

February 24, 2015

Tennessee Walking Horse Exhibitors and Breeders Association  
250 N. Ellington Parkway  
Lewisburg, TN 37091

ADVANCE COPY by  
ELECTRONIC EMAIL

Dear TWHBEA:

Friends of Sound Horses (FOSH) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the welfare of the Tennessee Walking Horse, the ending of soring and is a USDA certified Horse Industry Organization with licensed DQPs. FOSH is aware that steps were taken by the Celebration's new Veterinary Advisory Committee (VAC) to draw blood tests at the 2014 Celebration to determine if illegal substances were in use during this annual competition. FOSH understands that the Celebration did not pay winnings to those exhibitors who did not pass standards set by the VAC. FOSH notes that the substances tested did not include soring substances, which was a significant drawback to demonstrating that the Celebration wanted compliance with the Horse Protection Act.

Although winnings were withheld from exhibitors whose horses tested positive, FOSH does not believe this is a sufficient penalty for cheating. In light of this process to keep cheaters from their winnings, FOSH requests that those horses that tested positive not be permitted to have the World Grand Champion, World Champion and Reserve Champion titles added to their registration papers.

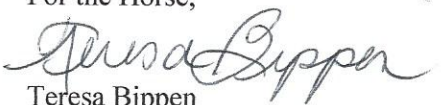
If TWHBEA is to take a stand against cheating and soring, TWHBEA should refuse to acknowledge any title awarded at the Celebration that was given to a horse that tested positive. This is not an unrealistic request if TWHBEA opposes soring and cheating. As a breed registry, it is incumbent upon TWHBEA to hold accurate records, and horses that were drugged should not be considered valid winners. No other U.S. breed registry records titles of winning animals that were drugged to win.

In all professional and amateur sporting competitions, it is standard policy to strip titles of those who cheat, even if it occurs months or years later. To not strip titles, is inherently unfair to those exhibitors that did not cheat. What message does this send to TWHBEA members and the public if titles are not stripped? That it is OK to cheat to get a title in the Walking Horse industry?

Even more telling is that almost every horse on the VAC list is owned and/or shown by people with multiple HPA violations each, suggesting that they have been, and are used to, getting away with cheating for a very long time. Please stand up to the further corruption that the VAC blood test results uncovered and do the right thing by not allowing the titles on the drugged horse's papers.

The HPA Violation Reports and the VAC Blood Test Results are public record for the entire world to see. The world is watching TWHBEA to see how it will handle these very damaging revelations from within its competitive associations and membership.

For the Horse,

  
Teresa Bippen  
President, Friends of Sound Horses