies.org)**

**I want to thank the USDA for it's part in the recent conviction of Barney Davis and the 52 indictments handed down for Jackie McConnell and his employees. I hope this trend of enforcement continues and that the USDA takes its responsibility for protecting the horse seriously from now on.**