



**Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service**

**Animal Care
Western office**

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June 22, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope this message finds you well. As you look forward to the show season ahead, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Horse Protection Act (HPA) program shares this anticipation. This year has seen unprecedented changes and challenges to everyday life due to COVID-19. USDA regards the safety of its employees, horse industry organizations, event managers and staff, and participants as a high priority as well as ensuring the welfare of the animals covered under the HPA. This message is to provide you with the guidelines the USDA HPA program staff will be following when our attendance at HPA regulated events resumes.

USDA staff will follow the below procedures:

- Implement all precautions related to COVID-19 provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, state and local health departments, USDA, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
- Follow guidelines or rules that have been placed by the State or Local government, and/or business.
- Maintain proper hygiene, including frequent hand washing/sanitizing, and practice social distancing.
 - Maintain 6 feet physical distance from others when possible
 - For job activities that require interaction with the general public, as best possible, establish a "zone" where USDA employees stand a safe distance away from others.
 - Hand washing should include 20 seconds of soap contact with skin.
- Disinfect inspection area (i.e. tables and chairs) with disinfectant spray or wipes before and after use. If surfaces are dirty, detergent or soap and water will be used to clean surfaces prior to disinfection.
- At a minimum, USDA staff will wear cloth or disposable surgical masks.
- USDA staff will remain in the inspection area to limit exposure to congregated people or surfaces not disinfected.
- USDA VMOs will disinfect hands between horses using wipes or hand sanitizer.
- USDA VMOs will disinfect equipment (i.e. tape measure, hoof testers) between horses using disinfectant spray or wipes.
- Maintain personal control over equipment and do not share equipment to the extent possible (such as pens, inspection equipment, etc.).
 - If equipment must be shared with others, additional precautions will be taken to minimize virus spread by washing hands, using hand sanitizer, and wiping equipment down with disinfectant spray or wipes.
- Use alternate forms of greeting such as elbow or fist bumps, if necessary, instead of shaking hands.

Additionally, USDA expects that the following guidelines will be met. Following these guidelines will ensure the safety of the USDA inspection team as well as the employees of the horse industry organizations, event managers and staff, and participants. These guidelines are in accordance with the those adopted by adopted by The Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association and Walking Horse Trainers' Association (TWHEA/WHTA) on May 15, 2020.

- Social distancing requirements will be enforced throughout the competition grounds at all times
- Show office will limit the number of persons entering the show office at one time and configure space to comply with social distancing
- Inspection area will be increased to allow all required personnel to social distance from each other
- Only one custodian per entry and one entry per Designated Qualify Person (DQP) in the inspection area at one time
- All DQPs will wear masks and be required to sanitize their hands after inspecting each entry
- All custodians of horses through inspection must wear a mask while the horse is in the inspection area
- Warmup areas will be as large as possible and where applicable have multiple warm up areas (with a DQP monitoring each area) to comply with social distancing guidelines
- Enforce only one trainer, one exhibitor and one groom per entry while in the warmup area (juveniles may have one additional adult in warm up area, exception requests can be made to USDA staff)

We appreciate your time to read this update. We look forward to continuing to work together toward achieving our common goals. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Dr. Aaron Rhyner at 970-494-7484.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Goldentyer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized 'E' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Betty Goldentyer, DVM
Deputy Administrator
Animal Care