

American Quarter Horse Association Officially Recognizes Dressage Classes

For the first time, AQHA members will be able to earn points and compete for year-end awards in dressage.

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Dressage is now an official AQHA class – one in which you can earn AQHA points, qualify for AQHA Incentive Fund earnings and compete for year-end awards. Beginning at Training Level 4, AQHA dressage classes will be held within existing classes at competitions licensed by the United States Dressage Federation or United States Equestrian Federation.

The same USDF-USEF judges will preside over the AQHA classes; the only additional requirement is that the judges must be AQHA members. Exhibitors must also be current members of AQHA, and the horse must be a registered American Quarter Horse. A competition license fee of \$85, good for the lifetime of the horse, is also required. The shows must be approved by AQHA at least 60 days in advance.

Horses competing in dressage are given scores, expressed in percentages. The Quarter Horse show industry has always been a point-driven system so AQHA has created a conversion table to change dressage scores into AQHA points. To see the conversion table, go to www.aqha.com/showing/guidetoshowing/dressage.html and click on “frequently asked questions.”

In addition to awarding points, AQHA is recognizing the three high-point American Quarter Horses at each of the nine USEF-USDF Regional Championship shows in 2010 and has also created a high-point recognition program for the open, amateur and youth divisions in each level of dressage competition. Amateur and youth eligibility is based on criteria found in the AQHA Handbook of Rules and Regulations.

If you're interested in getting your American Quarter Horse started in dressage, America's Horse – AQHA's membership magazine – initiated a year-long series on Training Level dressage in the January-February 2010 issue.

Read more dressage articles on HorseChannel.com >>

The United States Dressage Federation is giving AQHA members a 10 percent discount on the guide books. Visit www.aqha.com/showing/guidetoshowing/dressage.html to find the offer code and link. Enter the code at checkout.

AQHA welcomes comments regarding the new dressage program. To submit a comment, e-mail shows@aqha.org.