



August 24, 2026

Board of Directors
United States Equestrian Federation
4001 Wing Commander Way
Lexington, KY 40511

RE: Veterinary Review Panel

Dear USEF Board Members:

We write to you on behalf of our organization, United States Equestrian Trainers Association (USETA), regarding a policy proposal to better reflect modern drug testing in horses. Because of the increased sensitivity of drug testing methods and capabilities, as well as environmental factors that are increasingly outside of a trainer's control, exhibitors are experiencing anomalous drug testing positives for very small amounts of prohibited substances, or simply the metabolites of substances, such as caffeine, CBD, and certain

sedatives. Based on these trace amounts, the positives are almost certainly the result of cross-contamination and/or environmental exposure, not from the result of improper administration. Further, washout periods for medications can be difficult to gauge, and inadvertent violations can occur. For example, a stacking violation could occur when a horse is treated with Banamine for a colic episode shortly before a horse show, and then days later, is given a different NSAID at the show as part of its usual regimen. That could potentially lead to a stacking violation, even though the amount of residual Banamine picked up by modern technology is minimal and has no effect. Currently, this violation is treated the same as a stacking violation by someone who intentionally gives two full doses of different NSAIDs. Given the Federation's newly implemented policy of suspending the horse in addition to the trainer, the foregoing violation examples can lead to disproportionate and unfair outcomes for trainers, owners, and even horses, which can easily lose physical and mental fitness as a result of being removed from competition for months at a time.

We understand that USEF has set "action levels" for drug positives. Although these levels are withheld from membership, a review by veterinarians of available data shows that at least for certain substances, the "action levels" are so low as to be meaningless. As a result, members are being charged and punished for drug positives that are not remotely performance enhancing, do not negatively affect horse welfare, and are, as summed up by one highly respected veterinarian/lab director, "irrelevant."

Therefore, we propose that USEF utilize a panel of 3-5 actively practicing sport horse veterinarians to evaluate anomalous positive drug test results in order to determine if a substance had a performance-enhancing effect and to use that determination as a factor in applying a penalty, whether at the informal resolution stage or at the hearing

stage. We are not proposing that the panel have the authority to determine if a violation occurred or not.

We further propose that a panel of this type require **unanimous consent** among the panel to find that a positive is **not performance enhancing**. We acknowledge that not every drug positive is anomalous, but in certain situations, a panel of this type would serve the interests of the Federation and membership by assuring fair outcomes in the disciplinary process while still preserving a level playing field.

We surveyed our membership regarding this proposal, and the overwhelming majority (87.8%) were in favor. We recognize that there are more specific parameters that would need to be established before implementing this policy, and we stand ready to work with the Federation on those details. To that end, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with the appropriate Federation representatives to discuss this proposal further.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and we look forward to working with the Federation on this important issue.

Sincerely,

USETA Board of Directors
Carleton Brooks
Shelley Campf
Daniel Geitner
Chris Wynne

