



**UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION**  
THE NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY FOR EQUESTRIAN SPORT

May 29, 2013

Dear Committee Chair:

As I'm sure you are well aware, the USEF has embarked on a major horse welfare initiative undertaken as a result of several incidents which have occurred in the last couple of years. While horse welfare has always been one of the underpinnings of the Federation's Mission Statement, the subject is more timely than ever given the issues that racing and other breed organizations outside the USEF are currently facing. It is not only appropriate, but essential, that we take a close look within our family to make sure we live up to our pledge.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> the USEF will host a live Town Hall meeting that will be simulcast on the USEF Network. The purpose of the meeting will be to launch the initiative through two initial threads dealing with specific equine welfare aspects.

A Catastrophic Incident Protocol that will eventually encompass a range of subjects from bio-security preparation to horse collapse will be discussed. A collapse rule has already been introduced to the USEF Executive Committee and will likely be acted upon early this summer. The balance of this protocol will be developed over the balance of the year.

The second thread of the Town Hall meeting will introduce a new section of the rule book dealing with "Prohibited Practices." As part of this discussion, another rule will be explained which would prohibit administering injections to horses within 12 hours of scheduled competition. This rule has also been circulated to the Executive Committee and will likely be acted upon this summer as well. Like the catastrophic incident protocol, the balance of the prohibited practices will be discussed and then implemented over the course of the next year or two.

It is the topic of prohibited practices about which I write to you.

I believe it is time to undertake a thorough review and begin the discussion of training and preparation practices for every discipline and breed within the USEF. From shoeing practices, tail carriage and alteration, to training practices including excessive lunging and over-flexion, I believe it is critical to put these and other practices on the table to begin the discussion. We also need to initiate conversation about "competition culture." Has judging evolved to rewarding robotic behavior in the show ring? Are horses showing too much and too often in the quest for year-end points? It is imperative we begin this dialogue for ourselves before others begin it for us.

With this as the background, I'd like your Committee to perform a full assessment of current practices for your breed or discipline and answer the following questions:



Member, U.S. Olympic Committee



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1. From the committee's perspective, are there any training or preparation practices in your breed or discipline that push the boundary of horse welfare? What are the obstacles faced in changing and correcting it/them?
2. Are we judging horses in competition in the correct manner? If not, why? How can it be changed?
3. What changes would your Committee recommend in order to construct a "best practices" approach for training and showing?
4. Will culture get in the way of change? If so, how would the Committee handle the situation?

I am interested in receiving a written report from your Committee by August 1, 2013 regarding the questions discussed above, as well as any additional input you would like to provide about this important topic. I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chrystine J. Tauber".

Chrystine J. Tauber  
President



Member, U.S. Olympic Committee