



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Animal Care
Western office

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To Whom It May Concern:

Welcome to the 2023 show season, we hope you enjoyed your holidays with friends and family and are ready for another great year! Below we have provided you with data from the 2022 show season along with pertinent updates to the USDA Horse Protection (HP) program and inspection process.

In 2022, the HP impact was:

- Horse Industry Organizations (HIOs) reported 218 affiliated events totaling 48,340 entries inspected with an overall compliance rate of 98.5%.
- USDA attended 50 events totaling 1,567 entries inspected with an overall compliance rate of 76%.
- The two HIOs participating in prohibited substance collection identified 33 horses (out of 686 sampled) bearing a prohibited substance (4.8% positive rate). USDA will offer to partner with all HIOs in 2023 to continue expanding prohibited substance testing at events in which USDA is not in attendance.

USDA will implement or continue the following for the 2023 show season:

- Given the number of non-compliances identified in the warm-up areas during the 2022 show season including but not limited to use of prohibited substances, devices and paraphernalia, refusal to provide information, refusal of inspection and harassment and intimidation of APHIS staff, HIOs will enforce the following at all events: §11.21 *Inspection procedures for designated qualified persons (DQPs) subpart (b), ...only the horse, the rider, the groom and the trainer, the DQP(s) and APHIS representatives shall be allowed in the designated area (i.e. warm-up area).* HIOs will be provided additional information for special circumstances.
- USDA will make the following updates to our inspection referral and return process:
 - Discontinue *returning*¹ all horses found to be non-complaint with the HPA to DQPs for re-inspection.
 - Discontinue *referring*² bilaterally sore (i.e. bilaterally sensitive, bilateral inflammation) horses to DQPs for inspection.

¹ *Returning* a horse to DQPs: this is when the DQP did inspect the horse prior to USDA and subsequently passed the horse as compliant with the HPA.

² *Referring* a horse to DQPs: this is when the DQPs did not inspect the horse prior to USDA inspections (i.e., horse selected for inspection following a barn walk or a non-first place post-show inspection).

- Continue *referring* unilaterally sore (i.e. unilateral sensitive, unilateral inflammation) horses and equipment non-compliances (ex. 50% rule, Heel/Toe ratio, high band, etc.) to DQPs for inspection.
- USDA will implement new inspection technologies including on-site prohibited substance testing as well as blood testing throughout this season.
- USDA will continue field testing new inspection technologies including ultrasound throughout this season for potential implementation during the 2024 season.

We appreciate your time to read this update. We look forward to continuing to work together toward achieving our common goals. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Dr. Aaron Rhyner at 970-494-7484.

Sincerely,

Betty Goldentyer, DVM

Deputy Administrator Animal Care