

National Walking Horse Association Emphasizes Zero Tolerance for Soring at National Championship Show

Event to showcase the versatility of sound Tennessee Walking Horses.

September 29, 2008

The National Walking Horse Association (NWHHA) is showing its commitment to the 1970 Federal Horse Protection Act by inviting The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the USDA, and the ASPCA to its National Championship Horse Show in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, September 30 through October 4.

Donald Vizi, executive director of the NWHHA, extended invitations to the top brass at the HSUS, the USDA and the ASPCA to show his ongoing support of the humane treatment of Tennessee Walking Horses. The NWHHA was founded 10 years ago to advocate the natural abilities and versatility of the Tennessee Walking Horse. "We have invited all three organizations to attend Nationals and welcome their participation in the inspection of our sound, flat shod walking horses," Vizi says. "NWHHA is committed to preserving and fostering the natural abilities and welfare of the Walking Horse. We have a zero tolerance scar rule policy."

The Horse Protection Act makes it illegal to sore horses. Soring is the practice of inflicting pain on a horse's limbs in order to achieve an exaggerated gait. Unfortunately, soring continues to plague some Tennessee Walking Horse shows.

According to Vizi, horses will be inspected at the NWHHA National Show for full compliance with the Horse Protection Act. Horses' shoes will be inspected for compliance with NWHHA's rules as well. Shoes may be pulled and weighed to ascertain that they are formed only from conventional steel. Horses will also be observed for temporary visual impairment and may be required to submit a blood sample for drug testing.

Vizi's invitation is timely. The annual Tennessee Walking Horse Celebration, which took place this year August 20-30 in Shelbyville, Tenn., made headlines when it was announced afterward that the event saw 187 soring violations. That's an increase in violations over the 2007 Celebration when 104 soring violations were handed out.

For more information about the NWHHA National Championship Horse Show, visit www.nwha.com.