

## Trainers Implement New Penalty Structure

The Walking Horse Trainers' Association has adopted a new penalty structure for the 2018 show season. The unanimous decision of the WHTA board of directors will place additional penalties on trainers and training operations that exceed certain levels of noncompliance with the Horse Protection Act. The penalties imposed by the WHTA will apply to all trainers at the training facility and will be in addition to any penalties imposed by the Horse Industry Organization and/or United States Department of Agriculture.

"Our board felt it was important for us to step up and put an increased importance on compliance with the Horse Protection Act. We want the enforcement entities in our industry to know that our association is 100% against soring of any kind and we take the welfare of the animals entrusted to our care seriously," said President Bill Cantrell.

The WHTA penalty matrix will focus on sensitivity violations and will take into account violations received by a training operation from any USDA certified HIO. After reaching a level of seven violations in a calendar year, the barn in question will begin to have their license suspended for a period of two weeks (on the eighth violation), with escalating timeframes with any additional violations. The suspension will apply to all licensed trainers in that operation and will prevent them from showing at any HIO affiliated event.

"The trainers continue to support the efforts in Washington to achieve a more objective, science-based inspection protocol. We understand that some of the violations are subjective in nature and we took that into account, along with the fact that each trainer remains subject to the penalties of the affiliating HIO on each violation they receive. We accounted for both of these factors in determining how and when the penalty structure would start," continued Cantrell.

The new penalty matrix will go into effect on March 22, 2018, just prior to the start of the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual National Trainers' Show.

# WALKING HORSE TRAINERS ASSOCIATION

## PENALTY MATRIX

### VIOLATIONS AND SUSPENSIONS

#### A. AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS/BARN/STABLE AND/OR ALL WHTA LICENSED TRAINERS ASSOCIATED WITH THAT BARN/STABLE ("Facility")

The provisions of any Suspension(s) under this Penalty Matrix shall apply to the entire Facility and all WHTA licensed trainers associated with that Facility.

#### B. VIOLATIONS

A violation under this Penalty matrix only includes a Unilateral and/or Bilateral sensitivity violation committed at any USDA certified Horse Industry Organization ("HIO") affiliated/sanctioned event by any licensed trainer(s) associated with the Facility. This includes any HIO affiliated/sanctioned show, sale, exhibition or auction.

1. **Unilateral Violation.** All HIOs inspection procedure for a horse that are the same for the inspection of a horse that identifies and determines a bilateral sensitivity as described in the USDA Regulations and the HIOs Rulebook (if available) except the determination is limited to one foot only.
2. **Bilateral Violation.** A determination in the HIO inspection procedure that identifies and determines a bilateral sensitivity as described in the USDA Regulations and the HIOs Rulebook (if available) that presents a consistent reproducible (non-random) response to pain from any flexion or palpation in both front limbs.

#### C. EFFECT OF VIOLATIONS

All violations of this WHTA Penalty Matrix will be reported to ALL HIOs for compliance with the WHTA suspension. To the extent that a Trainer

presents or exhibits at an HIO that does not comply with this Penalty Matrix, the Facility will be suspended for an additional period of time (2 weeks if the original suspension was for the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> violation, and 30 days if the original suspension was for violation #10 or more).

#### **D. GENERAL – NOTIFICATION AND RESULTS OF SUSPENSION**

1. The WHTA will notify the Facility and the Head WHTA licensed Trainer at that Facility within 10 days of the violation(s) that initiate any suspension, by return receipt mail when any suspension will begin and end. The Facility and/or WHTA Head Trainer may waive the 10 day notice period and start the suspension immediately. The Facility or WHTA Head trainer must notify the WHTA of such waiver and provide a signed waiver to the WHTA (the waiver forms may be obtained at the WHTA office).
  
2. A person suspended as a result of a violation may only be a spectator at horse shows, exhibitions, sales or auctions. Persons who are on suspension shall not (1) enter a horse for the purposes of showing, exhibiting or selling at auction (For purposes of this paragraph “Enter a horse,” shall mean to perform any of the activities that are required to be completed before a horse can actually be shown or exhibited.) (2) show or exhibit a horse at a horse show, public auction, or exhibition such as a college football game or parade; (3) judge a horse show; (4) enter the show ring during the course of a horse show; (5) enter the inspection area or warm-up area where previously inspected horses are allowed to await ring or sale entry, during the course of a horse show or sale; (6) coach by any manner of communication, any trainer, owner, or exhibitor anytime during the show or exhibit (7) transport horses to shows, exhibitions or public auctions; (8) prepare a horse on the sale, show, auction or exhibition grounds; or (9) serve as a horse show official.

#### **E. SUSPENSION**

Suspensions will begin with the first HIO affiliated/sanctioned event and will end with the last HIO affiliated/sanctioned event and any suspension term not completed by the end of the last HIO event must be implemented

or continued beginning with the first HIO affiliated/sanctioned event of the following year.

#### **F. APPEALS**

**All APPEALS** will be handled by WHTA Ethics Committee.

#### **G. PENALTY MATRIX**

The penalties below apply only to Unilateral and Bilateral violations (as cumulatively found for a Facility) and will apply to the entire Facility including all facility licensed WHTA Trainers.

Violations #1 through #7 **NO SHOW – RETURN TO TRAILER**

Violation #8 through #9 2 weeks suspension

Violation #10 and more 30 days for #10 and for **EACH VIOLATION** thereafter

Multiple violations must be served **CONSECUTIVELY NOT CONCURENT** and during the show season

Subject to Section E above, all WHTA violations and suspension(s) will be removed at the end of the calendar year presuming the suspension(s) have been served by all licensed Trainers at the Facility.

Any licensed Trainer at a Facility who does not comply with this Penalty Matrix will be suspended for additional periods at the WHTA determination by majority vote of the WHTA board.

**THE WHTA has the right to modify, change or suspend this Penalty Matrix program at any time it deems appropriate.**