

Why We Think You Should Join FOSH

The Horse: The horse comes first with FOSH -- not exhibitors and the show ring. It is the HORSE. Because our philosophy is about putting the horse first, we no longer allow two-year olds under saddle, manhole cover shoes and hooves longer than 4 ½ inches. Our philosophy is different from most other equine showing and inspection organizations, and we take risks with these rules. Sometimes, it's about doing the right thing and not what's popular. FOSH sets the Gold standard for treatment of the gaited horse.

Soring: FOSH is on the front lines in the battle to end soring of gaited horses. No other gaited horse showing organization fights soring to the extent of FOSH. We have spent thousands of dollars attending Horse Protection Act (HPA) meetings, researching soring/pain/ pressure technology, and fighting the evildoers tooth and nail on ideas they try to slide through the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). We post the HPA suspensions and Horse Industry Organization (HIO) Meeting Minutes on our website, organized the Sound Horse Conference, and track and quantify thousands of HPA violations (this is a tremendous use of our dollars and time) so we can issue press releases and keep the world informed.

Other groups offer a sound show ring; however, offering a sound show ring is required by law. If you want a sound venue in which to show, there are several organizations where one can exhibit. If you want to support an organization that actively works to stop soring, puts the natural, gaited horse first and created the Sound Horse Conference, then I firmly believe you should rejoin and support FOSH.

Trainers: Because the horse comes first, FOSH does not allow trainers on its Board. We realize there are sound, wonderful trainers who are FOSH members; however, we have observed that some organizations suffer turmoil through trainer battles.

There is also a perception that trainer Directors have a show ring benefit over others or push for rule changes that provide advantages to them and their clients at the expense of the horse. This could cause the FOSH "horse first" mission to become watered down so we avoid this conflict by disallowing trainers.

Judges: We believe recognition of the Horse Protection Act is important to the world's perception of whether an organization is sound, and FOSH will not license anyone as a judge who has past HPA suspensions.

IJA Exhibition Rules: FOSH Independent Judges Association (IJA) rules are designed to showcase a more natural horse because the naturally moving horse will be more marketable and less likely to end up at auction or with an unhappy owner and home. Newcomers to gaited horses should not need gimmicks or special shoes for their horses to gait; however, they should not be a complete newbie to horses either.

Organizations that sponsor exhibition of horses trained with gimmicks are not actively promoting the natural horse, even if it is a sound show ring. Let's face it, enough gaited horses have been discarded through the years because they have not gaited properly. So, let's get to naturally moving horses that judges recognize and owners and novices

can easily ride without specialized bits and shoeing. FOSH welcomes barefoot horses in the show ring, unlike most other HIOs.

Transparency: FOSH strives for transparency in its operations and member communications. Communication is a two way street, and we encourage you to communicate with us if you have questions and concerns. Our budget does not permit us to have paid employees so a response may take awhile to reach you as we are all volunteers and many of us have full-time positions.

Education: We publish our **SOUND ADVOCATE** magazine bi-monthly to share news with our members about themselves and provide information on equine welfare, training, exhibiting, sportsmanship in the ring, gait biomechanics, hoof care and shoes, dressage for gaited horses, gaited breeds, the HPA, USDA and HIO happenings and much more. The **SOUND ADVOCATE** is the only gaited horse magazine that is not breed specific but covers all breeds.

Inspections: Our inspections are the gold standard in the industry and our Licensed Designated Qualified Persons (DQPS) want to ensure sore horses are not in the show ring. We pay close attention to the HPA regulations and use our experience to negotiate the Operating Plan with the USDA and other HIOs.

Promotion and Marketing: Aligning with FOSH provides a marketing advantage to trainers, breeders and their clients. FOSH is highly respected and nationally known for the strides it has taken in promoting sound horses and in the fight against the cruelty and torture of soring. Our rules may not be a convenient nor popular fit with the desires of trainers, breeders, exhibitors and clients; however, the rules can be justified when people realize that if humans do not address the welfare of the horse, no one will, which provides another marketing tool as individuals, breeders and trainers sell and promote their breeding philosophy and/or training methods and horses.

Other Benefits: FOSH provides FREE video Evaluation of your horse's gaits. FOSH provides financial incentives for FOSH sanctioned and affiliated shows. FOSH encourages sound gaited horse clinics with a FOSH approved clinician. FOSH supports clubs promoting FOSH and sound, gaited horses at equine expos. You can get a complimentary subscription to **EQUINE JOURNAL**. Your membership is tax deductible.

For more information, please visit www.fosh.info, www.soundhorseconference.com, or www.stopsoring.com. FOSH needs your help to be the voice for the horse and to end the soring cruelty so many gaited horses must endure everyday—all for a blue ribbon!!!.