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**Board of Directors**  
**Date February 18, 2024; 7:30pm**  
**ZOOM Meeting**

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**MONTANA QUARTER HORSE ASSOCIATION**

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Board members present: Cathy Dekker, Michele Shaw, Lesli Glen, Rita Church, Josh Shengle, Julie Schumacher

National Directors: Tracy Knudson-Brown, Marilyn Randall, Gary Lynn Olson

Meeting called to order by Board member Cathy Dekker. Julie made a motion to approve the amended January 22, 2025 minutes. Rita seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finance: Laura reported financial reports electronically. Lesli made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Second to the motion by Michele. Motion carried.

**Old Business:** None.

**Committee Reports:**

**Show Committee:** Laura reported judges have been hired, AQHA approval has been submitted, new premium from Bonnie was submitted after the Directory was printed so that list is not corrected.

NILE: No report.

**Membership Services:** Rita Church reported year-to-date of 82 new or renewed members, 40 Lifetime members and 16 MQHYA members.

Laura reported the Directory has been completed and been mailed to the membership as well as the advertisers.

Rita reported AQHA submitted a list of AQHA Montana members. Discussion regarding this email and how to contact these members. Julie will be putting together a welcome packet to these members. Laura will forward the email list onto Julie. Tracy would also like to receive the list.

**Marketing:** Julie reported she has two logos for the contest. Cindy Coe agreed to host the booth at the Big Piney Show in Wyoming. Tracy reported on the AQHA Amateur Ambassador program. Tracy would like to be included in the Marketing Committee as an Amateur Ambassador

**Amateur:** Cathy reported the SSF is ready to go, hi point buckles are done, judge is hired, AQHA approved. The Clinic has not had good interest so looking for options. Cathy posted the AQHA Show leaders list including several MQHA members.

**Youth:** Michele reported the Youth had a meeting in February with 3 participants. Discussion regarding a scrapbook. Laura is trying to find the location of this scrapbook so it can be updated. Updates will be presented to the Board for approval of items for the Youth. The FFA

have been contacted for participation, and to get more involvement from FFA and 4-H members for the Scholarships available. Fundraisers were also discussed with one participant making a suggestion. The shavings fundraiser at the Big Sky Classic. Discussion of inviting some 4-H members to helping with the fundraiser. Michele also presented the Youth should do a fun activity. Next meeting March 18, 2025.

**Breeders:** Lesli Glen has no report at this time.

By-Laws: Rita reported nothing new.

**Legislative:** Laura reported Britt Kissock-Robinson emailed a full report which has been forwarded onto the Board and an addendum to these minutes..

**Recreational Riding:** Julie reported there is a gal in Bozeman who contacted Julie about hosting MQHA events. Julie will forward the price list onto the Board.

**Region 2:** Rita reported the Region 2 will be having a meeting on Wednesday. A list of classes to approve is one of the topics. Tracy reported this will be the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, working with AQHA to make this a special event. Official dates were posted on Facebook.

**2025 Convention:** Laura reported she has been in contact with the Hotel and the prices will remain the same as the 2024 contract prices.

**Hall of Fame:** Laura reported there are two pages in the back of the Directory encouraging participation in the HOF. The forms have also been posted on the website.

**New Business:** Tracy reminded everyone about the AQHA Convention in March. Registration is open to anyone. Gary Lynn asked if anyone knows who the Photographer was at Region 2 in 2017. Laura received an email from Shelly Spears at AQHA requesting a statement about the AQHA Affiliate Funding MQHA received. Laura has not submitted a request to AQHA for the 2025 Affiliate Funding, needing some input for this submission. Request will include \$1,500 for the podcast costs and an additional \$1,000 for Marketing. Julie will send some information to submit for the Affiliate Funding.

**Correspondence:** Laura received a letter from the 4-H Foundation acknowledging the donation from MQHA. Discussion regarding the 4-H donation. Michele reported the Youth have discussed donating locally to the 4-H as opposed to donating to the Foundation. The Youth voted to not sponsor the Region 2 or the 4-H. Donations will be on an individual basis.

All agenda items have been satisfied. Rita made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second to the motion by Michele. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Bakker  
2025 Secretary/Treasurer

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**Next meeting – March 26, 2025 – Zoom Meeting 7:30 pm**

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## AMENDMENT – LEGISLATIVE REPORT submitted via email

### CONCERNING HORSES

#### UPDATES ON THE HPA

**January 24:** House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman James Comer (R-Ky.) released the following statement after the USDA APHIS announced the postponement of a final rule amending the Horse Protection Act (HPA): *“USDA’s decision to postpone the implementation of this final rule today is a victory for horse breeders, owners, and trainers nationwide and will protect the rights of those within the equine industry who depend on fair and consistent enforcement of the Horse Protection Act. ... The Oversight Committee remains committed to ensuring USDA enforces HPA in a manner that is fair, consistent, and within the bounds of its legal authority.”*

#### Background:

- **In 2024**, the Assistant Director of USDA’s APHIS sent an e-mail to horse show representatives detailing new competition inspection requirements just two hours prior to a competition, without warning or prior notification of forthcoming guidance.
- **August 9, 2024**, Chairman Comer called on the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to initiate a review of the USDA’s policies and practices regarding implementation of the HPA.
  - In addition, the Oversight Committee sought documents and information to enable oversight of APHIS’s role in enforcing the HPA.
  - Chairman Comer also issued a subpoena to a key official at USDA to further investigate the USDA’s arbitrary enforcement of the HPA and the final rule. USDA produced only *limited* documents and answers in response to *some* of the Committee’s requests.
- **On January 16, 2025**, Chairman Comer notified the Trump-Vance Transition Team of the USDA’s failure to provide clear guidance related to the HPA and called on the incoming Trump Administration and new USDA leadership to abolish the rule.
- **January 20:** In the January 20<sup>th</sup> Executive Orders signed, one titled “Regulatory Freeze Pending Review” stated, “consider postponing for 60 days Federal Register, or any rules that have been issued in any manner but have not taken effect, for the purpose of reviewing any questions of fact, law, and policy that the rules may raise.
- **January 24:** USDA APHIS issued a “Final rule; postponement of regulation” to be filed with the OFR on 1/28/25. This states “we are issuing a temporary postponement of the effective date of [the HPA] regulations for 60 days, from February 1, 2025, to April 2, 2025.”

## SAVE THE RODEO

The legislation restricting the use of equipment such as spurs and flank straps originated in Pittsburg PA in 1992. Animal rights extremists groups have been pushing similar ordinances, and restrictions have been adopted by several cities/states across the country, including:

- **California**
  - Los Angeles, California - city and county ordinances prohibiting the use of spurs, flank straps and ropes are being proposed in the city of Los Angeles.
  - Napa County - prohibits rodeo
  - Pasadena - prohibits rodeo
  - San Francisco - prohibits rodeo
- **Florida**, St. Petersburg - prohibits rodeo
- **Indiana**, Fort Wayne - prohibits rodeo
- **Maryland**, Baltimore County - prohibits calf roping and the use of spurs.
- **New York**
  - Greenburgh - prohibits rodeos on town property
  - Southampton - prohibits bucking straps and spurs
- **Ohio** - prohibits the use of spurs
- **Rhode Island** - prohibits all calf roping except breakaway roping, resulting in steer roping being illegal
- **Virginia**, Leestown - prohibits bucking straps and spurs

## USEF LEAVES DOOR OPEN FOR ANIMAL EXTREMISTS

**December:** The United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) recently announced upcoming changes to their rule GR838, which applies to abuse, neglect, or otherwise unethical horse treatment. As of December 1, 2024, GR838 will **apply anywhere USEF members raise, board, practice, train, or otherwise use horses, including home facilities**. Because the USEF does not have the authority to make site visits to private property they rely entirely on the reporting of alleged incidents and allow **anonymous reporting**. This leaves the doors wide open for animal extremists to target horse owners. The ideology of these extremists is of the mindset that *any use of animals is abusive*. They leverage the general public's lack of experience with horses (and other livestock) to garner donations, advance their cause, and quickly gain traction.

## **CONCERNING PENDING BILLS IN THE MT LEGISLATURE**

The following Agriculture, Livestock, Taxation bills have been introduced, current status below.

- **HB6: Renewable Resource Grants** – Sponsored by John Fitzpatrick, (H) Hearing 1/21/25.
- **HB 20: Require voted levies to be in dollars rather than mills**– Sponsored by Jaret Coles, (H) Third reading passed 63-37; (S) Referred to committee 1/23/25..
- **HB27: Remove Automatic Agricultural Classification for Certain Parcels** – Sponsored by Sherry Essmann, (H) Committee Executive Action--Bill Passed as Amended 11-10, 2/12/25.
- **HB80: Provide Cash Lease-only Bidding for Agriculture Leases** – Sponsored by Randyn Gregg, (S) Committee Report--Bill Concurred, 2/14/25.
- **HB108: Eliminate Reference to Personal Property Farm Manual for Property Tax Purposes** – Sponsored by Eric Tilleman, (H) Third Reading Passed 100-0; (S) First reading 2/07/25.
- **HB 119: Establish the Montana Cattle Committee** –Sponsored by Brandon Ler, (H) 3rd Reading Passed, 52-47, 2/06/25; (S) First Reading, 2/07/25.
- **HB 171: Eliminate Montana Alfalfa Seed Committee** – Sponsored by Eric Tilleman, (H) 3rd Reading Passed, 97-2, 1/28/25; (S) Hearing, 2/05/25.
- **HB 212: Limit Liability of Agricultural Vehicles** – Sponsored by Ed Byrne, (H) Committee Executive Action--Bill Passed as Amended, 8-6; (H) Rereferred to Committee, 20/4/25.
- **HB269: Eliminate the Organic Commodity Advisory Council** – Sponsored by Eric Tilleman, (H) 3rd Reading Passed, 96-3; (S) First Reading, 2/12/25.
- **HB 356: Allow livestock loss reimbursement for black bear predation** – Sponsored by Eric Tilleman; (H) 3rd Reading Passed, 94-6, 2/12/25; (S) First Reading, 2/13/25.
- **HB 401: Prohibit the sale of lab-grown meat in the state of Montana** – Sponsored by Braxton Mitchell; (H) Hearing, 2/06/25.
- **SB4: Revise Taxation of Homesite on Certain Agricultural Property** – Sponsored by Becky Beard, (S) Tabled in Committee, 8-0, 2/13/25.
- **SB78: Revise Laws Related to Marking Hides and Meat** – Sponsored by Josh Kassmier, (S) Committee Executive Action--Bill Passed, 11-0, 1/30/25; (S) Scheduled for 2nd Reading, 2/15/25.
- **SB79: Repeal Laws Related to Inspection of Animals in Feedlots** – Sponsored by Josh Kassmier, (S) 3rd Reading Passed, 47-2, 2/10/25; (H) Hearing, 2/11/25.

- **SB 80: Allow for digital copies of required documentation for transport of livestock** – Sponsored by Josh Kassmier; (S) 3rd Reading Passed, 48-0, 2/10/25; (H) Hearing, 2/11/25.
- **SB 96: Establish Working Animal Protection Act** – Sponsored by John Fuller, Introduced 1/06/25. (*This bill adds a new section stating, “The right to utilize a working animal for the benefit and welfare of the working animal or the individual the working animal serves is guaranteed.”*); (S) 3rd Reading Passed, 40-10, 1/31/25; (S) Hearing, 2/13/25.
- **SB99: Revise Unrelated Business Taxable Income to Include Certain Rental and Accommodations Income** – Sponsored by Becky Beard, (S) 3rd Reading Passed, 27-23, 1/31/25; (H) Hearing, 2/05/25.
- **SB 101: Revise laws related to squatting** – Sponsored by Becky Beard; (S) 3rd Reading Passed, 35-14; 1/24/25; (H) Hearing, 2/03/25.
- **SB155: Create Food Safety Panel** – Sponsored by Daniel Emrich, (S) Tabled in Committee, 11-0, 2/05/25.
- **SB161: Provide for Regulation and Sale of Aquaculture** – Sponsored by Greg Hertz, (S) Committee Executive Action--Bill Passed as Amended, 11-0, 1/31/25; (S) Scheduled for 2nd Reading, 2/15/25.

## **CONCERNING AGRICULTURE**

### **MDA ANNOUNCES 2025 PESTICIDE DISPOSAL EVENT**

**February 13:** The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) is facilitating spring pesticide disposal events during the week of April 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, in Kalispell, Plains, and Drummond. Summer disposal events are set for June 30<sup>th</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, in Polson, Hamilton, and Butte.

### **NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

The Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council will meet beginning on Monday, March 10, 2025, for the fall business meeting at the Delta Hotel in Helena, Montana. The council will review applications for the 2025 Noxious Weed Trust Fund grants through a series of hearings March 10-12, 2025. Funding deliberations will take place at 2:00 P.M. on Wednesday, March 12, 2025.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **ANIMAL RESEARCH**

The Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation held a hearing titled, “Transgender Lab Rats and Poisoned Puppies: Oversight of Taxpayer Funded Animal Cruelty.” Subcommittee members discussed how the federal government wastes millions of dollars on animal research that prioritizes *societal trends* over scientific outcomes.

- Based on government documents, it is estimate that over \$20 billion a year of taxpayers’ money is spent on *ineffective tests* on animals in the U.S. and in hundreds of *foreign* laboratories.

- \$241 million dollars has been spent on transgender animal testing.
- NIH is currently paying a lab in China over \$2 million for drug tests on animals, and authorizes 27 animal labs in China (including labs run by CCP and PLA) to receive taxpayers' money.
- The DOD wasted \$949,108 of tax dollars on dog tests even though the FDA has stated that it doesn't require them.
- DOD's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has spent over \$10 million on experiments on cats for erectile dysfunction and constipation studies. DARPA admits, "animal models have limited relevance to humans and poorly predict effects in humans."

Dr. Paul Locke, Professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, says, *"Scientific advancements have created multiple opportunities for us to develop and deploy more human centric techniques in toxicology and biomedical research and therefore call into question our current reliance on animal testing. Championing these non-animal methods ...will also produce data that is more relevant to human health."*

## FROM GOVERNOR GIANFORTE'S OFFICE

**February 13:** In his Path to Security and Prosperity, the governor advocated for the homestead rate cut which is projected to lower property taxes for Montana homeowners by 15% and small businesses by 18%. The recommendation will directly reduce property taxes for more than 215,000 primary residences, more than 32,000 small businesses, and provide indirect relief for over 130,000 renters.

The homestead rate cut was heard for discussion this week in the House Appropriations Committee and the governor expressed optimism in the bill being heard on executive action before the end of the week.

**January 30:** Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform (a leading, national taxpayer advocacy group committed to limiting the size, scope, and cost of government with a belief in a system in which taxes are simpler, flatter, more visible, and lower in states than they are today.) held a press conference at the State Capitol to discuss Governor Gianforte's proposals to reduce Montana's income tax rate. Norquist warns, *"Watch out for efforts by cities that are not managing their own cities properly, deciding that somebody else should give them money so they continue not managing their funds as well as they need to ..."* Since 2021, the governor and the legislature have simplified Montana's income tax code from seven to two brackets and lowered the income tax rate most Montanans pay from 6.9% to 5.9%.

**January 27:** The DNRC's ability to respond safely and aggressively to wildfires in 2024, keeping 95% of the fires under 10 acres, was bolstered by increased preparedness resources secured through House Bill 883. The bill, passed during the 2023 legislative session, allocated \$60 million over the biennium to expand the state's wildfire preparedness and forest management efforts.

Among the additional resources were two hand crews, a contracted helicopter with a capacity of over 2,000 gallons of water, a large air tanker capable of dropping more than 2,500 gallons of fire retardant, four single-engine water scoopers, and an incident awareness aircraft equipped with infrared technology capable of detecting fire starts at night.

## **FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL KNUDSEN'S OFFICE**

**February 6:** MT AG Austin Knudsen led a coalition of 17 attorneys general in demanding answers from the world's top asset managers to determine if they are misrepresenting and omitting essential disclosures regarding Chinese investments. In a letter sent to BlackRock, StateStreet, Invesco, JPMorgan, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley, AG Knudsen raises concerns that the asset managers appear to be misrepresenting and concealing the risks of Chinese investments to their investors, especially as China is a foreign adversary of the United States. The misstatements and omissions about investments in China may violate components of the asset managers' fiduciary duty of care to investigate the facts underlying an investment and implicate state laws on securities and on unfair and deceptive acts and practices.

**January 31:** The Department of Justice's Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) fielded 900 scam complaints, over 1,000 complaints about businesses, and saved Montanans from losing over \$1 million in 2024. OCP prevented Montanans from losing \$314,000 to scammers and recovered \$687,000 for customers who filed complaints about businesses. Additionally, a total potential loss of \$4 million was reported to OCP by Montanans who knew they were being targeted by a scammer but did not pay them.

**January 27:** AG Knudsen announced Montana is projected to receive \$16.57 million of the total \$7.4 billion from a settlement in principle with Purdue Pharma and the Sackler family, Purdue's owners, for the role they played in creating the opioid crisis. The settlement money will be used for opioid abatement which could include programs like opioid use disorder treatment, providing Narcan to emergency or first responders, and drug treatment courts for defendants with opioid-related substance abuse problems or histories.