

## USDA SAYS WHOA TO SORING!



### *USDA ACTS TO STOP THE MAIMING AND TORTURING OF HORSES AFTER THE OUSTING OF DR. CHESTER GIPSON*

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed major reforms of its enforcement efforts of the Horse Protection Act (HPA). These reform measures are long overdue and have been blocked for many years by Dr. Chester Gipson, who was in charge of enforcing the HPA, as well as the federal Animal Welfare Act, for USDA.

Soring is an inhumane practice whereby chemicals or caustic blistering agents are applied to the horse's front legs or hooves. These painful substances cause excruciating pain to the horse and in response to such pain; the horse produces an exaggerated unnatural high-stepping gait. While such a gait appears pleasing to show judges and uninformed spectators, it is a very agonizing experience for the horse.

Due to the intense cruelty and outright torture associated with soring, Congress passed the Horse Protection Act (HPA) in 1970 that strictly prohibits the showing of sored horses. While the HPA prohibits anyone from entering a sored horse into a show, regrettably, there has been little enforcement of the Act by USDA which is the agency responsible for its implementation. **This lax enforcement was particularly noticeable during the tenure of Dr. Gipson who for over a decade had been in charge of the enforcement of federal animal welfare laws.**



*The departure of Dr. Gipson provides relief for sore horses*

As reported earlier, the Alliance efforts to remove Dr. Gipson from the U. S. Department of Agriculture proved successful as he was ousted at the end of 2015. While the most immediate result of Dr. Gipson's departure was enhanced enforcement efforts at puppy mills, his departure now paves the way for long overdue reforms of the walking horse industry and hopefully the end of soring and the maiming and torturing of horses.

As if the horse is not in enough agony from soring, walking horses are also forced to wear heavy stacks of pads underneath their hooves to further accentuate their gait. These tall stacks of pads cause the horse to stand at an unnatural angle and frequently, foreign objects are inserted between these pads and the horse's hoof to increase the suffering.

Unfortunately, the horses are in too much pain to be left out in pastures to walk around and graze on grass. Instead, they are confined to their stalls for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, while enduring the suffering caused by the blistering agents.

***It is imperative that you let USDA know that you support the proposed regulations to stop soring.*** You can be assured that the Walking Horse Industry will be vigorously opposing any efforts to halt their cruel practices at horse shows.

Please leave a comment in support of the proposed regulations by going to the following link <http://www.regulations.gov/comment?D=APHIS-2011-0009-0001>

Or by mailing your comment to:

Docket No. APHIS-2011-0009  
Regulatory Analysis & Development  
Station 3A-03.8  
4700 River Road Unit 18  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1238

If you have any problems with leaving your comment on the link above, you can contact Dr. Kay Carter-Corker, (301) 851-3748 [Kay.a.carter-corker@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Kay.a.carter-corker@aphis.usda.gov)



A sore walking horse from Missouri assumes an abnormal stance to relieve the pain in its legs

USDA proposed rule makes two significant changes:

- USDA would oversee the inspection process to ensure that horses are not being sored. This is critical as currently USDA too often allows the industry to police itself.
- USDA would ban the use of all action devices, pads, chains, and foreign substances at horse shows, exhibitions, sales and auctions.

**URGE USDA TO TAKE ACTION TO ABOLISH THE CRUEL PRACTICE OF SORING**