

18

The Tipping Point



I Am Jose make his victory pass (above) while USDA releases HPA violation data, this year in a timely and clear fashion. P. 5



Can You Say Bunraku?

News of Interest 2

Facts you need to know in a condensed version, including a Hall of Fame cockfighting appearance on P. 6

They're Back 3

Congress is back in DC and the days to pass PAST are drawing down. Your willingness to twitter could be of help.

Getting it 4

The Chattanooga Times Free Press gets it right in a post Celebration editorial except it was Ebony's Senator that won in the lightning storm.

The 76th Annual Tennessee Walking Horse Celebration has come and gone. It was the worst attended Celebration in modern memory. The vaunted Veterinary Advisory Committee turned out to be just another shell game when it was revealed that one of the much publicized vets had never agreed to serve, had last been on the Celebration grounds 20 years ago, and seemed fairly confused about what the purpose of the whole exercise was in the first place. The Celebration angrily fought

back, first producing a release that was almost completely contradicted by an oral interview released to the public with the veterinarian in question. Then, the spokesman for the VAC announced that it was not necessary for the veterinarians that had been named to actually be on the ground to produce objective testing. The fact that common agents, like GOJO and Dawn dishwashing liquid as well as Oil of Cinnamon and other preparations used in soring horses, would not show up on blood tests was somehow lost in the shuffle.

So, the annual finessing of the truth continued, even over the weather, when

Celebration CEO Mike Inman told The Tennessean that the rainy weather was likely to blame for bad attendance. Actually it didn't rain all that much this Celebration, except the last night when it poured. People just didn't turn out, rain or shine. The rows and rows of empty box seats, even when offered at cut-rate prices, told the story.

The Trade Fair, which used to be well attended, was moved outdoors into the fenced in show grounds to encourage people to buy tickets. The locals didn't go. Finally, a decision was made to open at noon during the last days of the show

and no ticket was required to get in, but it was too little, too late. The vendors, what few there were, literally lost their shirts.

Gloom: with the USDA having turned down 21 of 38 horses inspected on the first night of the show, a new story to inspire the Celebration faithful and change the focus was clearly needed and provided.

Meet Bunraku, an ancient Japanese form of puppetry. Puppeteers wearing black clothing, including hoods, manipulate manikins on stage. Everyone willingly suspends disbelief. The Celebration's Bunraku moment came when 2013 WGC I Am Jose returned to the stake class on the last Saturday night and was the first WGC since 1956 to win back- to- back titles. He did it from a field of three horses as the other contenders were mostly turned down the previous Saturday. I Am Jose didn't have to qualify according to the rules. Pay no attention to the people in the black hoods behind the scene. The show must go on and true believers love a good story.

The first night of the 2014 Celebration, the USDA disqualified 21 of 38 horses, according to industry reports, for violation of the Horse Protection Act.

Motions continue in trainer Larry Wheelon Case. Stay tuned.



Ready, set,
NEWS!



Padded 2-Year-Old Collapses in line up at 2014 Celebration. Owner/exhibitor gives horse swift kick to get him up with no success. Eventually he staggers to his feet. Celebration says its heat exhaustion. He goes on to win 6th.

Three Judge Appeals Panel Hears Mandatory Penalty Case

The motor homes had barely cleared Bedford County following the Celebration when attention turned to a courtroom in New Orleans. There a three-judge panel heard oral arguments in the appeal brought by Mike McGartland, an attorney with performance horses who owns Contender Farms. He led a suit against the USDA over mandatory penalties. The initial suit was decided in the government's favor by summary judgment.

McGartland then appealed the case to the 5th district court that elected to hear oral arguments over whether or not the imposition of mandatory penalties is appropriate. The decision is expected to come by the end of this year.

Condolences are expressed to Mr. Roy Exum, whose columns have inspired the nation regarding the tragedy of the performance walking horse. Mr. Exum's mother passed away August 28th in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She was a true lady of the old school.

USDA Gets the Violation Numbers Out!

Fifty-nine members of Congress wrote an unusual letter to USDA Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack before the Celebration began this year. In the letter they asked that the Secretary ensure that USDA VMOs aggressively enforce the Horse Protection Act at the event. The Secretary reportedly assured the writers that the law would be followed, that technology would be used to identify violators and that pulling shoes to test for pressure shoeing could be done.

Information regarding what the USDA finds each year at The Celebration notoriously lags behind the event, allowing the industry to put its own spin on violations. By releasing its own suspension numbers, the HIO leads the public to believe that violation rates are much lower than in fact they are. **This year the USDA changed course and the results are telling; see the clear documentation of what happened in 2014 beginning on page 5.**

The USDA's random swabbing tests for prohibited substances also produce interesting numbers. They are usually been released too late to be of any real help to individuals who follow the story. We will be waiting for the 2014 numbers to appear.

Celebration random swabbing by USDA showing positive tests

2013: 67 percent
2012: 76 percent
2011: 98 percent
2010: 86 percent Source: USDA records

Have Your Say in 144 characters. It's time to Tweet because it appears that's how things get done these days in DC.

Need some help? #help is provided below



70% of the House has already cosponsored H.R. 1518, the PAST Act! @SpeakerBoehner, bring this #bipartisan bill to a vote! #passthePASTAct

Majorities in the House and Senate are already cosponsors of the PAST Act to end horse soring: where is our vote? #passthePASTAct @GOPLeader

It's past time to #passthePASTAct to end soring: torture of horses for profit. 70% of House and 58% of Senate are cosponsors! @GOPWhip

Time to #passthePASTAct, the #bipartisan bill to end torture of horses for profit, endorsed by @AVMAVets @AmericanHorseCo! @McConnellPress

70% of Senators say #passthePASTAct to end brutal horse soring! @McConnellPress @SenatorReid bring #bipartisan bill up for a vote!

#PASTAct to end horse torture is #StuckInTheSenate & #StuckInTheHouse with majorities cosponsoring. @SpeakerBoehner bring HR1518 to a vote!

#passthePASTAct to protect horse industry! #Bipartisan bill, majority support in #House & #Senate @SpeakerBoehner @SenatorReid: time for a vote!

Show that Congress can act @SpeakerBoehner @SenatorReid: give HR1518/S1406 a vote and #passthePASTAct to protect American horses!

Time to #passthePASTAct, #GOP backed bill to end intentional horse torture. @KellyAyotte intro'd in the Senate & 58% already cosponsoring!

It's past time to #passthePASTAct, #bipartisan bill to end intentional horse torture for profit. @GOPLeader let's have a vote TODAY!

The PAST Act has been #StuckInTheHouse long enough. Do the right thing @SpeakerBoehner and bring HR1518 to a vote to protect America's horses!

#passthePASTAct to put an end to horse soring and the unnecessary abuse of American horses!

There's no more time to waste @SpeakerBoehner @SenatorReid, it's time to call HR1518/S1406 to a vote and #passthePASTAct!

With overwhelmingly sponsorship in the #House and #Senate, it's time to give HR1518/S1406 a vote @SpeakerBoehner @SenatorReid! #passthePASTAct

Congress, stop horsing around and #passthePASTAct to end horse soring in the US: @SpeakerBoehner @SenatorReid give HR1518/S1406 a vote!

With broad, #bipartisansupport in #House and #Senate, we need a vote on the PAST Act today to end horse soring! @SpeakerBoehner @SenatorReid

Horse soring can be stopped! Call S S1406 to a vote @SenatorReid, so we can #passthePASTAct! #bipartisan

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2014/sep/07/dont-let-tennessees-walking-horse-be-a-dying-breed/>

Don't let Tennessee's Walking Horse be a dying breed



The dust is finally settling from the 76th Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration and what may have been the worst attended in recent decades of the 11-day iconic Shelbyville event.

Photographs and videos indicate the 25,000 seat Calsonic Arena held about 3,000 to 5,000 people on Aug. 30, the final night of competition when the grand champion is named.

Industry diehards blamed rain, but that's a fallacy.

In 1966 in Shelbyville, the heavens threw daggers of lightning and buckets of rain onto the stadium and show ring during the 28th Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.

The towering bleachers were packed and nobody left -- even with lightning strikes flying, witnesses attest. That was the year Shakers Shocker defeated 15 to 20 competitors to win the World Grand Championship.

But that was before the sport was almost completely corrupted by "professional" trainers and owners who resorted to chemicals and other abusive methods to short-cut training for this steady and beautiful breed.

That was also before soring -- as we've come to know it today -- forced the horses to step unnaturally higher and further, all to avoid the pain when their high-shod hooves and chemically abraded legs touched the ground. Soring is the use of substances, painful shoeing techniques and objects hidden beneath outrageously sized pads that force the horses to high step around the show ring. Soring is what the world finally saw, up close, in videos secretly recorded in Celebration Hall of Fame trainer Jackie McConnell's stables by operatives of the Humane Society of America a few years ago. The tapes were turned over to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and then to U.S. attorneys in Chattanooga. McConnell later became the first person in the history of the 40-year-old federal Horse Protection Act to be criminally prosecuted and convicted.

The upheaval McConnell's conviction caused in the industry and among fans of the walking horse continues to smother the walking horse industry and this beautiful, steady breed of horse. But it hasn't stopped the soring.

Only three horses entered the ring to compete for the 76th World Championship title. Abuse inspectors -- mostly USDA vets and technicians -- had disqualified the rest of the field. They were disqualified based on evidence the inspectors deemed to be signs of soring abuse.

The winning horse, named I am Jose, has no soring violation history, but other horses in his bloodline do. So do his owners and trainers, according to USDA violation records in a database maintained by Friends of Sound Horses, a horse organization that has taken a decided stand against animal abuse.

But the walking horse industry as a whole -- as opposed to horse fans -- has been slow to acknowledge the apparently rampant soring abuse: FOSH's database provides 28 years of Horse Protection Act and soring violations, showing more than 12,500 violations as well as a "Repeat Violators" report with hundreds of single-spaced pages.

Industry stalwarts have insisted that McConnell and his ilk represented just "a few bad apples."

For weeks leading up to this year's Celebration, officials touted a new "world class" trio of veterinarians who would oversee inspections to prove the industry's commitment to no cheating. But these officials neglected to disclose that one of the vets had never agreed to participate and wasn't at the 11-day event. Another had ties to the industry dating back years and to lobbying efforts to have the Horse Protection Act amended to be less protective (though it's hard to imagine how a 40-year-old protection act with only the first conviction in 2012 could be much less protective).

When the Tennessean reported gaping problems in the Celebration veterinarian committee, officials quickly backtracked, saying the vets didn't have to be present to oversee the inspections. Let us guess: Inspections by telepathy? Clearly the vets idea was a public relations stunt to protect the industry, not the horses.

Now these soring loyalists -- the ones who've ratcheted up the "big lick" with out-sized pads, chains, chemicals and whatever it takes -- are also fighting proposed amendments to toughen the existing law. The amendments are known as the PAST Act, and they would outlaw the pads and chains that hide and exacerbate the chemicals and foreign objects.

It is clear that fans -- along with plenty of owners of show-worthy walking horses -- stayed out of the arena this year in an effort to get the message across to the industry diehards: Walking horses don't need lumbering "big licks" to be exciting.

Shakers Shocker and the horses before him proved that when they so electrified crowds that not even lightning kept fans away. Bring those horses -- and that natural gait with flat-shod hooves -- back.

Support the PAST Act. This industry doesn't have to die. It just has to return to its horse-loving, solid footing.

USDA HORSE PROTECTION ACTIVITY REPORT

DATE(S) USDA ATTENDED EVENT: 21-30 August 2014	NAME OF EVENT: Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration
HIO: SHOW	CITY AND STATE: Shelbyville, TN
SHOW MANAGER: Mike Inman	ADDRESS: PO Box 1010, Shelbyville TN 37162
TYPE OF EVENT (SHOW, SALE, EXHIBIT OR AUCTION): Show	
6 DQPs Present	

EVENT TOTALS-SUMMARY	*This number is lower than the total violations because there may be multiple violations found on the same horse, i.e. bilateral sore and scar rule violations on one horse.
Total Horses Inspected: 1,075	
Total Scratches: 485	**Total Violations may be different than sum totals because USDA and DQPs may find a different violation on the same horse.
Total Disqualifications: 166 (15.4%)*	
-165 Padded, 1 Flatshod	
Total Violations: 219 (20.4%)** (Note, 2013 rate: 6%, 2012: 9%, 2011: 9.5%)	
-USDA found 199 violations, DQPs found 20 violations	
-218 Padded, 1 Flatshod	
651 of 1560 initial entries (42%) were either scratched or disqualified	

EVENT TOTALS	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
Number of Classes	112	21	133
Number of Classes Cancelled	0	0	0
Number of Entries Inspected	924	151	1075
Number of Entries Scratched Prior To Inspection	450	35	485
Total number of violations (USDA and DQP)	218	1	219
Total number of horses disqualified	165	1	166
Number of Pre Show Horses Inspected by USDA	274	21	295
Number of Post Show Horses Inspected by USDA	86	8	94

VIOLATION BREAKDOWN (DQP PRESHOW)	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
Bilateral	3	0	3
Unilateral	14	0	14
Scar Rule	7	0	7
Foreign Substance	3	0	3

Heel/Toe	0	0	0
Action Device	0	0	0
50% Rule	0	0	0
Other	4	0	4

VIOLATION BREAKDOWN (DQP POSTSHOW)	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
Bilateral	0	0	0
Unilateral	0	0	0
Scar Rule	0	0	0
Foreign Substance	0	0	0
Heel/Toe	0	0	0
Action Device	0	0	0
50% Rule	0	0	0
Other	1	0	1

VIOLATION BREAKDOWN (VMO PRESHOW)	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
Bilateral	19	0	19
Unilateral	25	0	25
Scar Rule	84	0	84
Foreign Substance	45	1	46
Heel/Toe	0	0	0
Action Device	0	0	0
50% Rule	1	0	1
Other	0	0	0

VIOLATION BREAKDOWN (VMO POSTSHOW)	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
Bilateral	0	0	0
Unilateral	2	0	2
Scar Rule	22	0	22
Foreign Substance	0	0	0
Heel/Toe	0	0	0

The Take Away:

These numbers shoot down the myth of 98% compliance with the HPA by industry HIOs. 99% of all violations found at the 2014 Celebration were found by the USDA on performance horses and remember, the USDA did not inspect every horse.

Final Graph on p. 6

Under the Category of What Are They Thinking?

Proud Gamecock Fighter Makes Hall of Fame Club Appearance on Celebration Grounds.

There he was, a retired Army SFC named B.L. Cozad from Ohlahoma, come to preach his message that animal cruelty laws, including horse soring laws, are unconstitutional and thus illegal.

And there he stood, standing right in front of a photo of a Tennessee Walking Horse and plaques bearing the names of Celebration luminaries.

No one in the audience publically objected when he told them that if the government came to his property with the intent to enforce the law that they had better bring a gun because they were coming to a private party.

In an atmosphere where The Celebration is billed as a family event yet this year, one individual threatened to slit the throat of an individual with whom he disagreed over a stated position regarding soring and the big lick horse; while another person employed by a well known walking horse trainer took to Facebook in the days leading up to the show to say he would do the 30 days time it would take after he knocked this fellow out; while someone else, furious about USDA enforcement of the law, took to a private chat line to say “shank the Mexican”, believed to be a statement aimed at Dr. Cezar of the USDA; and finally, a young trainer whose entry was turned down threatened to whip people in the inspection area and was escorted out by local police, Mr. Cozad’s inflammatory rhetoric seemed to fit right in and was actually welcomed.

It has often been, in a sort of grim humor, been observed that if the performance horse was forced by legislation to make changes that the people who owned them would switch their allegiance to fighting chickens. It turns out that the mentality on display by Mr. Cozad seems to parallel many of the arguments used by opponents of the PAST Act. To understand both the anger and the passion of people who feel that their “rights” to do whatever they want with animals they consider to be nothing more than property, it is only fair to hear Mr. Cozad in Shelbyville in person. He is introduced by some one else spouting the line but please stick around for the whole spiel.

This was posted on Youtube by Save the Rural USA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMkV5C9_UHo&feature=youtu.be

USDA Inspection Results 2014 Celebration

Continued from page 5

Action Device	0	0	0
50% Rule	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0

	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
THERMOGRAPHY			
REFERRED TO VMO for further inspection	210	14	224
VOLUNTARILY RETURNED TO BARN	3	0	3

	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
DIGITAL IMAGING			
Prohibited Metal/Object Present	0	0	0
Coffin Bone Rotation	1	0	1
Thin Hoof Wall(s)	4	0	4
Thin Sole(s)	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0

	PADDED	FLAT	SHOW TOTALS
OTHER MODALITIES			
FOREIGN SUBSTANCE TESTING*	111	14	125
DRUG TESTING*	89	14	103
IRIS SCAN IDENTIFICATION (new horses)	145	27	172

*Results take about 1 month.

The Last Word

Celebration Management Releases Prize Money Top Ten Winners for 2014 Event

According to The Celebration, the Top Ten Winning Stables for this year's Celebration included two flat shod barns, a third barn that is known for flat shod and built up horses, as well as the expected performance horse barns.

The top money winner was also the facility that trained this year's repeat World Grand Champion I Am Jose. Wright Stables operated by Casey and Michael Wright collected a \$27,980 pay day out of the total \$176,954 dollars awarded in prize money throughout the show which ran from 20-30 August.

Others in the Top Ten included:

- 2.) Hannah Pulvers - \$22,111
- 3.) Laurie Toone - \$19,213
- 4.) Mickey McCormick - \$17,892
- 5.) Callaway Stables - \$16,358
- 6.) Howard Hamilton - \$16,218
- 7.) Jimmy McConnell - \$15,885
- 8.) Joe Fleming - \$14,213
- 9.) Winky Groover - \$14,152
- 10.) Baucom Stables - \$12,932

Also of interest are the violation histories of these establishments. All but flat shod trainer Hannah Pulvers have violations of the Horse Protection Act on file.

The Wright Brothers between them according to public record data bases have 41 violations. Number 10 on the list has two members of its stable family currently on five year federal disqualifications for soring multiple horses over the years.

In total these top prize money winners and associated trainers have almost 200 violations of the Horse Protection Act to their credit and this number does not include the 7060 warning letters for violation of the Act which the USDA issues in lieu of federal prosecution .

I Am Jose, the winner of this year's title, has no history of being cited for HPA violations.

Does the Information in this Issue Inspire You to Take Action? Good: Do Something.

The news from the world stage isn't good right now. Congress has big issues on its plate and smaller issues of importance could be pushed aside, but the PAST Act is something that can be accomplished with a single vote on the floor with the mechanics dealt with latter by the USDA through the rule and regulation making process.

With 305 co-sponsors in the House and 57 co-sponsors in the Senate, PAST would pass handily if a vote were taken today. Although PAST has tremendous and unusual bi-partisan support in both houses of Congress, campaign contributions by special interests associated with the big lick show industry, made to specific members of the House and the Senate, have been instrumental in keeping PAST from getting the vote it deserves.

You can help PAST get that vote in the final days of this session of Congress. Please contact Senator Harry Reid and Congressman John Bohner and ask that they allow a floor vote on this issue to be held. Then, if your representative of senator is not a co-sponsor of this legislation, call those offices and ask that they sign on. The voice of the people counts in this effort to protect horses from abusive training methods.

The performance horse industry is counting on the turmoil in the world to knock this issue off the radar as an insignificant blip that does not demand the attention of the Congress for a remedy. They hope that the momentum that has been gathered can be depleted if PAST doesn't get a vote this session and with the possibility that the Senate changes hands and the House remains as it is, that life as they know it will return and that business will return to normal. The horses are hoping that they are wrong.

Make your voice heard and remember the words of the famous German poet, Goethe, who when speaking about training a horse wrote:

"...you must learn his thoughts from the noble horse you intend to ride, you must not demand anything unwise, anything foolish of him."

It can be safely asserted that Goethe would not know what to make either of WGC I Am Jose or his trainer.