

Donna Pettry-Smith  
PO Box 1379  
New Lenox, IL 60451

## **What is the Horse Protection Act?**

The Horse Protection Act (HPA) was passed in 1970 by Congress to eliminate the practice of soring by prohibiting the showing or selling of sored horses.

The HPA outlines procedures for inspections at horse shows and sales for compliance with the HPA conducted by Designated Qualified Persons (DQP) or Horse Protection Inspectors (HPI) who can find a horse in non-compliance and disqualify the entry from competition.

Originally the HPA specifically inspected three breeds of horses, Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses, and Spotted Saddle Horses, the three breeds mentioned in the Prevent All Soring Tactics Act (PAST Act).

Under the Animal and Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS), which is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), proposed changes to the HPA, released on July 26, 2016, language has been changed in reference to what breeds the HPA applies to, reading "Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses, and related breeds". The language, in some areas, even goes as far to say "Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses, or related breeds of horses that perform with an accentuated gait that raises concerns about soring."

Additionally, under the changes to the HPA, horse show management assumes the responsibility to have 2 Horse Protection Inspectors (HPI), and a farrier designated to assist with inspections, maintain all records for 6 years (instead of the current 90 days) and provide a designated inspection area (with APHIS regulated specifications) free of charge. APHIS suggests these costs be passed down to the exhibitors in order to not put a financial strain on the horse show.

## **What this means to you...**

If the APHIS proposed changes to the HPA are enacted, Saddlebreds, Morgans, Hackneys, Friesians, and any other breed of horse that APHIS chooses, can be subject to the regulations of the HPA if APHIS is *concerned* that soring is taking place in that particular breed. In addition to being no longer able to use pads, wedges, or bands in the breed's shoeing, this will open up said breed to random inspections at horse shows where HPis, who under the new amendments to the HPA, are trained by APHIS, and will determine if an exhibitor's horse is sore and disqualify it from competition. Even if your horse is not "sored", you will be non-compliant if your horse is wearing a pad. Additionally, under the amendments, "ANY substances are banned from the limbs of any Tennessee Walking Horse, Racking Horse, or other related breed horse that performs with an accentuated gait while being shown, exhibited, or offered for sale, or otherwise present on the grounds at any horse show, horse exhibition, or horse sale or auction." This included, but is not limited to liniments, poultice, and even fly spray.

## **What can I do?**

Report to [Regulations.gov](http://Regulations.gov) search "Horse Protection Act", and click on the comment box next to the heading "Horse Protection; Licensing of Designated Qualified Persons and other Amendments" and leave a comment.

The comment period ends October 26, 2016

For additional information and comment suggestions please go to:  
[www.ASHA.net/horseprotection](http://www.ASHA.net/horseprotection)