



**HUMANE SOCIETY
VETERINARY MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION**

April 27, 2012

Dr. Rachel Cezar
Horse Protection Coordinator
USDA/ APHIS Animal Care
4700 River Rd
Riverdale, MD 20737

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Dear Dr. Cezar,

I am writing on behalf of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA) and its 4,200 veterinary professional members to support the comments regarding enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) presented to you by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), at the April 10th, 2012 Listening Session in Riverdale, MD. We wish to join the HSUS and ASPCA in encouraging you to implement the recommended changes to the HPA regulations to protect Tennessee Walking Horses and other breeds.

The Horse Protection Act, passed in 1970, has been in effect for 42 years without sufficient enforcement or change within the Walking Horse industry. Soring and abuse is still running rampant and the current self-regulation is a system that is unsuccessful. This is shown by the shocking statistics referenced in the comments made by the HSUS and the ASPCA. The fact that 97.6% of samples taken by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) at 2011 walking horse shows and 86% in 2010 tested positive for illegal foreign substances is unacceptable and strongly indicates that changes must be made to the current system of enforcing the HPA.

The HSVMA agrees that certain steps must be undertaken to ensure compliance, including the USDA seeking sufficient funding to enable aggressive enforcement, eliminating the role of horse industry organizations in enforcement, and strengthening administrative procedures and policies. We also agree that the use of non-therapeutic pads, non-protective shoes, and all action devices should be prohibited.

We appreciate the opportunity to voice our support for the comments made by the HSUS and the ASPCA, and we urge the agency to consider the requests made, in order to fully and effectively enforce the HPA and provide much-needed protection for Tennessee Walking Horses and other gaited breeds.

Sincerely,

Dr. Susan Krebsbach
Advocacy/Policy Division
Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association