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Dear Colleagues,

I attended the APHA Convention in Vancouver, Washington September 28 – October 1<sup>st</sup>.

HIGHLIGHTS:

**Performance Halter:**

As a member of Breed Improvement, I have spearheaded the development of a Rule Change Proposal that would add Performance Halter as an APHA approved class. This rule was developed from the collaboration with both halter and performance exhibitors. The proposal was approved by the EC for review by Show & Contest Committee, which voted it down, and therefore, Performance Halter did not progress to Convention for a vote.

Opposition in the Show & Contest Committee centered around the fear that adding Performance Halter would “kill” halter. Currently, a significant number of Clubs require halter for those performance horses going for high point awards. Because of these horses, halter classes have sufficient entries to generate national points for the “true” halter horses in the area.

The questions are:

1. Would Performance Halter increase overall halter entries or decrease them?
2. Would Performance Halter increase the overall APHA halter points available to be earned or decrease them?
3. Is it “fair” to require performance horses to compete against the specialized halter horse when a performance horse, regardless of conformation, will have difficulty being competitive against a horse that has been specifically conditioned for halter.

A survey was handed out at Convention regarding Performance Halter. The results showed that a majority of the respondents would support Performance Halter but a very passionate number of attendees are strongly opposed to the rule. A decision will be made in the next couple months whether there will be another attempt to add Performance Halter.

I need YOUR INPUT. Please fill out the attached survey and return it to me. If you have an opinion on this, now is the time to act. Without a strong signal from you, Performance Halter has a strong possibility of not being submitted for consideration this coming year.

**Youth Walk/Jog Division:** Age is now 5 – 10 instead of 5 - 9.

**Registration of Horses with two AQHA parents:**

A rule change proposal that would have allowed horses with two AQHA parents to be registered by the APHA was removed from consideration by the EC due to irregularities identified in the petition process that over road the Registration Committee’s unanimous vote against the proposal. The Board of Directors ratified the EC decision by a large margin.

**DNA Testing:**

APHA, in conjunction with UC Davis, will now begin offering a panel of DNA tests that will identify 5 of the most commonly found genetic conditions responsible for potential health issues in our horses.

HERDA is one of the most horrific which literally causes the skin on a horses back to peel away. In a recent study funded by the AQHA, and conducted by UC Davis and the University of Minnesota, it was learned that approximately 28% of AQHA cutting horses carry the gene AND that 13% of AQHA western pleasure horses also carry it. (Please see attached article.) It is reasonable to project that a similar study of APHA horses would parallel the findings of the AQHA. For those of you breeding mares, please consider requesting that stallion owners verify that their stallion does not carry the HERDA gene. By being proactive now, we can possibly slow or stamp out the spread of this terrible genetic defect.

**Youth Breeders Trust Scholarship Program:**

A program is being considered that would fund a new Youth Scholarship program. Currently, unlike Open & Amateur, our Youth do not earn Breeders Trust money. If passed, Youth APHA points would generate scholarship monies, held in a trust account, that could be applied to furthering the Youth's education upon graduation.

As a participant in the Breeders Trust Program, you may be asked in the near future to vote on contributing 10% of your Breeders Trust monies to this program on an ongoing basis. This program deserves your serious consideration. Not only does it encourage and nurture our Youth, but it also gives Breeders Trust horses a competitive advantage in the Youth market similar to the advantage they enjoy in the Open and Amateur markets.

**Yearling Longe Line:** (SC-191 in the 2012 Rule Book )

Heads-Up Exhibitors. This rule changes the scoring system for longe line as well as clarifies a lot of ambiguities in the "rules." Be sure to read it prior to the 2012 show season.

**Solid Paint Bred Classes**

To gain show approval, a show offering Amateur classes must now also offer a minimum of 3 Solid Paint Bred Amateur Halter Classes and a minimum of 3 Solid Paint Bred Amateur Performance Classes

**Open Color Classes**

APHA points in this class count towards a ROM, Superior, Honor Roll as well as Breeders Trust. Points do not count towards an APHA Championship or any other APHA award. Many people reported that these classes are being very well attended in shows around the country.

Obviously, a lot goes on at these meetings and writing a report to cover everything would take a great deal of time and maybe too much of your time to read. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sharon