

WORLD CHAMPION HUS AWR SITE INSPECTION CH ~ FIRST PREMIUM
INDIAN ARTIFACTS
SIRE OF: WORLD, CONGRESS, NSBA, NSBA BCF CHAMPIONS & AWR FIRST PREMIUM SPORT HORSE
1995 17.2 HAND STALLION

Date: December 19, 2010

To: Charlie Hemphill
CHemphill@aqha.org
REF: AQHA for the 2011 convention Show and Contest Committee

From: Robin DeGraff, DeGraff Stables
Owner and Standing: Indian Artifacts, DGS IndyGo and DGS Vestastic

Dear Sir,

I have been a showperson and a breeder of English venue horses and in business since 1985. We are an AQHA 4A Horse Breeder. I am a strong supporter of AQHA in all events and have been following the progress of AQHA approving Quarter Horses to earn AQHA points in Dressage for several years. Quite frankly, I was thrilled that AQHA moved forward with Dressage and approval was implemented for 2010.

It has come to my attention that there is a rule about to take effect that would limit the quantity of points that may be earned in Dressage in each Level. We are advised that AQHA proposes to limit the Quarter Horse in Dressage as follows: "Once an individual has earned 20 points in Training Level, or 20 points in First Level, or has earned 10 points in Second Level or 10 points in Third Level or 10 points in Fourth Level he/she will no longer be eligible to participate in that level and earn points in subsequent years, but may continue to compete in that Level until the end of the calendar year in which the afore-mentioned instances occurred." This provides that riders have no way to show that their horse excels above others in Dressage with AQHA, yearly, or overall at each level. Not only was this a huge shock to me but a disappointment as well. Horses in AQHA may earn a Superior when achieving 50 points in one Level of Hunter Under Saddle, Western Pleasure and many other events. Yet there is a proposal that the Quarter Horse in Dressage would not be able to count 50 points earned towards a Superior(s) in Dressage. We have seen records of horses earning a cumulative count of 400 points or more; yet, these exceptional horses were not limited to earn a certain number of points in each class.

I am requesting that the point limit be lifted from riders and horses that are earning points in Dressage, for the following reasons:

1. Each level in Dressage is like a separate class at a normal horse show with each level becoming more difficult requiring more movements that are harder for the horse to do, in fact the translation for the word Dressage = Training. Many horses can be trained and shown at training level but need natural qualities of their gaits developed to score well. The horse needs more training to go on to adequately perform at First Level. A Training Level trained horse will not succeed at First Level unless it can perform the First Level engagement and movements. Each test within each level builds on the preceding level requirements. There is a huge jump in training and talent required from the horse for it to go from First Level to Second Level. Subsequently, each Level above that are all huge jumps in training and difficulty of movements required. It takes 3 to 4 years of work to train your horse to Second or Third level then only to be able to earn a few points will discourage riders from participating in the AQHA programs
2. As a breeder, we have several offspring of Indian Artifacts that have excelled in the Dressage arena competing and winning against Warmbloods. It would be a detriment to Indian Artifacts, and that of other stallion owners whom are breeding for the desired characteristics of the animal that performs well in the Dressage venue, which is similar to breeding for the characteristics of a cow horse, a reining horse, a pleasure horse or an over fence horse. Limiting the points in Dressage would be a huge detriment to the stallion and his ability to prove his ability to pass along certain characteristics through wins and points tracked.
3. The showpersons that own the offspring and spend money to compete in Dressage are just like those that compete in Reining, Pleasure and other events. To not allow the Dressage participant to accumulate points and wins for their efforts would be a detriment to our AQHA industry.

WORLD CHAMPION HUS AWR SITE INSPECTION CH ~ FIRST PREMIUM

INDIAN ARTIFACTS

SIRE OF: WORLD, CONGRESS, NSBA, NSBA BCF CHAMPIONS & AWR FIRST PREMIUM SPORT HORSE
1995 17.2 HAND STALLION

4. As an example, Marie Hoffman's stallion; Indian Artbeat by our stallion, Indian Artifacts, is an exceptional individual excelling in Dressage movements. Marie worked hard enabling her and her equine partner; Indian Artbeat, to do well when shown in dressage in 2010:
 - a. They Qualified for the Region 6 USDF Championship Show in Training Level Test 4 with two or more qualifying scores of 68% or more
 - b. Indian Artbeat was 6th at the end of September and at that time ranked 7th in the Nation in USEF at first Level Test I and II, with one more show to be tallied. The ranking is figured by the horses (all breeds) that Indian Artbeat placed over in the shows.
 - c. He also earned 5th Place in the USDF year end All Breeds Award for Quarter Horses, with an average score of 65% ; averaging the top 8 scores
 - d. Indian Artbeat earned 24 First Place awards.
 - e. All of the before-mentioned is not easy to do, and many horses (all breeds) do not accomplish this level of competency. Indian Artbeat and Marie Hoffman were recognized by USDF and USEF for their efforts. We hope that AQHA will also agree that the accomplishments merit the accumulation of points as earned.
5. As another example; Lynn Palm with her customer's horse; Indian Harvest by our stallion; Indian Artifacts, has earned a USEF Training Level Year End Award. We have many other Indian Artifacts' offspring that are competing in USEF and USDF competitions around the country... and winning! The judges do not look at the registration papers of these horses when they enter the ring. Again, Dressage = Training. The horse must achieve the quality of movement required by the tests before it can advance. We think it would be a big detriment to AQHA to not embrace the positives of the venue and reward those that are promoting the Quarter Horse in Dressage. By allowing these points to accumulate, AQHA opens another whole market for the offspring of this breed.
6. I also strongly suggest that a limit on points will discourage participation. If Quarter Horses are not at the (Dressage) shows, no one will know about them. Potential purchasers and riders will not be able to view the Quarter Horse, nor see how trainable and versatile the Quarter Horse actually is, and, what a great Dressage Horse they can be for many riders.
7. Marie Hoffman advises me that there is NO other program in Dressage that offers a way to earn money back like the AQHA incentive fund does. This is a huge marketing advantage to encourage Dressage riders to purchase and ride Quarter Horses as their next show horse especially if they see that Quarter Horses can be very successful. A limit on the accumulation of points will greatly dampen this aspect of marketing plan for the Quarter Horse in Dressage.
8. Another thing that I was unaware of, is the actual process that must be gone through in order to allow a Quarter Horse to compete for points at a USEF/USDF show.
 - a. First the USEF/USDF Judge must be an AQHA member. We have heard negative comments that the USEF/USDF judges do not typically participate in Quarter Horse venues, therefore, the requirements to them personally, to purchase an AQHA membership was a detriment to their judging a Quarter Horse during a Dressage Show. Further, it required that those that wanted to show were required to absorb this expense and other expenses to facilitate the Quarter Horse breed within an USEF/USDF venue. We would suggest that AQHA could consider, at least for a few years to waive this expense to the Judges and the Shows to help develop participation.
 - b. Marie said she, herself, worked hard to promote Dressage for Quarter Horses, she contacted all the Dressage shows in her area and through much effort and cost made sure that as many shows were approved as possible so that when she showed her Quarter Horse stallion, that he and other Quarter Horses shown could earn AQHA points. Marie stated that the shows were not willing to

WORLD CHAMPION HUS AWR SITE INSPECTION CH ~ FIRST PREMIUM
INDIAN ARTIFACTS
SIRE OF: WORLD, CONGRESS, NSBA, NSBA BCF CHAMPIONS & AWR FIRST PREMIUM SPORT HORSE
1995 17.2 HAND STALLION

pay the fee(s) and go through the extra paperwork or expense until they saw an increase in entries. She advised me that she faxed in the forms and paid the show approval fee to have these shows approved.

- c. As it takes a lot of training to train a horse to be successful in dressage, again the point limit may discourage riders from wanting to venture out and retrain their horse with NO possibility of being exceptional at each level. It is the records of those successful horses that encourage new riders in Dressage with Quarter Horses to give it a try, especially in these formative years.
 - d. To compete at a USEF/USDF show, a rider has to pay in addition to AQHA fees, the yearly membership fees of the other organizations in order to show and earn points in dressage. While the horse fees are once in a lifetime and the memberships to all must be kept up yearly, we would hate for riders to not follow through because of a limitation on points and/or Incentive Fund awards.
9. Should Dressage be allowed at the AQHA world show, Marie Hoffman advises me that because in 2010, as a result of showing, she has earned the proposed maximum points in the Training Level and the proposed maximum in First Level, that she could never qualify at Training Level or First Level for an AQHA World Show. She would not be able to compete any more at these levels in order to earn the World Show qualifying points required. This would be a huge detriment to one of the pioneers of the Quarter Horse in Dressage and she should not be penalized by rules that were not clearly identified or in place at the time when she was showing.
- a. As an option to promote competitors to move up in Level; AQHA could adopt the USDF rule (or similar), as at the Regional Championship Show (like qualifying for the World Show) that if you qualify and show in one level you cannot show in that level again and MUST move up the next year. This type of rule would help encourage riders to move up the levels. You can qualify in the same level year after year but once you show you can't qualify at that level again and must move up.
 - b. Regarding the point limit for the 2010 season, Marie further advises me that the information is not clearly defined by AQHA, nor is it public on the AQHA website. I would suggest, that the requirements for all other AQHA events are clearly defined, and that this rule, if it is not readily available to the show public, not be enforced for the 2010 show season.

In conclusion, I would like to propose lifting the limit on points earned and adopt a ruling similar to USEF/USDF that encourages competitors to keep moving up in Levels. I feel the limit of points in each level is too restricting and will not encourage Quarter Horse owners to explore this new avenue to promote their horses and overall to promote the Quarter Horse breed as a Dressage horse.

I am grateful for those within AQHA whom have made it possible to earn any points at recognized Dressage shows and would like to see their hard work reach its full potential.

Sincerely,
Robin DeGraff
DeGraff Stables, Inc.
AQHA I.D. #1514369