

AAEP Hosts Discussion on the Practice of Soring

Veterinarians from the USDA and the AAEP met with 14 industry groups to discuss how the equine veterinary community can help end the practice of soring.

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The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) hosted a roundtable discussion with representatives from the Tennessee Walking Horse industry and the United States Department of Agriculture on March 19, 2007, in Lexington, Ky. The meeting was held to discuss how the equine veterinary community can help permanently eliminate the practice of soring. Fourteen industry groups were represented, along with veterinarians from the USDA and AAEP officials.

“Despite ongoing efforts to stop the soring of Tennessee Walking Horses, some within the industry continue this practice,” Douglas G. Corey, DVM, AAEP president says. “The AAEP feels this issue has reached a critical level, and in order to protect the health and welfare of the horse, we were compelled to reach out to the industry and offer our assistance.”

Issues discussed at the meeting included uniting the industry under one umbrella governance structure, detecting pressure shoeing by competitors and conducting further investigation into the practices that cause soring. Next steps include the formation of a special task force of industry groups charged with exploring how a unified structure within the industry may work. The AAEP will be pursuing specific recommendations made for its involvement within the industry, including research and veterinary assistance.

In addition to the AAEP and the USDA, the following groups were represented at the March 19 meeting:

- American Horse Protection Association
- Friends of Sound Horses
- Heart of America Walking Horse Association
- Horse Protection Commission
- Kentucky Walking Horse Association
- Missouri Fox Trotters Breeders & Exhibitors Association
- National Horse Show Commission
- National Walking Horse Association
- Spotted Saddle Horse Breeders & Exhibitors Association
- Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders & Exhibitors Association
- United Mountain Horse Association
- Walking Horse National Celebration
- Walking Horse Owners Association
- Western International Walking Horse Association

All in attendance expressed their commitment to ending soring, which is strictly prohibited by the Horse Protection Act. The AAEP condemns the practice of soring and supports the enforcement efforts of the USDA.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners, headquartered in Lexington, Ky., was founded in 1954 as a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and welfare of the horse. Currently, the AAEP reaches more than 5 million horse owners through its nearly 9,000 members worldwide and is actively involved in ethics issues, practice management, research and continuing education in the equine veterinary profession and horse industry.