

AQHA ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

This Animal Welfare Policy applies to any sanctioned event held by the AQHA, its Affiliates and any organisation that has been given Program approval.

HUMANE TREATMENT

The Association will not tolerate inhumane treatment of a horse, or any other animal used in competition.

No member or non-member will treat any horse or animal in a cruel or inhumane manner.

Inhumane treatment includes but is not limited to all relevant animal welfare legislation and rules of the National Authorities controlling the applicable sport.

In any equestrian sporting event, the welfare of the horse is the primary consideration at all times.

No horse should be ridden or trained in such a way that it is subject to extended periods of mental or physical distress.

Association members must comply with all relevant animal welfare legislation and rules. This applies to all horses exhibited at events sanctioned by the AQHA, AQHA Affiliates and at any event that has been given AQHA Program approval;

The Association encourages all members to follow best animal welfare practice in all their dealings with horses. Any member will be disciplined, suspended, fined and/or expelled from the Association and any nonmember will be denied Association privileges for any violations.

RESPONSIBILITY:

An individual is absolutely responsible for the horse's condition if:

He/she designates himself/herself on the entry form as the exhibitor, or authorises another to designate him/her as exhibitor on the entry form;

He/she signs the entry form on behalf of himself/herself or another or causes an agent or representative to sign it;

He/she physically participates in the class by riding or showing the horse; or

He/she is the actual trainer, having presented or caused to be presented the horse at the grounds for exhibition;

Both the exhibitor, designated on the entry form, and the person having actual possession of the horse while physically participating in the event are conclusively deemed to be authorised by the owner to execute all documents necessary or convenient to allow the horse's participation in an Association approved event, including documents pertaining to drug testing;

If an individual is prevented from performing his/her duties, including absolute responsibility for the condition of the horses, or is absent from the show, he/she must:

immediately notify the show secretary and, at the same time;

appoint a substitute, and

such substitute must place his/her name on the entry form.

The exhibitor represents the owner in regard to his/her horses entered in an approved show.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

No person on the grounds, including but not limited to barns, stall, practice areas, or show arena can treat a horse in a manner that includes, but is not limited to:

Continuous and/or relentless pressure from the bit, legs or spurs;

Placing an object, other than a legal bit, in a horse's mouth so as to cause undue discomfort or distress;

Placing a legal bit in a horse's mouth in an abnormal manner;

Leaving a bit in a horse's mouth for extended periods of time so as to cause undue discomfort or distress, broken skin and/or bleeding;
Tying a horse's head up (above the withers), back, or around in a manner as to cause undue discomfort or distress. The horse must be able to hold its head comfortably in a "normal" position;
Tying a horse in a stall without access to food or water for an extended period of time;
Use of excessive training techniques such as striking a horse's legs;
Excessive spurring or whipping;
Excessive spinning (defined as more than eight (8) consecutive turns in either direction);
Continuing to work or exhibit a horse which appears to be sullen, lethargic, emaciated, dehydrated, depressed, drawn or overly tired;
Schooling using rails higher than 1.2 mtrs
Breaking the skin and causing bleeding from the spur, bit or any other equipment;
Riding or training in such a way that the horse is subject to periods of mental or physical distress;
Exhibiting a horse that has an open wound and/or shows traces of blood;
Using prohibited equipment on the horse at Association approved events.

PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT:

The use of prohibited equipment includes but is not limited to:

saw tooth bits;
hock hobbles;
tack collars;
curb straps with tack/rivets or tack hackamores;
war bridles or like devices;
riding in a curb bit without a curb strap;
wire or solid metal curb straps, with or without padding;
wire cavesson;
wire or cable tie downs;
bumper bits;
metal bosals with or without padding;
metal lunging hackamores;
chambons; headstalls made of metal, with or without padding;
running martingales used without rein stops;
excessively tight nosebands;
draw reins attached between or around the front legs;
side reins (direct from bit to girth or surcingles)
any item or appliance that restricts movement or circulation of the horse's tail;
Any appliance or equipment, which results in any bleeding;
Any other treatment or conduct deemed by a show official to be inhumane or abusive.

NUTRACEUTICALS OR HERBAL THERAPIES

The onus is on the Owner/Trainer/Handler/Exhibitor, who decides to administer these type of products to a horse, to ensure that they are free of any prohibited substance.

SURGICAL PROCEDURES:

A horse cannot compete if it has had any surgical procedure which could affect the horse's performance. Exception: for those surgical procedures performed by a duly licensed veterinarian for the sole purpose of protecting the health of the horse. If asked, a Veterinary Certificate detailing the surgery will be required.

ARTIFICIAL APPLIANCES

Artificial appliances are not permitted for use in approved classes.

The following are not prohibited:

Conventional pads.

Therapeutic shoes

Slip on (easy care) horse boots or related footwear; or

Pacemakers or prosthetic eyes, as long as the owner obtains written permission from the Association and the resulting authorisation is noted on the horses registration certificate.

PROHIBITED DRUGS AND FOREIGN SUBSTANCES:

A horse that has had any prohibited foreign substance or drugs administered internally or externally cannot compete. Exception: Acceptable foreign substances listed in Rule 2.9; drugs as administered under rule 2.8 c);

A patch of any type, medicinal or otherwise cannot be on a horse when that horse is being exhibited;

c) Exception: A horse that is injured or taken ill, once it has arrived at the official show venue or whilst on the ground during the course of the event, may compete after that horse has been treated by a veterinarian, at that show. The attending veterinarian must sign a certificate which states:

What the horse is suffering from;

What treatment, including any substances that have been administered internally or externally; and

That the horse is sound enough to compete at that show;

The certificate must be given to the Show Secretary/Show Manager prior to the horse competing.

A horse cannot be injected at a show unless the Veterinarian, that attended the horse at the show, has otherwise instructed. A Vet Certificate showing the treatment required must be obtained.

ACCEPTABLE FOREIGN SUBSTANCES:

The following substances are acceptable:

Antiprotozoals;

Anti-ulcer medication;

Insect repellent;

Anthelmintics;

Rehydration fluids;

B vitamins (orally);

Regumate/Altrenogest (mares only);

Topical ointments not containing Corticosteroids, irritant, or painkillers;

Preventative joint restorative therapies and general "over the counter" feed store supplements;

Every exhibitor will, upon request of show management or an Association representative, permit a specimen of saliva, urine, blood, or any other substance to be taken for testing. Refusal to comply with such a request will constitute grounds for immediate disqualification of the horse from further participation at the event;

If the laboratory report on the chemical analysis of saliva, urine, blood, or other sample taken from the horse indicates the presence of a foreign substance, prohibited drug or medication, this will be taken as prima facie evidence such substance has been administered to the horse.

PENALTIES AND RESTRICTIONS:

Any person found in violation of these rules, will be disciplined, suspended, fined, denied Association privileges, disqualified, expelled from the grounds, and/or expelled from the Association.

Nonmembers will be denied Association privileges for any violation of Rule 2;

If, upon examination by Association or show representatives (after Association authorisation) a horse's physiological functioning is found to be outside normal limits, the horse will automatically be reported to the Association;

Upon written notification by the Association, the horse's participation privileges in Association approved events will be temporarily suspended pending a hearing to determine whether or not the horse's physiological functioning remains abnormal, with the burden of persuasion on the owner to prove normal physiological functioning;

Participation privileges of the horse will remain temporarily suspended until any hearing;

Any hearing under rule 2.9.4 must be requested by the owner;

A conviction of an individual under State or Federal Law, for:

An offence of cruelty to; or

Judicial confiscation of a horse, whether or not an Australian Quarter horse is involved, will constitute a presumed violation of these rules.