

*Discussion for listening session with USDA regarding the Horse Protection Act Concerning inspection requirements and process for horses at children's horse shows such as 4H shows.*

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*I am a 4H Club leader with horses of many different breeds, including non-trotting type, shown by children in my club. . I am concerned for both the children and horses safety and welfare.*

*The North Carolina State 4H Horse Show class list is offered as an example only. I am in no way speaking on behalf of North Carolina 4H, my county 4H or my 4H Club. These are my personal opinions. The Horse Protection Act is important. In no way would I encourage soring, cheating or cruelty to anyone or any animal.*

*My concerns are: 1. that the ones inspected at all breed 4H type shows are only non-trotting, singling out those children and putting them in uncomfortable situations; 2. that inconsistent information is delivered from DQPs; 3. the cost of the inspections puts these types of shows in the position of needing to have all of the non-trotting classes spaced very close together on one day.*

*Many of the 4H children who have their project horses at home or at a small boarding stable, feel very unfairly profiled as a person who would sore his or her horse. It appears that there is an expectation of guilt until the inspection proves innocence. In the children's minds they are being inspected when their horse is being inspected.*

*When a particular sub-group of children, whether by race, sex or what have you, is singled out from the rest for special inspection, it is not generally considered to be in the children's best interest. Any yes, when a child's horse is inspected by an "official" for wrong doing, in the child's eyes he or she is being inspected.*

*The press given to the criminal element in the TWH industry is not indicative of the total population of lovers and owners of this breed or other non-trotting breeds. It is especially not true of the 4H children who are exhibiting these horses.*

*NC 4H rules pertaining to the NC State 4H Horse Show  
(Excerpt from the NC 4H Rule Book)*

*"The horse must be managed and under the care of the 4-H member*

since May 1 of the current year. Project horses should not be trained on a regular daily basis by a professional within 60 days before competing in 4-H classes. Professional advice and instruction of the 4-H member is encouraged whenever possible. Such assistance can include occasional riding or handling of the horse by the professional but cannot include regular daily training and care of the horse within 60 days of competition. Youths boarding their horses at public stables that feed their horses and clean their stalls are eligible to participate in 4-Horse shows if the 4-H members ride and care for the horses on a regular basis."

Horses showing in these shows do not have licensed trainers listed. They are shown under the child's eligibility card.

Following describes the physical situation of the DQP area, arenas and holding pen set up, and the circumstances of the day when the classes in the referenced show were held.

Raleigh, NC - Daytime temperature high 107 degrees

Age of people showing - 9-13 yr old Juniors and 14-18 yr old Seniors.

Number of non-trotting horses at the show overall: about 30; other horses more than 300.

This is the class list for the Saddle Seat division for both trotting and non-trotting.

*This is a five day show yet all of the non-trotting classes have to happen on one day largely because of the enormous cost of inspections.*

#### Class Description

\*78. Saddle Type Halter (Mares and Geldings) 1,2,15

\*79. Non-Trotting Mares in Hand 1, 2, 11 - INSPECTED

\*80. Non-Trotting Geldings in Hand 1, 2, 11 - INSPECTED

81. Saddle Seat Showmanship in Hand-Open 1,2,15

82. Non-Trotting Showmanship (All Seats) - (Jr.) 2,11 - INSPECTED

83. Non-Trotting Showmanship (All Seats) - (Sr.) 2,11 - INSPECTED

84. Country English Pleasure 1,2,3,15

85. English Non-Trotting (2 Gaits) - (Junior)2,11,12 - INSPECTED  
 \*86. Academy Walk/Trot Pleasure 1,2,15  
 87. English Non-Trotting (2 Gaits) - (Senior)2,11,12 - INSPECTED  
 88. Saddle Seat English Pleasure 1,2,15  
 89. Go-As-You-Please Non-Trotting (2 Gaits) -INSPECTED  
 -Other Non-Trotting Horses1,2,11, 12,13  
 \*\*\* 15 Minute Break \*\*\*  
 90. Saddle Seat Equitation-Open 1,2,15  
 91. Non-Trotting Equitation (Junior) - 2 Gait2,12 - INSPECTED  
 \*92. Academy Walk/Trot Equitation1,2,15  
 93. Non-Trotting Equitation (Senior) - 2 Gait2,12 - INSPECTED  
 94. Hunter Pleasure - English-Type1,2,15  
 95. Walking Horse Pleasure (3 Gaits)1,2 - INSPECTED  
 96. Racking Horse Pleasure (3 Gaits)1,2 - INSPECTED  
 97. Other Non-Trotting Horse Pleasure (3 Gaits)1,2,13 - INSPECTED  
 \*\*\* 15 Minute Break \*\*\*  
 98. Western Pleasure-English-Type1,2,15  
 99. Western Non-Trotting (2 Gaits) - (Junior)2,11,12 - INSPECTED  
 100. Western Non-Trotting (2 Gaits) - (Senior)2,11,12 - INSPECTED

*A Senior age youth with a TWH mare as her project horse could enter classes: 79,83,87,93,95,96,100 (NC 4H rules do not prohibit cross entering the Walking Pleasure and Racking Pleasure classes). It is even possible that a Jr and Sr might share a horse. One can see the time constraints for inspections under the current structure.*

*Children and horses have no reprieve in these shows. The constant take the saddle off, get inspected, put it on again, wait, standing in the holding pen with no shade and do it again for hours is absurd. In this particular example shady areas were in clear sight of the DQP, within a few feet, but outside of the fence. But again all of these classes have to happen on the same day because it costs so much to have a DQP and inspections there. For example the Western Division youth can do Showmanship on Thursday, Trail class on Saturday and the most of their other classes on Sunday. Thus allowing both children and horses to be less stressed and perform better.*

I have taken old TWHs to similar shows where DQPs have told a child something like " this old horse is ok here but with this scar on his leg he wouldn't make it into another show" The particular horse I'm speaking of had a scar on his heel bulb from getting caught in a fence 14 years ago. I realize that bilateral scaring is the rule, and the particular horse I'm speaking about

didn't have bilateral scars. At another show a child had a horse with a mild case of thrush. She had put some purple Thrush Buster on this horse's frog a few days before the show, her vet had suggested she do that for her horse. There was a trace of that purple on the horse's frog when she went to the show. That also falls outside of the law, although it was in the best interest of the horse. The DQP said he should write her a ticket but he didn't. How inconsistent is it for there to be a law that says a medicine the vet suggested the child put on her horse is a ticketable offense?

*As a 4H leader, a horse owner, and a mother I find this to be difficult for both the children and the horses. An act called The Horse Protection Act should tend to do things that make the animals more comfortable, rather than set up situations where they are to be as miserable as possible in the heat because they have to be inspected, and re-inspected for multiple classes with in a few hours. Our good sense should dictate that we care for our children to keep them as comfortable and safe as possible. Yet to satisfy the Horse Protection Act inspections and the schedule of shows such as the one referenced above, we have no choice if we want to allow our children to show their horse of choice..*

*This impacts the number of non-trotting breed horses that 4Hers will chose for project horses, and is reflected in the number of non-trotting horses that are brought to the show in the example.*

*The enormous cost of affiliating shows, and having inspections, prohibit all breed shows from including TWHs or breed types. There should be written specification and difference made in the inspection requirements between children's shows that include non-trotting entries and shows such as the Celebration.*

*I advocate easing the inspection requirements for 4H shows in the non-trotting division at least the unsaddle - re-saddle - inspect - re-inspect situation as described. Possibly even random inspections and tests similar to the random drug testing that is applicable to all could achieve the same thing for these types of shows. Because some adults have treated or are treating horses of a breed type cruelly and illegally, is not cause to presuppose that everyone who has this breed type of horse does. Don't think that these children do not notice that they are the 30 or so who are being singled out from the 300 plus at the 4H shows, and that they are suspected.*

*The economic impact could be lessened if there were, at the least, changes made that would reduce the cost of the inspections at this type of show. Perhaps suggest a required number of volunteer hours that HIOs would give to their*

*respective state and district 4H shows. In a show such as the example used, that may allow for the classes to at least be divided over two days.*

*We cannot control temperature. Setting up holding areas in the shade when available and simply allowing the children to keep their horse saddled between classes when they are going right back into the ring within a few classes, would create a much kinder and comfortable environment for both horse and rider. Part of that may be more under the authority of show management but direction from USDA on this would be helpful.*