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## **FOSH Unveils Database of Horse Protection Act Violators January 4, 2010**

Friends of Sound Horses (FOSH) announced the unveiling of a web site listing over 8,700 Horse Protection Act violators who have received suspensions from 1986 to the present. The Horse Protection Act (HPA) is the Federal law that makes it illegal to “sore” Tennessee Walking Horses and other gaited breeds. Soring is the abusive practice of creating pain with chemical or mechanical means on the front legs and hooves to exaggerate and create an artificial gait for the show ring.

Access to these records is critical to protect horses. Individuals selecting a professional trainer for their gaited horse can research the trainer’s violation history. A buyer can verify the seller’s reputation for soring. Horse rescues that are placing horses with new adoptees can verify their HPA history before placing the horse. Show management and enforcement officials can familiarize themselves with names of repeat violators, which are listed in one of the search options. The site also provides current data, such as suspension proportions by state, and by violation type.

FOSH is providing the information as a resource for persons who are active, or wish to become active, in owning, breeding and/or showing Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses and Spotted Saddle Horses, the principle breeds subject to regulation under the Horse Protection Act. Users have free access to the information after registering at <http://www.hpadata.us/> .

Sources of the data include the official disqualification and civil penalty lists maintained by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); violation and penalty information reported by USDA-certified Horse Industry Organizations (HIOs) such as SHOW, the National Horse Show Commission (NHSC) and other HIOs that have participated in the USDA-sponsored Operating Plans, and various public web sites. Any corrections must be directed to the original source HIO which reported the data. There are 13 USDA-certified HIOs at present.

This listing does not include all HPA offenders because the USDA is restricted by budget and only attends about 7% of the shows. Many industry inspectors have proven to be lax in their examinations when the USDA is not present to provide oversight. Early records were disorganized and lacking, however, the FOSH database is the most complete listing available today of Horse Protection Act violators.

FOSH is the national leader in the promotion of natural, sound gaited horses and in the fight against abuse and soring of Tennessee Walking Horses and all gaited horses. For more information about FOSH, or to become a member, please visit <http://www.fosh.info/> or call 800-651-7993.