

Who is FOSH?

FOSH, Friends of Sound Horses, is a unique, all volunteer organization committed to supporting the welfare of the whole horse. This means protecting the animal's emotional, mental and physical well-being.

This is done by focusing on three primary areas. Each is considered of equal importance. FOSH offers education into the proper training and treatment of horses.

The FOSH show program is based on rules that address the welfare of the whole horse. This commitment to animal welfare over the number of show entries makes FOSH unique.

Two-year-old horses are not allowed to be shown under saddle with FOSH because there is conclusive evidence that horses of this age are not physically, mentally or emotionally ready for such stress. Horses' hooves must not exceed 4 1/2 inches in toe length because recent studies indicate setting the hoof at an unnatural angle proves detrimental to the physical and emotional well-being of the animal. Shoe size is carefully governed for the same reason.

In addition to an active show program, FOSH offers the Independent Judges Association. IJA judges receive extensive training in how to recognize and reward naturally gaited horses that are sound emotionally, mentally and physically.

FOSH is highly respected for its humane efforts in closely working with the USDA, American Association of Equine Practitioners, The Humane Society of the United States and Horse Inspection Organizations (HIO) to enforce the Horse Protection Act. FOSH is the only organization that provides public comprehensive information about individuals ticketed or suspended for soring.

FOSH also created and supports its own highly skilled and deeply committed and USDA certified HIO with DQP's who provide thorough, humane inspection for FOSH shows and any other gaited shows that don't support stacks, pads, chains or heavy shoes.

Each year, FOSH reaches out to others promoting sound horses by offering financial support and information. One year FOSH offered monetary rewards to writers doing effective and educational stories and articles on soring, its impact or alternatives.

The following year, a program offered financial incentives for youth who submitted written and video reports of their own sound training programs. In 2008, three Girls Scouts earned their Gold Award for a moving DVD on soring called "See it Through My Eyes." FOSH helped provide information for the video's creation and later supplied funds to have it reproduced and sent to Girl Scout troops in states most known for soring.

FOSH was the Founder and creative force behind the first ever Sound Horse Conference in 2008. Representatives from the USDA, various HIOs, veterinarians, farriers, breed registries and other gaited breed were brought together to hear information on the current soring status and to work together to eliminate such suffering in the future. The 2009 Conference was held at the in Gainesville Florida on March 20 and 21. Further information on the Sound Horse Conference, with full proceedings, can be found at www.SoundHorseConference.com.

The FOSH rule books embrace a variety of gaited breeds, disciplines and activities. Gaited dressage, judged trail rides, competitive trail obstacle courses, Equi-Theater, horse shows, educational clinics and equine retreats are just a few of the activities supported by FOSH.

FOSH is a place where people who believe in using natural training practices can find a place to show and receive education in how to naturally train their horse without the gimmicks and harsh methods found in the rest of the industry.

This organization is not a group of radicals. Rather, FOSH is an eclectic collection of people from all over the world united by the desire to seek out new methods to detect and prevent inhumane treatment of all gaited breeds by offering education and alternative, sound activities.