

From: Robin DeGraff [mailto:Robin@WhatIWork4.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 6:28 PM
To: Chemphill@aqha.org; Peter Cofrancesco; Johne Dobbs (johne.dobbs@comcast.net)
Subject: Appeal Regarding the Quarter Horse in Dressage Issue



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March 30, 2011

Attention: Mr. Charlie Hemphill

Please copy to:

Mr. Peter Cofrancesco III
Mr. Don Treadway
Ms. Johne Dobbs
Other Relevant AQHA Contacts

Subject: AQHA Committee-Dressage

Dear Charlie,

Please accept this letter as a follow up to my December 19, 2010 letter to the Rules Committee regarding the Quarter Horse in Dressage and the limit on points that AQHA intends to impose on this event.

First, I thank you for responding via email that you had received my letter in December, but secondly, to say that I am disappointed with the intended outcome of the committee meeting held in March at the AQHA Convention and subsequent follow up, is a mild understatement. I have learned that in the final analysis AQHA is intending to follow through next week and limit the points in Dressage and further to require in future year's that AQHA membership is required by judges.

I am making an additional appeal to the committee to table this limit on Dressage related points in 2011, and, in addition, to extend waiving of Dressage Judge memberships beyond 2011 for the following reasons:

1. NO OTHER VENUE IN AQHA HAS A LIMIT ON THE AMOUNT OF POINTS THAT MAY BE EARNED
2. Dressage is a new venue for AQHA and it needs the opportunity to nurture and grow before we impose limits
3. The value of Dressage to our organization extends not only to the English venue, but also Western; i.e. Western Dressage. In other words, we can develop more uses for more of our horses. The result is additional performance events and possible sales of our horses

4. The most important value of Dressage to AQHA, is to benefit the horse. The definition of Dressage is "training". Better trained horses through a proven progression will result in better performance by the equine athlete and more satisfaction from the horse's owner/rider; thus bringing us full circle to increase our market for the Quarter Horse in Sport
5. Statistics show that Quarter Horse registrations are down by over 50% in 2010 as compared to 2005, while we find that other sport breeds are up in total numbers when comparing this same time period. I will provide statistics in a follow-up letter. This should be a LOUD WAKE UP CALL to AQHA!
6. Developing the Quarter Horse in Dressage and in sport venues opens a new market for the Quarter Horse
7. Restrictions on Dressage points as currently being considered will limit business. Breeders, owners, trainers and riders are all affected negatively from the impending restrictive actions that AQHA is about to adopt
8. It is irresponsible for an organization to impose rules that have the possibility to negatively impact and restrict the potential growth for our breed
9. The USEF and USDF do not require judges to hold active membership in each of the breed associations that they judge

As a Quarter Horse breeder and in business since 1985, I find that AQHA must be compelled to address the fact that while our country is experiencing extreme issues with the economy, our Quarter Horse breed is experiencing declines that while a certain decline is economy related, much other of the decline may be attributed to choices made by AQHA that did not embrace opportunities for growth.

Personally, I have spoken with many people around the country whom have chosen to show their Quarter Horses in USEF and USDF venues, as it was just too difficult, costly and cumbersome to comply with the requirements by AQHA to compete in Dressage for points.

We have recently heard from many exhibitors that participated in Dressage in 2010, that if points are not available to them in 2011, they can find no reason to go through the extra efforts and costs that are required of them in order to obtain Quarter Horse approval for the event and may only show USEF in 2011.

Our (AQHA) show numbers are down across the board, AQHA cannot afford to lose one person to a different association because of their unwillingness to listen and effect a change.

Myself, I would also like to see more transparency regarding our committees and the workings of the direction that AQHA is taking among it's many venues. Had I not been contacted by an active dressage participant for help in opposing the proposed point change, I would not have known that this action was under consideration by AQHA. In fact, subsequently, we tried, but could find no mention on the AQHA website, nor through any AQHA publications relating to the Dressage point issue.

As I had stated in my previous letter, I AM appreciative of the time and effort of the many people whom are on the committee(s) and that they have worked hard to get us (AQHA) to the stage where we are at as it relates to Dressage. I do not want to be heard a voice of complaint without offering to help. If there is a position on any committee, preferably in an English venue, and most preferably Dressage, but will apply myself anywhere as needed or directed, I would welcome the opportunity to work on an AQHA committee.

Please, it is not too late. Let's go to the membership that is actively showing and promoting our Quarter Horse in Dressage; a list should be easily obtainable due to the application process required of them. Have the committee contact these people, let them offer solutions on how to grow this segment of the Quarter Horse market.

My guess is that many of the comments will also spill over into other of the English venues, providing more opportunity for growth of our American Quarter Horse in Sport. We can stop the downward spiral that AQHA is experiencing if we LISTEN and if we ACT!

Sincerely,
Robin DeGraff
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