

EVENT GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES

PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

For more than 69 years, the American Quarter Horse Association has demonstrated proven policy for safeguarding the welfare of all American Quarter Horses. AQHA actively protects the American Quarter Horse by establishing and strictly enforcing rules which govern every AQHA approved event to reflect the natural ability of the animal. As evidenced by the Association's Statement of Position on Animal Welfare, AQHA is committed to the following beliefs:

“EVERY AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE SHALL AT ALL TIMES, BE TREATED HUMANELY AND WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT AND COMPASSION.”

Stringent rules established and enforced by AQHA demand that American Quarter Horse breeders, owners, trainers and exhibitors are continually responsible for the well-being and humane treatment of any American Quarter Horse entrusted to their care.

Above all, the American Quarter Horse's welfare is paramount to other considerations and the continual development of procedures which ensure humane treatment of the breed and fair competition supersedes all other concerns.

Surveys indicate 92 percent of all American believe animals have rights. However, defining those rights is where most people have difficulty. Does the term “animal rights” mean that an animal is entitled to food, water, shelter and humane treatment? Or, does it mean that animal have equal rights as humans, with the ability to roam free and with no interference from humans? People everywhere are affiliating with organizations who profess to be “animal rights,” “animal welfare,” and “humane” groups. Although there are common grounds between all organizations, there are also distinct differences.

Persons affiliated with the animal rights movement believe animals should not be “used” for any purpose or reason. Among these ranks are groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and SHARK (Showing Animals Respect and Kindness). While PETA tends to focus the majority of its equine efforts on horse racing and SHARK targets rodeo competition, either or both of these organizations can infiltrate the barns or competition arenas of any horse show. The stated missions of these organizations are to eliminate:

- ▶ Raising farm animals for food, clothing and animal byproducts;
- ▶ Hunting, trapping and fishing;
- ▶ Using animals in education and entertainment, including zoos, aquariums, circuses, rodeos and stage acts;
- ▶ Breeding and owning pets

In contrast, animal welfare groups believe in proper care and use of animals in a justifiable and “natural” manner. Their philosophy parallels the humane treatment of all animals, much like humane organizations. Usually members of these type groups take their message to the general public on a less confrontational manner. Typically humane groups, as the name implies, are generally concerned with the humane treatment of animals.

What can easily be said about all these groups is they are becoming increasingly more active and well-funded. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) boasts every one in 10 Americans have donated to their organization. In 2005, roughly one percent of all total charitable dollars went to animal-related causes.

These groups have been extremely effective in leveraging their visibility through activist protests and demonstrations and other media events. These public forums in turn have aided the groups’ efforts in fundraising. For example, HSUS has enjoyed recent successes in getting state referendums on the ballot to reduce or eliminate so-called “factory farming” practices such as battery cages for laying hens or veal crates.

For American Quarter Horse enthusiasts, the threat of these groups is very real. While the Association has maintained a long-standing policy on responsible animal use and testing show and race horses for the presence of illegal substances, AQHA has been targeted for its policy of opposing anti-slaughter legislation. As recently as the 2008 AQHA World Championship Show, the group known as “Friends of Equines Society” (FOES) filed a permit with the city of Oklahoma City to hold a public demonstration during the course of the show.

The National Finals Rodeo is no stranger to animal rights activists and protests from groups such as SHARK and PETA are commonplace at rodeo events across the country.

The fact that the Association is made up of members who own, breed and exhibit American Quarter Horses is directly against the principles of most animal rights groups. The key to alleviating the threat of a group “shutting down” your event is preparedness. It has been demonstrated time and again that extremist groups target organizations which cannot adequately defend their practices. Animal rights groups stage protests and other attention getting activities at an organization’s events in an effort to expose flaws in their practices. Therefore, having a clearly defined action plan in the case of an extremist protest is of paramount importance to an organization which utilizes animals for research, recreation, entertainment, etc.

If the event is managed by a national organization, the story hits the wire services and satellite dishes of national media, and if the local event manager is not prepared to defend the organization’s practices, the results can be detrimental to the credibility of the organization as a whole.

As an event manager of the American Quarter Horse Association you should find this scenario somewhat alarming. This is yet another reason why the AQHA has developed this Responsible Event Management Guidebook.

PART TWO: RESPONSIBLE EVENT MANAGEMENT

As an event manager for the American Quarter Horse Association, one of your primary goals is to ensure all American Quarter horses participating at your event are treated humanely. Because of this, there have been a number of responsibilities pertaining to the safety and welfare of American Quarter Horses competing that you, as event manager, should follow. These are outlined in Rule 434 of the *American Quarter Horse Association Official Handbook*:

The Show Manager shall:

- (2) have authority to enforce all rules referring to the show and he/she may excuse any horse or exhibitor from the show or contest prior to or during the judging;
- (3) have jurisdiction over preparing and mailing all entry blanks, premium lists and catalogs and shall enforce the arrival and departure times as shown in the catalog or as advertised;
- (4) be present on the show grounds for the duration of the show. In the event an emergency arises and the show manager is unable to fulfill his/her duties, an acting manager should be appointed. The show manager must submit a written explanation to AQHA for his/her absence. The acting show manager must also remain on the show grounds for the duration of the show and must meet the requirements as set forth in the AQHA Official Handbook;
- (5) at all times extend every effort to satisfy the comfort of the horses, exhibitors, spectators and officials and will be held responsible for maintaining clean and orderly conditions throughout the show. **The show manager shall also be responsible for ensuring humane treatment of horses is adhered to on show grounds through policing of stalling areas and practice pens at various times throughout the show;**
- (6) **receive written or verbal complaints from exhibitors, trainers, owners, show participants and other AQHA members of incidents of cruel, abusive or inhumane treatment of horses on show grounds or any other complaints or incidents of rule violations and shall forward such to AQHA;**
- (7) upon a report or discovery of inhumane treatment, immediately investigate the incident and report it to AQHA. Show management shall make every effort to obtain the concurrence of any AQHA-approved judge on the grounds or AQHA-authorized personnel, if available. Any verbal or written warning performed by the show manager at a show for inhumane treatment is to be reported in writing to AQHA. If an incident is later reported to AQHA and knowledge is gained that the show manager was present but did not report the incident, this could jeopardize their ability to manage an AQHA-approved show in the future.

Defining what is inhumane by AQHA standards. As stated by Rule 401 in the *AQHA Official Handbook*:

- a) Every American Quarter Horse shall, at all times, be treated humanely and with dignity, respect and compassion. Refer to rule 441;
- b) The standard by which conduct or treatment will be measured is that which a reasonable person, informed and experienced in generally accepted equine training and exhibition procedures or veterinary standards, would determine to be cruel, abusive or inhumane.

Further defining practices deemed inhumane by the Association. Rule 441 states:

Inhumane Treatment. Inhumane treatment of any horse (whether or not registered with AQHA) or any other animal on show grounds is strictly prohibited. **Treatment of any horse will be considered inhumane if a person, educated or experienced in accepted equine training techniques, would perceive the conduct of an individual to be inhumane.** Inhumane treatment includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) placing an object in a horse's mouth so as to cause undue discomfort or distress;
- (2) leaving a bit in a horse's mouth for extended periods of time so as to cause undue discomfort or distress;
- (3) tying a horse up or around in a stall in the manner as to cause undue discomfort or distress;
- (4) lunging or riding in a manner as to cause undue discomfort or distress;
- (5) tying or fastening any foreign object on a horse, halter, bridle and/or saddle in order to desensitize the horse;
- (6) use of training techniques or methods such as poling or striking a horse's legs with objects;
- (7) excessive spurring or whipping;
- (8) excessive jerking or reins;
- (9) excessive fencing;
- (10) excessive spinning (defined as no more than eight (8) consecutive turns in two (2) repetitions);
- (11) poling (altering an obstacle while the horse is negotiating the obstacle);
- (12) schooling over ramped oxers in reverse order (i.e. from highest to lowest instead of lowest to highest);
- (13) schooling using rails higher than four (4) feet;
- (14) use of prohibited equipment, including, but not limited to saw tooth bits, hock hobbles, tack collars or tack hackamores;
- (15) use of any item or appliance that restricts movement or circulation of the tail;
- (16) exhibiting a horse which appears to be sullen, dull, lethargic, emaciated, drawn or overly tired; or
- (17) intentional or negligent treatment which results in any bleeding.

Your awareness and enforcement of these inhumane treatment guidelines, along with the AQHA drug and tail testing policies, form the core of the Association's first-line defense at responsible event management. As outlined in Part One, increased media scrutiny of animal welfare issues has mandated the need for your adherence to these policies.

CHECKLIST FOR RESPONSIBLE EVENT MANAGEMENT

_____Inspect facilities

The show manager, or someone designated by show management, should make a routine, preliminary inspection of all event facilities. The facilities should be clean, adequately lit and easily accessible in case of emergency. No loose wire, protrusions or standing water should be present in the arena, alleys or stalling areas (except in cases of inclement weather). The arena floor should be firm and level, with no slick, uneven or broken areas or holes. Any problems should be immediately reported to facilities maintenance personnel prior to the event and repairs should be complete before the event begins.

_____Designate veterinarian

Mandatory requirements for AQHA-approved events state that a veterinarian must be on-call throughout the show. The Association encourages the presence of a veterinarian on the grounds throughout the event. If there happens to be more than one veterinarian on the grounds, one should be designated as being in charge. It is advised that you secure several, to work in shifts, during lengthy events. Additionally, all health requirements should be outlined in show premium books and on entry blanks and strictly enforced by the show manager and veterinarian. The American Association of Equine Practitioners offers an “On-Call” program to provide accurate veterinary information to the broadcast and print media in an effort to respond to crisis situations. For more information on the AAEP On-Call program, contact Sally Baker at 859-233-0147. Questions on therapeutic medications and prohibited substances, dosage and withdrawal times may be directed to United States Equestrian Federation 24 hour hotline at 800-633-3472.

_____Provide emergency equipment

In the event of an accidental injury of horse or cattle, make every effort to have an ambulatory sled, either adjacent to or within easy access to the arena before, during and after the event. AQHA encourages the show manager to discuss accidental injury protocol with the veterinarian prior to the event. In the event of an accidental injury to an exhibitor or spectator, refer to local and/or facility guidelines. AQHA requires show managements to report ALL injuries to horses or cattle at the time show results are submitted for processing.

_____Address cattle handling procedures with contractor and crew

As outlined in the *AQHA Official Handbook*, cattle used for cutting, working cow horse or team penning classes may not be worked more than once within a go-round. Cattle used in roping events may not be used in other classes. AQHA strongly encourages cattle handling practices adhere to the same humane guidelines as apply to horses. Class specifics on unnecessary roughness in cattle events should be strictly enforced.

_____Examine class equipment

The show manager is encouraged to examine all class equipment, including jumps, trail obstacles, barrels, poles, logs and barrier equipment to ensure that they are safe, secure and in proper working order. Consult the *AQHA Official Handbook* for specific details on class equipment.

Review equipment standards

Since the show manager may be called upon to excuse any horse/exhibitor on the grounds at any time during the event for illegal and/or prohibited equipment, it is advised to review equipment standards in the *AQHA Official Handbook*. Rules 441, 442, 443 and 444 address rules pertaining to bits, biting and prohibited equipment for all classes.

Review inhumane treatment rules

Show managers, secretaries, ring stewards and even judges are advised to familiarize themselves with AQHA's Policy Statement on Animal Welfare and Rule 441 pertaining to inhumane treatment and prohibited conduct. If an exhibitor, owner, trainer, spectator or other official informs show management of a practice, which may be considered inhumane and/or prohibited by AQHA rules, the show manager should take the following steps:

- a) **Instruct responsible parties to cease the abusive practice**
- b) **Obtain the names and contact information of anyone who witnessed the act**
- c) **Show management must choose one Professional Horsemen on the grounds for each day to act as exhibitor representatives. The Pro Horsemen of the day shall address any concerns or possible rule violations by exhibitors and to ensure the humane treatment of animals on show grounds. Two Professional Horsemen should go to address a situation of inhumane treatment or an abusive practice with the responsible party**
- d) **Show management must report in writing all matters pertaining to abuse to AQHA within seven days of the show**

Post AQHA's Statement of Position on Animal Welfare

Each show manager is provided four copies of the AQHA Statement of Position on Animal Welfare. These should be posted at the show office, at the entrance to the arena, at the practice arena and in the stalling office. Extra copies may be posted at other visible areas. Announcements concerning these rules and their locations should be made over the public address system. Advise exhibitors, trainers and owners to read the rules and that they will be strictly enforced. **Failure to post the position statements and make these announcements can result in the loss of approval for subsequent shows.**

Develop a contingency plan for activist action

You should develop a contingency plan in the event of an animal activist protest or demonstration, and review this with all show officials prior to the event. The following section will aid in the development of this plan.

PART THREE

CRISIS MANAGEMENT/CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The Association's proven policies for safeguarding American Quarter Horses are well documented, and form the framework of its reputation as a responsible animal use group. By enforcing Association policies and following the checklist in the previous section, you are effectively carrying out these important policies on a grassroots level.

Vulnerability of AQHA events, and horse events, in general, to protests by animal activist groups remains. The reasons are: a) AQHA sanctions events where horses are used for entertainment and educational purposes, which have been targeted by animal rights activists in the past, and b) AQHA events are geographically widespread, providing activist groups with easy targets for demonstrations to gain media visibility, **BUT ONLY IF THE EVENT IS UNPREPARED!!**

In case of a demonstration by an animal rights activist group, preparedness becomes important. Remember, the actual demonstration is only a tool to draw media to your event. The true purpose of the activist is to tell the media you are not a responsible animal use industry. People watching television, looking at the Internet or reading newspapers have little or no way of knowing you are a responsible event manager. If, during a demonstration, the media views your facilities as disorderly, questionable practices are occurring and you appear unprepared, aloof or irresponsible, that's exactly what the public will perceive. What the animal activists believe is irrelevant. Your goal is to prove to the media, and subsequently your true audience-the public, that you are responsible for the welfare of American Quarter Horses competing at your event as well as other animals used at the show such as roping cattle, etc.

To accomplish this effectively, you first should enforce AQHA's policies and follow the checklist in the previous section. Additional preparations which can be completed prior to your event and will aid you in effective crisis management are as follows:

Establish rapport with local law enforcement

Contacting local law enforcement officials prior to your event is always a good practice, particularly in light of possible animal activist protests. Find out which agency holds jurisdiction over your facility (city, county, state) and ask who would be a good contact in the event of an activist demonstration. Inform them of the dates and locations of your event. The local authorities can advise you on the legal rights of individuals, event management and the sponsoring organization. They can also serve as an initial information checkpoint to determine if an activist organization has obtained the proper permits to conduct a demonstration. Some events have been able to disband the demonstration simply by contacting the local authorities and allowing them to handle the matter. Should a demonstration permit be obtained, the authorities should make sure the activists follow the prescribed procedures for conducting their demonstration.

Post an exhibitor notice in the event office

You should post a notice to all exhibitors inside the event office informing them of the possibility of an animal activist demonstration and asking them to report all suspicious acts or persons to the event office. On this notice, inform all horsemen they should remain calm and collected, go about business as usual and not confront or engage the activists. In the event local authorities contact your event and inform you a demonstration permit has been obtained, call a meeting of all horsemen to reiterate this notice. Reassure everyone all legal steps are being taken to protect individuals and property.

Designate a media spokesperson for your operation

To more effectively deal with the media, your event should have a designated media contact or spokesperson. Whether you act as spokesperson, or delegate this duty to someone else, keep in mind this person should be knowledgeable in all facets of your operation. Your spokesperson should be familiar with AQHA policy on animal welfare (Appendix A), and be comfortable dealing with the media. Consult the “Meet the Press” section of this book (Appendix B). Practice good neighbor policy, this is not just a matter of crisis management, but also one of good citizenship. If you are able, take the time to speak at local civic meetings about American Quarter Horse activities. Reinforce that the American Quarter Horse Association is a responsible animal use organization.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

Although you may likely never be required to deal with an animal rights or animal welfare demonstration, you must always be prepared to do so. If this occurs at your AQHA approved event, the Association recommends following these step-by-step contingency plans.

PLAN ONE: If you receive advance notice of an animal rights activist protest:

1. Ask for specifics – in the past several show managers have been told in advance of an animal activist demonstration and the report turned out to be false. Therefore, it is most important to find out the who, what, where, when and why of the protest. Most important are the names of the group, time, date and location of the protest.
2. Inform AQHA of the situation – Call AQHA at (806) 376-4811 and inform the Public Policy Department of the group planning the demonstration, time, date and location. AQHA officials are in the office from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST daily and on-call during nights and weekends.
3. Inform local law enforcement – Provide proper authorities with the name of the group planning the demonstration, time, date and location.
4. Call a meeting of all horsemen – This should be done in advance of the planned demonstration. At this time, read the following statement to all in attendance:

“We have reason to believe an animal rights protest may take place at this event on _____ date at _____ time. If you witness any suspicious activities or persons, report this to the Event Manager immediately. If a demonstration occurs, proceed with business as usual. Remain calm and above all do not confront or engage the activists in any fashion. We are taking all legal steps to ensure your animals and property will be safe and the issue and the issue will be resolved in a timely manner.”

PLAN TWO: If an animal activist group arrives to stage a protest at your event:

1. Inform AQHA of the situation. AQHA officials are present at headquarters Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. An AQHA official is on call during nights and weekends.
2. Inform local law enforcement officials – After a protest has begun, it is sole responsibility of the proper law enforcement authority to monitor the activists and ensure they abide by the law.
3. Remain calm and go about business as usual.
4. Read the following statement to spectators in attendance at your event:

“As you know, we are being protested by an animal rights group. We obviously believe they are misinformed, but their first amendment rights mean they may picket and speak to what we regard as a misguided view. We suggest you ignore the protesters. No matter how misguided you might feel they are, do not debate them. We in the American Quarter Horse industry have taken great efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of our American Quarter Horses are not compromised.”

5. Respond to media – If representatives of the media arrive to cover the demonstration, have your spokesperson announce their identity to the media and offer a response to the activists’ charges. Obtain the name of the reporter and his/her affiliate.
6. Document activities – In order to maintain a record of the circumstances surrounding a demonstration and/or disruption, it is important to document the sequence of events. As horsemen you know if they have cameras or camcorders and have them document the activists’ activities. This documentation will be useful in the event of criminal proceedings should the demonstration become unlawful, and it will aid AQHA in its efforts at preventing and managing future demonstrations.
7. Inform the public the matter has been resolved, if that is the case
8. Contact AQHA and provide all details regarding the information

APPENDIX A:

POLICY STATEMENT “THE WELFARE OF THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE”

AQHA is the world’s largest breed registry and equine recreational organization, with more than 5 million American Quarter Horses registered worldwide and AQHA membership in excess of 335,000. AQHA international headquarters in Amarillo, Texas, issues and maintains the pedigrees and registration records of all American Quarter Horses, and oversees various programs and incentives - including races, shows, recreational activities and supporting sponsorships - that promote America’s oldest distinct breed of horse. AQHA provides beneficial services for its members that enhance and encourage American Quarter Horse ownership and participation, and strives to generate growth of AQHA membership via the marketing, promotion, advertising and publicity of the American Quarter Horse. Furthermore, AQHA actively protects the welfare and integrity of American Quarter Horses, as evidenced by the following Statement of Position:

AQHA STATEMENT OF POSITION

American Quarter Horse Association’s mission is to record and preserve pedigrees of American Quarter Horses, while maintaining the integrity of the breed. Further, AQHA encourages American Quarter Horse ownership and participation. AQHA actively protects the American Quarter Horse by establishing and strictly enforcing rules that govern every AQHA-approved event in order to reflect the natural ability of the animal. To that end, AQHA is committed to the following beliefs:

- Every American Quarter Horse, all other horses and all animals, shall, at all times, be treated humanely and with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Stringent rules established and enforced by AQHA demand that American Quarter Horse breeders, owners, trainers and exhibitors are continually responsible for the well-being and humane treatment of any American Quarter Horse entrusted to their care.
- Above all, the American Quarter Horse’s welfare is paramount to other considerations, and the continual development of procedures that ensure humane treatment of the breed and of all other horses and all animals involved with AQHA events, and fair competition supersede all other concerns.

AQHA’S DISCLAIMER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

AQHA does not assume responsibility for safety of participants at the shows or other events it sanctions. As between AQHA and Show Management, responsibility for participant safety remains solely with Show Management. Show Management applies for AQHA approval on a voluntary basis, agreeing to conduct the show according to AQHA rules, which are designed to promote fair competition. Assumption of responsibility for safety by show management is required by AQHA as an express condition to grant the designation “AQHA-approved show.” AQHA’s limited objective is to require, by rule enforcement, a “level playing field” of competition in order that performance of exhibitor and horse can be judged uniformly by competent judges; horses are identified by registration certificate; and horses perform or are exhibited free of prohibited substances that could affect their performance. Safety is a concern of everyone, but AQHA does not assume responsibility for it. AQHA’s limited purpose for sanctioning a show is to promote fair competition.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The AQHA Executive Committee is the forum within AQHA that, initially or ultimately, hears or reviews evidence of alleged violations of rules and regulations by members and/or participants in AQHA-approved events. A member may be disciplined, suspended, fined and/or expelled from the Association, and any non-member participant may be denied any or all Association privileges.

Association rules pertaining to prohibition of drugs, surgical alteration or any inhumane treatment of the horse provide for absolute responsibility for a horse's condition by an exhibitor, trainer, participant and/or the owner, thereby making the exhibitor, participant and/or the owner eligible for possible disciplinary action upon proof of the presence of such prohibited drug by laboratory analysis, existence of surgical alteration or any inhumane treatment of the horse.

ENHANCEMENT OF PENALTY

AQHA reserves the right to independently direct disciplinary action or sanction against individuals coming under the jurisdiction by participation in AQHA-approved shows, contests, race meets or other events. The AQHA Executive Committee may enhance or initiate suspension, fine and/or otherwise penalize repeat offenders of Association rules and regulations, and/or those of other jurisdictions; and include owners or lessees who have placed the care and custody of their horses to such repeat offenders.

SPECIFIC AQHA RULES AND POLICIES TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

Racing

AQHA expresses concern for the health and welfare of the racing athlete through rules and through financial support of worthy industry initiatives. These include support of a racing surface research project, support of the industry's Racing Medication and Testing Consortium and national movements through Racing Commissioners International for uniform medication rules. For example, in 1988, the Enhancement of Penalty Rule was adopted as part of the *AQHA Official Handbook*, rule 302, in response to concerns of AQHA's membership over the use of illegal drugs in the racing American Quarter Horse.

AQHA has adopted the following rules limiting the participation of two-year-olds as referenced in Rule 300(b).

To further increase incentives for racing older horses, AQHA implemented the Bank of America Quarter Horse Racing Challenge, a regional racing program with bonus awards. The Challenge's goal is to increase racing opportunities for older horses. In the Challenge, 83 percent of the purse monies of the races offered are for older horses. In Challenge Races, 2-year-olds are restricted to racing after May 1, and the distance is limited to 350 yards.

AQHA and the AQHA Racing Council will continue to seek ways and opportunities to ensure the welfare of the racing American Quarter Horse. The AQHA Racing Committee ensures that rules and policies regarding the welfare of racing American Quarter Horses are continually revised and updated as directed by the AQHA Statement of Position.

Shows

Shows sanctioned as approved events by AQHA are regulated by some of the most strict rules enforced within the equine industry, designed to ensure that the safety and welfare of American Quarter Horses competing in approved events are not jeopardized. A number of rules from the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations are a testament to the fulfillment of these aims and purposes.

Prohibited Conduct, rule 441, states an overview of AQHA's stance on unsportsmanlike conduct and/or inhumane treatment of a horse.

Policy on Controlled Substances and Tail Alteration: AQHA's policies concerning the administration of controlled substances (drugs) are well-documented as being among the most stringent in the equine industry. AQHA began drug testing at AQHA-approved shows in 1973 and was among the first, if not the first, equine breed association to do so. AQHA and some of its affiliates perform random testing throughout the year. Rule 441 outlines AQHA's policy concerning the administration of controlled substances. Additionally, AQHA has funded research in an effort to determine techniques for evaluation of altered tails in horses, the results of that were presented to equine veterinarians from the United States in October 1992 at a seminar at Colorado State University entitled, "Techniques for Evaluation of Normal and Altered Tail Function in the Equine Utilizing Physical Examinations and Electrodiagnostics." Some of these same techniques are still utilized by AQHA in random testing at the three World Championship Shows.

The Association has spent more than \$3 million since 1980 to test for evidence of drugs and/or tail alteration in horses competing in AQHA-approved events. Beginning in 1993, American Quarter Horses competing in non AQHA-approved events may also be subject to testing for drugs and evidence of tail alteration.

The AQHA Executive Committee has taken action – including investigation, prosecution, suspension of privileges and/or fines being levied - on all cases where substantial evidence existed of violations of AQHA's drug and tail alteration rules. Since 1980, 340 people have been fined, suspended or placed on probation for violations of AQHA's drug and tail alteration rules. And in 2005, AQHA shows in the United States began collecting a \$3 per horse drug testing fee to enhance AQHA's ability to enforce its controlled substance policy.

Humane Treatment

The welfare of American Quarter Horses exhibited in AQHA-approved show events are safeguarded under comprehensive rules 104(a) and 401, that provide for their well-being. The AQHA Executive Committee has taken action – including investigation, prosecution, suspension of privileges and/or fines being levied - on all cases where substantial evidence existed of violations of AQHA's animal welfare rules. Since 1980, 52 people have been fined, suspended or placed on probation for cruel and inhumane treatment of American Quarter Horses.

Bits and Equipment

To enhance the humane standards by that American Quarter Horses are subjected to when competing in AQHA-approved arena performance events, uniform guidelines regarding bits and equipment are listed in rules 442, 443 and 444.

In western classes, horses 5 years old and younger may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, curb bit, half-breed or spade bit. Horses 6 years old and older may only be shown in a curb bit, half-breed or spade bit. Chin straps are required and must meet the approval of the judge, must be at least one-half inch in width, and must lie flat against the jaw of the horse.

Prohibited equipment in western classes include jerk-lines, tie-downs with bare metal in contact with the horse's head, and tack collars. Prohibited equipment in English classes include draw reins and roweled spurs. Standing or running martingales are also prohibited except in working hunter, jumping and equitation over fences.

Lameness and Movement

American Quarter Horses are easily identified by their unique conformation that allows the breed to be versatile in a variety of athletic endeavors. With these thoughts in mind, lameness is of paramount importance. The evaluation of lameness is a major factor in judging American Quarter Horses competing in arena performance events and is subsequently stressed in AQHA's Judges Workshops, conducted several times throughout the year and designed to educate AQHA's approved judges.

Rule 446 demonstrates AQHA's emphasis on lameness and movement. Lameness and movement are further emphasized in the judging of both western pleasure and hunter under saddle classes at AQHA-approved shows. The judging criterion for western pleasure is based primarily on rule 465B(a).

The judging of AQHA's hunter under saddle class likewise places a premium on movement, as evidenced by rule 466B(a).

In both western pleasure and hunter under saddle, the condition and conformation of the horse also is considered. At the discretion of the judge, a horse may be penalized or eliminated from a class "if the horse appears sullen, dull, lethargic, emaciated, drawn or overly tired."

Cattle Classes

In AQHA classes that involve the use of cattle, AQHA strives to safeguard the welfare of the cattle, as well as the welfare of both the horses and riders competing in the class. All shows are encouraged to have a veterinarian on call, and are encouraged to provide proper equipment and medication should accidental injury occur. In both cutting and team penning, an optimum number of cattle are prescribed for the class, and the cattle may not be worked more than once within a go-round. Cattle used in the working cow horse class may only be used once within a go-round. Cattle used in roping events may not be used in other classes. In all heading and heeling classes, cattle shall be protected by horn wraps.

Additional rules in the AQHA Official Handbook outline specific guidelines within each class regarding proper care and handling of cattle. At the judge's discretion, contestants may be penalized or disqualified.

Speed Events

During the course of a speed event, including barrel racing, pole bending and the stake race, contestants may utilize a riding crop to enhance the horse's natural ability to race. However, in all speed events, the judge, at his discretion, "may disqualify a contestant for excessive use of a bat, crop, whip or rope in front of the cinch."

AQHA and its Show Committee will continue to seek ways and opportunities to ensure the welfare of the American Quarter Horses exhibited in AQHA-approved events. An Animal Welfare Subcommittee operates as a part of the AQHA Show Committee to ensure that rules and policies regarding the welfare of American Quarter Horses exhibited in AQHA-approved events are continually revised and updated as directed by the AQHA Statement of Position.

EQUINE RESEARCH

AQHA's Equine Research Committee was established as a means of funding equine research at colleges and universities in an effort to better diagnose, manage and prevent diseases not only in American Quarter Horses, but in all equine breeds. The Equine Research Committee annually allocates more than \$350,000 in support of a diverse range of research projects related to the health, welfare and utility of the horse, and of importance to the horse owner and horse industry. Funding decisions are based on the project's scientific merit, clinical application and or potential benefit to the horse and horse industry. Breakthroughs include the prevention, treatment and management of colic; metabolic pathways, genetic inheritance modes, diagnostics and preventive measures for various genetic diseases; pathology and prevention of equine pulmonary disorders; reproductive pathology and disease prevention; as well as other advancements for a wide range of diseases have been accomplished via AQHA's Equine Research Committee.

Research findings are published by AQHA in *The American Quarter Horse Journal* and *The American Quarter Horse Racing Journal* in order that AQHA members, owners, breeders, trainers and other participants in the industry may make knowledgeable decisions regarding the health and welfare of all horses.

EDUCATION

Since beginning publication of *The American Quarter Horse Journal* in 1948 and *The American Quarter Horse Racing Journal* in 1988, AQHA has made an ongoing commitment to educate owners about the health, safety, nutritional, sanitation and shelter needs of American Quarter Horses. *The American Quarter Horse Journal*, *The American Quarter Horse Racing Journal* and *America's Horse*, AQHA's official member publication, provide comprehensive editorial coverage designed to educate and inform horse owners on proper feeding, health care and training matters concerning American Quarter Horses.

The Association also has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in producing brochures on such topics as tips on purchasing a horse and equine health. AQHA has produced dozens of educational films and videotapes, in cooperation with horse industry experts that cover humane, correct training techniques for AQHA-approved events. "America's Horse," AQHA's television series, features horse health care segments on many episodes in cooperation with expert veterinarians.

AQHA, through its partnership with trusted manufacturers such as Fort Dodge Animal Health and Universal Trailer Manufacturing, provides greater accessibility of quality health, nutritional, handling and tack products to its members.

SUMMARY

The American Quarter Horse Association has ensured not only the integrity and welfare of American Quarter Horses, but also these concerns as they apply to the entire horse industry. The Association continually revises its policies concerning animal welfare via the Public Policy Committee and an in-house Task Force on Animal Welfare. Through these many avenues, as well as industry leadership, advisory and council roles, the American Quarter Horse Association is able to expand upon its proven efforts to safeguard the welfare of American Quarter Horses, as outlined by the AQHA Statement of Position.

APPENDIX B

‘MEETING THE PRESS’

One of the most important facets of your process to become a more responsible event manager involves not only working to safeguard the welfare of American Quarter Horses at your event, but to also build credible public perception that you are doing so. This involves utilizing the media, the same media that your adversaries—animal rights activists—will be using to build a negative public perception about you. It is imperative you or your designated spokesperson, are prepared to effectively deal with the media. The same principles apply, whether the media is television, Internet or print.

Your first step in effectively dealing with the media is to identify your real audience. In the event of an animal activist demonstration, your goal is not to change the activists’ minds. In all likelihood, this is an impossibility. Your goal is to convey to the real audience—television views, Internet users, radio listeners and newspaper readers—that you are caring and responsible in your usage of American Quarter Horses and totally concerned with their welfare. Reinforcement of this image is paramount, a task aided by utilizing the checklist in Part Two of this guidebook.

One misconception many people have, particularly in dealing with television media is that appearance of the spokesperson is important. Granted, having a neat appearance has its merits, but content is the key. What you say is far more important than how you say it. Your objective in an interview is to contribute new, interesting information about why your event, and AQHA, is a responsible animal use organization. The reporter will ask for specific examples, so it is essential to anticipate the questions he/she is likely to ask. Above all, tell the truth and do not bluff.

To become more effective at this, research this subject, and AQHA’s track record in regard to the welfare of American Quarter Horses. Utilize the **Policy Statement in Appendix A** of this book. Try to anticipate what a reporter might ask and set a goal of what you hope to achieve in an interview. Then, write out one to five main points which will form the most critical elements of your message. Be brief, as television time constraints and the Internet prohibit lengthy responses. In a television interview, one main point is probably all you can effectively communicate.

Another useful tip in dealing with the media is that the best interview is conversation, not testimony. You are part of a two-way exchange of ideas and not obligated to answer questions exactly as they were posed. This is why reading canned, prepared statements may often be detrimental to your cause, as TV and Internet viewers may perceive you to be unbelievable. Instead, develop “answer enhancers” to go with your main points in an effort to create a vivid picture in the mind’s eye of the audience. Identify personal experiences, stories, examples and anecdotes which illustrate your main points in a memorable way.

One important thing to remember is the reporter may not be sympathetic to your utilization of American Quarter Horses (or cattle, etc.) for recreational/entertainment purposes. In fact, a reporter may actually try to “trip you up” on the issues. If this scenario develops, you need to strengthen your mental radar to be in tune with the following question traps:

1. **Loaded Preface:** If the interviewer makes an outrageous charge during the set-up or as part of an elaborate question, neutralize the allegation by confronting it immediately and dismissing it clearly. Statements like “It’s a well known fact that horsemen are cruel,” should be addressed immediately as untrue.
2. **Garden Path:** The irrelevant question might result from a current news story or an unprepared interviewer. It only serves to waste time on air.
3. **Either/Or:** When the accurate answer isn’t “black or white,” say so! This type of question is often asked by an interviewer who is trying to simplify a complex situation. But simple answers may not accurately tell your story.
4. **Absent Party:** Don’t allow yourself to get trapped into being a spokesperson for another company or individual. Do not answer questions such as “What do you think so-and-so thinks about this?”
5. **“Tell me something bad”:** If asked a question like “What’s your worst problem?” is asked, don’t supply your own negatives. Soften the stinging words and answer in the most affirmative way possible.
6. **Your own worst enemy:** Watch what you say at all times before the interview, during a commercial break or while the reporter/photographer/cameraman is setting up. Information supplied in these circumstances can often be damaging and used against you.
7. **False statement:** Nullify incorrect information at once, including mispronounced names and factual inaccuracies. However, do not actually repeat the wrong information, as this would only serve to reinforce it.
8. **Hypothetical:** You do not have to answer a question, which is hypothetical or conditional, since it represents a scenario which never occurred and is not fact. However, if you elect to answer this type of question, be sure to flag that it contains a hypothetical premise, so the audience does not forget the “what if” scenario and remember your answers as though they were fact.
9. **Ball’s in your court:** Don’t miss this opportunity if you’re asked, “Do you have anything to add?” Rehearse your main point and reinforce it at this time.
10. **Off the record:** There is no such thing as “off the record.” Never answer a question posed by the scenario of “Off the record...”

Finally, remember that perception is reality. If your real audience perceives you to be confident, well-informed and authoritative, then you are, as far as they are concerned, worth listening to. To cap off your media training, review these following simple do’s and don’ts just prior to the interview:

- * **Do prepare**
- * **Do be relaxed**
- * **Do be open and honest**
- * **Do be brief**
- * **Do play it straight**
- * **Don’t assume the interviewer is out to get you**
- * **Don’t say “No comment!”**
- * **Do stop. One regularly practiced broadcast technique is to leave cameras running and microphones on even after an interviewee has responded to a question.**

APPENDIX C

ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST GROUPS

The following is a listing of animal rights and/or animal welfare organizations, which have been known to protest events utilizing animals for entertainment and recreational purposes. All threats by individuals claiming to be affiliated with these groups should be taken seriously.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

Friends of Equines Society (FOES)

Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA)

Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)

Animal Liberation Front (ALF)

Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM)

Friends of Animals (FoA)

Animal Rights Mobilization (ARM)

This is just a partial list; these type organizations crop up nearly every day.

APPENDIX D

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Quarter Horse Association Official Handbook, Fifty-eighth Edition, 2010

Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for our Treatment of Animals, Peter Singer

Animal Rights: The Inhumane Crusade, Daniel T. Oliver, Capital Research Center

“Are You Media Ready,” Myrna Pedersen and Joan McGrath, prepared for the American Horse Council by Pedersen/McGrath Associates Ltd.

“Basic Skills in Public Relations,” R. Charles Graves, PhD., Charles Graves & Associates

“Crisis Management for Animal Welfare and Animal Rights Issues,” prepared by the National Farm Bureau

“Event Guidelines for Handling Animal Activists,” Wayne G. Hipsley, Hipsley & Associates Equine Consultants

“Media Training,” Farm Bureau Federation

APPENDIX E

ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

The Guide to Responsible Event Management was written and published by AQHA. The following people also serve as AQHA’s contacts on the various issues pertaining to animal welfare:

Ward Stutz, Senior Director of Breed Integrity and Education

Tom Persechino, Executive Director of Competition and Breed Integrity

Patti Carter-Pratt, Executive Director of Competition

Charles Hemphill, Senior Director of Shows