
Board of Directors
Date January 22, 2024; 7:30pm
ZOOM Meeting

MONTANA QUARTER HORSE ASSOCIATION

Board members present: Tyrell Burklund, Britt Kissock-Robinson, Cathy Dekker, Michele Shaw, Lesli Glen, Rita Church, Josh Shengle, Tracy Tiner, Julie Schumacher

National Directors: Tracy Knudson-Brown, Nancy Weaver, Gary Lynn Olson

Meeting called to order by President Tyrell Burklund. Cathy made a motion to approve the amended December 8, 2024 minutes. Britt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finance: Laura reported financial reports for both December and January were submitted to the Board via email. Lesli made a motion to approve the financial report as amended. Second to the motion by Cathy. Motion carried.

Old Business: None.

Committee Reports:

Show Committee: Tyrell Burklund reported on the Big Sky Classic, Southern Hospitality for the BBQ needing to submit a menu. Working on sponsorships, sponsored stalls are being reserved, the premium will be posted on the BSC events Facebook page as well as the MQHA Facebook page.

Lesli reported the annual Nile membership meeting will be coming up. Crystal Anderson is the equine manager for the Nile.

Membership Services: Rita Church reported year-to-date of 80 new or renewed members, 40 Lifetime members and 17 MQHYA members.

Laura reported the Directory is in the final production stage, later than anticipation. Laura is working with a new producer with issues in the appearance of the publication. Expecting the final drafts with production to printer by the end of the week and projected completion by February 1.

Marketing: Julie Schumacher reported the Marketing Committee had a meeting and talked about promotion ideas. Logo for the Big Sky Classic contest open for winner receiving an MQHA membership. Having the MQHA kiosk booth at events was discussed to promote MQHA; 4-H horse Show, Vaughn Shows, MRHA reining classic, etc. Waiting for approval and cost to have booths at these events.

Laura received an email from Janel Favero regarding posting MQHA approved events on social media sites. The design was presented to the Board for consideration. Discussion included revising the verbiage regarding qualifying shows for year-end awards and some missing events, adding the MQHA website for exact verbiage regarding qualifying. Michele Shaw made a motion to approve the flyer Janel presented with the corrections suggested. Second to the motion by Britt. Motion carried.

Amateur: Cathy Dekker reported the clinic is organized and forms are done and posted on social media. Application for the SSF has been submitted to AQHA. Looking for sponsors. SSF has been moved to the Super Barn in Billings, Chris Brown will judge. Laura Bakker will be the clinician.

Youth: Michele reported the Youth meeting at the Convention scheduling the next meeting which was rescheduled for the following week. 3 Youth attended with one parent. Looking for more participation. Michele responded the 2 youth attending the convention scheduled their January meeting which was then rescheduled due to lack of attendance. The financial history was discussed, specifically the scholarship. The Youth approved to name the college scholarship as the Bill and Sherry Harrison Memorial Scholarship Fund. Julie indicated that renewed scholarships were voted down in the past. The Youth approved doing the shavings for the Big Sky Classic. Pre-bed and delivery options will be available with proceeds going to MQHYA. Support for the Youth attending the World Show was discussed and the qualifying for the Show, specifically the fund raising efforts being completed by two youth and needing additional Youth members to participate. Michele would like the Board to consider the purpose of the MQHYA and how it benefits the members, and perhaps change the bylaws to somehow include participation as a prerequisite to the monetary support provided by MQHYA.

Breeders: Lesli Glen reported she does not have any news for the Board. As soon as weather permits, she will proceed with ranch visits. Will be having a Committee meeting.

By-Laws: Rita reported nothing new on the By-Laws, but brought forward that the President is the Chair of the By-Laws Committee.

Legislative: Britt Kissock reported she will email Laura her report in full. Britt talked briefly about the HPA legislation that is taking affect February 1, 2025. A letter from James Comer that went to the transition team regarding the HPA amendments. Full report will be an amendment to these minutes.

Recreational Riding: Julie Schumacher reported having the Poker Ride at the 406 in Vaughn. She is trying to find an event at the 406 to partner with for the Ride. Amateurs sent out a questionnaire and not much interest in recreational riding.

Region 2: Rita reported the Region 2 is the 20th Anniversary. New by-laws and conflict of interest are done and available on their website. Chris Jensen was re-elected for the manager of the Show. Judges are hired. Diane Gage has been re-hired as secretary of the Show. Working on getting more support and presence from AQHA at the Show. Tracy B. reported they are working on more fun activities at the Show and encourage more attendance.

2025 Convention: Laura reported she has received a new contract with new increases in rent. Laura will contact Ramona May and see if the 2024 prices could be utilized for the 2025 Convention. Laura needs to get a deposit to the hotel and would like Board approval to remain at the BW Great Northern. Discussion regarding the high quality of the hotel and their meals. Julie made a motion to remain at the BW Great Northern for the 2025 Convention. Second to the motion by Cathy. Motion carried.

Hall of Fame: Laura reported there will be a tab on the website specified for Hall Of Fame with the forms. HOF has a two page ad in the Directory to encourage nominations.

New Business: Laura has submitted the Annual Report to the Montana Secretary of State.

MQHA's letter of recommendation for National Director has been submitted to AQHA. Tyrell will complete his information and submit to AQHA within the week.

Correspondence: Laura received a thank you from the Region 2 recipients. Innercoastal Livestock brochure and an email from the AQHA Foundation.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Bakker
2025 Secretary/Treasurer

Next meeting – February 18, 2025 – Zoom Meeting 7:30 pm

AMENDMENT – LEGISLATIVE REPORT submitted via email

CONCERNING HORSES

December 20: The Horse Protection Act, originally passed in 1970 to prevent the intentional soring of Tennessee Walking Horses, racking horses and spotted saddle horses, is a Federal law that prohibits sored horses from participating in shows, exhibitions, sales or auctions. It also prohibits the transportation of sored horses to or from any of these events. Beginning February 1, 2025, a change to the Horse Protection Act (HPA) will expand the scope to allow USDA-APHIS to inspect horses for intentional soring at all horse shows, exhibitions, and sales.

The American Horse Council has requested a delay to the expected implementation on February 1, 2025, in addition to AQHA seeking available options to stop or delay implementation. If this should be implemented as currently planned, an event would need to provide an area for horse testing and review of entry documents.

AQHA is working with the **American Horse Council** to minimize any probable negative impacts on the equine industry. The AQHA Show and Animal Welfare Departments are actively monitoring the information regarding the regulations, and are committed to gathering correct information and answers regarding the program.

According to Western Justice, the revised version of the HPA could devastate all levels of horse show communities and effectively cripple much of the equine industry in the United States. For example, as of February 1, 2025, horse event managers must:

- **30 days prior to event:** Notify APHIS of the event, specifying whether or not they are hiring/requesting an inspector.
- **15 days prior to event:** Notify APHIS of any event updates.
- **Within 5 days after conclusion of the event:** Report any violations of the Horse Protection Act to the APHIS regional director.
- **During/after the event:**

- Allow free and uninhibited access by HPIs to records, barns, horse trailers, stables, stalls, arenas, and all other show or exhibition grounds.
- Verify identity of each horse entered at a show, exhibition, sale, or auction
- Maintain all horse show and exhibition records for **90 days** and make available to inspectors.

If an event manager chooses not to request or hire a USDA inspector, he/she is then liable for any HPA violations found at his/her event.

AQHA is communicating with USDA-APHIS to allow AQHA to report approved shows and is also working to identify what information is necessary for post-show reports.

According to Western Justice, below is a partial list of what the new rules could mean for horse owners:

- Anything that could make a horse sore, lame, or irritated are prohibited. Sore muscles from a **focused training session** or a small rub from an ***incorrectly fitted bell boot*** could be equated to intentional soring. The lead USDA veterinarian, Dr. Aaron Rhyner, even went so far as to say that ***he could see how just riding a horse could be considered to be a type of soring.***
- Any substance that could make a horse sore or have an inflammatory reaction is prohibited, including therapeutic liniment
- No substances may be used on the limbs of a horse, ***including skin and hair conditioners or fly spray.***
- Any participant with horses is subject to liability, including agents, haulers, trainers, vendors, supporters, and sponsors.
- ***Mandatory rest periods*** must be observed during shows, exhibitions, sales, and auctions.
- Any information requested must be provided to inspectors on demand.
- Horses' legs must be blemish-free, including dermatologic conditions such as irritation, moisture, edema, swelling, redness, epidermal thickening, loss of hair, or other evidence of inflammation.
- Horse inspections may include, but are not limited to, "visual inspection of a horse and review of records, physical examination of a horse, including touching, rubbing, palpating, and observation of vital signs, and the use of any diagnostic device or instrument, ***and may require the removal of any shoe*** or any other equipment, substance, or paraphernalia from the horse when deemed necessary by the professional conducting such inspection.
- ***Horses can be detained by HPIs for 24 hours.***
- Therapeutic treatments, including massage, chiropractic treatments, and PMF must be administered or overseen by qualified veterinarians
- ***Complete veterinary records*** must be kept and maintained for horses receiving therapeutic treatment of any kind.
- Requirements for shipping and transporting horses.
- Any horse winning first place in a class is required to be re-inspected.
- Horses that ***receive a rub or blemish while competing*** are subject to HPA violations, even if the horse passed inspection prior to entering the ring.

Animal extremists have not only persisted in their attacks of the TWH industry, but also in seeking to expand the definition of "soring" to encompass as much of the horse industry as possible. With several major breed associations, numerous competition organizations, and hundreds of horse sales in the nation, there are thousands and thousands of horses competing or selling that would require inspection by the new HPA. While the USDA expanded the scope of the HPA, they have at the same time drastically reduced the number of possible inspectors by eliminating the use of third-party designated qualified persons (DQPs) that have historically been utilized. The USDA's APHIS is now solely responsible for training and employing Horse Protection Inspectors (HPIs), who must be licensed veterinarians or veterinary technicians.

Several **Western Justice team members** attended a recent HPA webinar hosted by the USDA. During the Q&A period, the Western Justice questions went unanswered and the USDA left the call a half hour early.

Western Justice is taking action to stop the HPA revisions. They have created the Western Horse Coalition, uniting organizations against these new rules.

AQHA will share information regarding details and the process as more becomes known. For accurate information please contact Ward Stutz, AQHA's Director of Breed Integrity/Animal Welfare/Education at wstutz@aqha.org, or Scott Neuman, AQHA's Director of Competition at sneuman@aqha.org.

UPDATES ON THE HPA

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."

January 20: In the January 20th 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 16: James Comer, Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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.

Background: In 2024, the Oversight Committee received allegations that 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. On August 9, Chairman Comer called on the OIG to initiate a review, while the Oversight Committee sought documents and information to enable oversight of APHIS's role in enforcing the HPA. In addition, Comer issued a subpoena to a key official at the USDA to further investigate the USDA's arbitrary enforcement of the HPA and the final rule; the USDA produced only limited documents and answers, which raised additional questions. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/hpa>

https://www.westernjustice.info/files/ugd/13c429_06706ed6b69745beb0bcfee5f51c76a3.pdf

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/05/08/2024-09469/horse-protection-amendments>

https://www.westernjustice.info/files/ugd/72d0c8_298cbf4207e844c3a8485dbe7eb4bf15.pdf

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/05/08/2024-09469/horse-protection-amendments>

https://www.ruralamericainaction.com/fb_share.php?type=petition&s=stop-the-horse-protection-act

OTHER ISSUES CONCERNING HORSES

December 17: Horses originating from or that have resided in El Salvador within the 60 days immediately preceding export to the United States must complete the established import screwworm protocol.

CONCERNING AGRICULTURE

BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE: The following Agriculture, Livestock, Taxation bills have been introduced, thus far.

- **HB6: Renewable Resource Grants** – Sponsored by John Fitzpatrick, Introduced 12/11/24
- **HB27: Remove Automatic Agricultural Classification for Certain Parcels** – Sponsored by Sherry Essmann, Introduced 12/06/24
- **HB80: Provide Cash Lease-only Bidding for Agriculture Leases** – Sponsored by Randyn Gregg, Introduced 12/12/24, Passed (H) Committee 1/06/25, Passed House 12/12/24.
- **HB108: Eliminate Reference to Personal Property Farm Manual for Property Tax Purposes** – Sponsored by Eric Tilleman, Introduced 12/20/24, Passed (H) Committee 1/06/25, Passed House 12/20/24.
- **HB 119: Establish the Montana Cattle Committee** –Sponsored by Brandon Ler, Introduced 1/06/25, Passed (H) Committee 1/07/25

- **HB 171: Eliminate Montana Alfalfa Seed Committee** – Sponsored by Eric Tilleman, Introduced 1/10/25, Passed (H) Committee 1/10/25
- **HB 212: Limit Liability of Agricultural Vehicles** – Sponsored by Ed Byrne, Introduced 1/15/25.
- **HB269: Eliminate the Organic Commodity Advisory Council** – Sponsored by Eric Tilleman, Introduced 1/21/25.
- **SB4: Revise Taxation of Homesite on Certain Agricultural Property** – Sponsored by Becky Beard, Introduced 11/19/24
- **SB78: Revise Laws Related to Marking Hides and Meat** – Sponsored by Josh Kassmier, Introduced 12/27/24.
- **SB79: Repeal Laws Related to Inspection of Animals in Feedlots** – Sponsored by Josh Kassmier, Introduced 12/27/24.
- **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.”)*
- **SB99: Revise Unrelated Business Taxable Income to Include Certain Rental and Accommodations Income** – Sponsored by Becky Beard, Introduced 1/06/25.
- **SB155: Create Food Safety Panel** – Sponsored by Daniel Emrich, Introduced 1/15/25
- **SB161: Provide for Regulation and Sale of Aquaculture** – Sponsored by Greg Hertz, Introduced 1/15/25.

December 20: The USDA announced the final \$300 million in assistance to distressed direct and guaranteed farm loan borrowers under Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act. Over the past two years, USDA assisted distressed borrowers in retaining their land and continuing their agricultural operations. Since August 2022, USDA has provided approximately \$2.5 billion in assistance to more than 47,800 distressed borrowers.
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-events/news/12-20-2024/usda-announces-final-300-million-automatic-assistance-distressed-farm>

December 17: Effective December 10, 2024, and until further notice, the USDA APHIS Veterinary Services is restricting the importation of animal commodities originating from or transiting El Salvador based on the confirmation of New World screwworm in cattle.

December 13: The USDA APHIS is reminding all animal caretakers of the critical importance of biosecurity in protecting animals from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1.

December 12: The Farm Credit Administration board receives quarterly report on conditions in agriculture and the Farm Credit System.
<https://www.fca.gov/template-fca/about/2024DecQuarterlyReportonFCSCCondition.pdf>

December 9: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) \$2 billion **Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC)** program, aimed at helping specialty crop producers expand markets and manage higher costs, is now accepting applications from Dec. 10, 2024 through Jan. 8, 2025.
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-events/news/12-09-2024/new-marketing-assistance-now-available-specialty-crop-producers>

MISCELLANEOUS

December 31: Cats consuming raw milk or raw cat food (e.g., Northwest Naturals, Monarch Raw Pet Food), have been diagnosed with **H5 bird flu**. As of this date the cats were in OR & CA. Cats infected with H5 can develop severe illness that can include neurologic signs, respiratory signs or liver disease that can rapidly lead to death. There have been no human cases of bird flu associated with house cats. Most human cases of bird flu in the US (66 cases in 10 states) involve people who had direct contact with infected cattle or livestock. In addition, The FDA said it plans to collect 300 samples of raw cow's milk cheese that has been aged for at least 60 days from warehouses and distribution centers across the country.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/fda-testing-aged-raw-cows-milk-cheese-bird-flu/story?id=117222065>
<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/5-house-cats-sick-after-bird-flu-found/story?id=117240072>

December 19: The USDA announced a \$4.5 million investment to create three additional USDA Nutrition Hubs. The hubs will support effective, translatable and scalable approaches to advance food and nutrition security and reduce the burden of diet-related chronic diseases, especially in underserved, at-risk communities.

December 17: The USDA FSIS announced several new steps to strengthen the agency's oversight of food processing facilities it regulates (meat, poultry and egg products) and ensure safe food.

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/news-events/news-press-releases/fsis-announces-stronger-measures-protect-public-listeria>

FROM GOVERNOR GIANFORTE'S OFFICE

January 17: Governor Gianforte announced the appointment of Jillien Streit as Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA). Streit currently serves as the financial controller at Flat Acre Farms in Chester. In 2014, she founded Stricks Ag, a merchandiser of high-quality, high-demand grains. Streit is a past president of the Hill-Liberty-Blaine County Farm Bureau and previously served as a member of the Montana Pulse Crop Committee.

December 31: Together with Montana Department of Livestock and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Governor Gianforte is suing to halt the implementation of Yellowstone National Park's Bison Management Plan, alleging that the adoption of the plan by NPS violates several federal laws.

December 19: Governor Gianforte, Senator Steve Daines, Representative Ryan Zinke and the Montana Department of Labor & Industry announced that the state has received a grant award for \$3.5 million to support workers recently laid off from the Sibanye-Stillwater Mine.