

## HIO Meeting Summary

December 13, 2005  
Riverdale, MD

**Present:** Donna Benefield (HPC), Keith Dane (FOSH), Craig Evans (NHSC), and Niels Holch (HOA)

**Not Present:** Ron Beasley (MFTHBA), Bob Blackwell (MFTHBA), Don Bell (NWA), Mack Motes (SSHBEA), Travis Kelley (SSHBEA), Kenny Smith (KWA), and Bob Wright (SSHBEA)

**USDA:** Dr. Todd Behre, Dr. Alan Hogue, Dr. Cathy Hovancsak, Dr. Randy Ridenour, Mike Tuck; Facilitator Robin Lohnes

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### Review of November 8, 2005 Teleconference Summary:

The November 8, 2005, teleconference summary was reviewed and approved as amended.

### Overview of TWHEABA Plan and Other Personnel Changes

- It was noted that Travis Kelley and Bob Wright have replaced Lynda Hill as the HIO representatives from SSHBEA and that Ron Beasley will be the HIO representative for MFTHBA and that Bob Blackwell, formerly with MFTHBA, has been appointed the FOSH DQP Coordinator.
- Craig Evans gave an overview of the TWHBEA plan. TWHBEA intends to set up an umbrella organization which will have a single DQP standard, its own rulebook, and free training. It has extended an invitation to all of the HIOs to come under this umbrella organization for \$2 per horse. TWHBEA would provide a hearing committee and a representative to the HIO Working Group. It was noted that TWHBEA has spoken to several representatives of HIOs. TWHBEA will actively pursue shows affiliated with any HIO that declines to participate in the TWHBEA umbrella plan.
- According to Craig Evans, TWHBEA's Executive Committee has elected to withdraw from the Commission altogether, and the Walking Horse Trainers Association and the Walking Horse Owners' Association have elected to remain with the Commission.
- Craig added that this should have little or no impact on the upcoming training session scheduled for February 2006. Dr. Behre confirmed that any subsequent HIO personnel changes would not impact the VMO training.
- The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for January and Craig would keep the HIO Working Group up to date on any changes.
- Dr. Behre noted that USDA would eventually review any new plan but confirmed that to date there had been no review or comment by the Department.

### USDA Monthly Report (Dr. Behre)

- **Show Reports:** Dr. Behre reported that there were no additions to the previous month's show report. He also noted that the three conflict resolutions with KWA had been resolved with 8 month suspensions for all three. The two conflict resolutions with SSHBEA remain pending, and the one Commission conflict resolution involving the Big D Charity Horse Show was unresolved
- **Update on Technology:** Dr. Behre reported that a few revisions had been made to the draft algometry protocol and will provide an electronic copy to all HIOs. He noted that had been no volunteers that have come forward to provide horses. The Department was still looking at a March timeframe but still needed feedback from the HIOs concerning specific location on the leg for application and variables such as scar tissue. Dr. Hogue reiterated that the first step was to establish an initial pain threshold.
- Dr. Behre also noted that the Department was working with the AAEP, and summarized three papers on gait analysis that were presented at the 2006 AAEP Convention utilizing three different methodologies: 1) measurement of head motion; 2) evaluation of forces of ground against hoof; and 3) sensors on treadmills.
- Niels Holch commented that it was difficult to obtain hard copies of the studies mentioned in the draft protocol, and volunteered to compile the nine articles referenced in the bibliography in a PDF file for eventual distribution.

## **2006 Training**

- A syllabus for the February 9-11, 2006, joint training in Shelbyville, TN, was distributed to all HIOs and the Department will extend a written invitation to all DQPs by December 31, 2005.
- Keith Dane noted that Bob Blackwell, who is now FOSH's DQP Coordinator, would like to participate as a group leader.
- Dr. Behre distributed a Department brochure on HPA Enforcement that would be available at the training session along with the scar rule pamphlet.
- Dr. Behre extended an invitation to the directors of the newly formed National Horse Protection Society and members of the AAEP Welfare Committee to attend the joint training session as guests of the Department. Niels Holch noted that the Department should have notified the HIOs of this in advance since the training session is jointly sponsored by USDA and the HIOs.

## **USDA 2006 Listening Sessions**

- The USDA 2006 Listening Sessions will be formally announced in the Federal Register at least 30 days in advance. It is expected that the notice will be published in mid-January. In addition to the public meetings scheduled for March 14, 2006, in Springfield, MO; June 13, 2006, in Pomona, CA; September 12, 2006, in Chattanooga, TN; and December 12, 2006, in Riverdale, MD, the Department has schedule two additional listening sessions. One will be held the day prior to the joint training in Shelbyville, TN, in February, and the other will be held in Dallas on a date yet to be determined.
- The agenda for the listening sessions will include an overview of the program and time for public comment on HPA enforcement.
- The HIOs requested that the Department include a specific agenda item concerning the OP.

## **Follow the Horse Report (Keith Dane/Niels Holch)**

- Keith Dane reported that he and Niels needed additional time to review the data but noted that preliminary information indicated that approximately 18% scar rule tickets do not appear to result in suspensions. This item will be added to the February teleconference agenda.

## **Review of OP – Scar Rule**

- Each HIO was asked to identify potential problems with the present scar rule language in the OP: Heart of America (Niels Holch) noted there lacks common understanding as to how to interpret the scar rule from show to show; there is a lack of uniformity in application by VMOs and DQPs; and that almost all of the problems seem to be related to the back of the pastern. The Commission (Craig Evans) concurred and added the verbiage in the OP is difficult to understand and is incomplete. He also added that other issues such as determining the norm is a factor and that better training is needed. The Horse Protection Commission (Donna Benefield) commented that the "gray area" is subjective, and FOSH (Keith Dane) inquired whether FTH has changed the incidence of violations.
- Dr. Behre commented that USDA is as unified as possible within its small HPA working group as to the scar rule interpretation, and added that there seemed to be less trouble in interpretation of the scar rule when VMOs were present, then when not.
- Niels Holch distributed copies of revised scar rule language for consideration which were discussed by the HIOs present. There were no final changes made to the OP.

## **Determine January 10, 2006 HIO Teleconference**

- Tentative Agenda:
  - Review of December 13, 2005 meeting summary
  - USDA Annual Report
  - FTH Report
  - Continued Discussion of Scar Rule Definition and Application