



# WALKING HORSE

## A D V O C A T E S

### **NEWS UPDATE**

#### The Trainers Show and the NHSC

Walking Horse Advocates serves as the primary media resource for information on the Walking Horse industry, including rules, regulations, shows, associations and animal welfare issues.

In this role, Walking Horse Advocates has compiled a comprehensive Fact Sheet to provide the media with the latest information involving the NHSC and the recent decision to postpone the 2009 Trainers Show. Additional information will be added as new developments occur.

#### **FACT SHEET**

- Right now, the Walking Horse industry is engaged in a healthy and open debate over the future of the National Horse Show Commission (NHSC).
- The NHSC is a 50/50 partnership between the Walking Horse Trainers Association (WHTA) and the Walking Horse Owners Association (WFOA).
- The NHSC is one of several horse industry organizations licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the purpose of establishing and enforcing industry regulations.
- The NHSC serves as the voice of the Walking Horse Trainers Association and the Walking Horse Owners Association in policy-making decisions at Walking Horse competitions—including horse inspections and judging.
- On Monday, March 2, the Trainers Association Board of Directors unanimously voted to relinquish its input on policy making and disband the NHSC.
- The Trainers Association recommends that those duties be performed instead by another USDA-approved organization known as S.H.O.W., which is governed by the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.

- While the fate of the NHSC is being decided, the Trainers Association has chosen to delay the annual Trainers Show, which is widely considered the unofficial kickoff of the Walking Horse show season, to provide ample time for all effected groups to meet and discuss the issues at hand.
- On Monday, March 9, the WHTA general membership met at their headquarters in Shelbyville and backed the board of directors' decision to dissolve the NHSC.
- The Owners met via a conference call on Thursday, March 12, and voted to accept WHTA's recommendation to move all responsibilities from the NHSC to S.H.O.W.
- Trainers Association President Link Webb issued this statement: "We [the WHTA board] feel strongly that we have made a giant step in moving the industry forward. We are comfortable that the horse industry will be better as a result of our decision today."
- Walking Horse Advocates encourages the ongoing dialogue between the Trainers Association and the Owners Association. We are confident this discussion will result in stronger, better oversight of the industry, whether the NHSC remains as the regulatory arm of the Walking Horse show circuit or those responsibilities are assumed by another organization.
- Walking Horse Advocate spokesperson Mark Farrar issued this statement: "This is a positive and encouraging process, and we applaud all sides for coming together with open minds and the best interests of our industry at heart. We are working towards the same goal—fair and consistent regulations for all competitions that will ensure the safety and welfare of the horses."
- At this point, the NHSC continues to oversee other Walking Horse shows currently being held around the country.

For regular updates, or for more information on Walking Horse Advocates, please visit [www.walkinghorseadvocates.com](http://www.walkinghorseadvocates.com).

### **About Walking Horse Advocates**

Comprised of members from several leading industry groups, Walking Horse Advocates is committed to the protection and humane treatment of the Tennessee Walking Horse. By putting the well-being of horses first, the group is dedicated to the promotion of safe practices in the training and exhibition of this elegant breed through the consistent enforcement of uniform standards and regulations. Formed in 2008, Walking Horse Advocates seeks to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the innate grace and

beauty of the Tennessee Walker, often recognized as “the world’s greatest show, trail and pleasure horse.”

For more information, please visit [www.walkinghorseadvocates.com](http://www.walkinghorseadvocates.com).

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