

2014 AHA Convention Report

The 2014 AHA Convention was held in Denver, Colorado November 19-22. It was my honor and pleasure to be one of the 269 delegates that represented their club at this convention.

This year the convention offered information forums such as: Judges and Stewards Commissioner Q& A, Adequan presentation, and Outreach and the Arabian Horse: Going Beyond The Show Ring – How Can We All Share The Arabian Horse. I was able to attend these as well as my committee meetings.

Stan Morey, the Judge and Steward Commissioner, gave quite an interesting presentation. At present there are 119 Stewards and 258 Judges. 324 competitions were held last year, and from these competitions there were 60-65 evaluations made. Only 20 of these evaluations were negative. Reports that are being offered with regards to the Youth Nationals is that the Judges are consistently in awe of the skill level presented at this level. Also observed is that the Canadian Nationals is consistently getting better and better. The Show Commission is working their butts off! There have been some changes to the software, an example of such, is that in Showmanship a document has been created to help the Stewards and Judges for this division. Information can be found on the website.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to attend all of the Adequan forum. However, what I was able to hear it was a very insightful presentation on the health benefits of using Adequan both for humans as well as our equine friends. At one point in the forum, it was pointed out that there are some upcoming changes to the time frame that injections and shock wave treatments may be provided prior to the competitions so it would be advisable to be kept alert to any of these changes.

Levelling the Playing Field comes into effect this next year, 2015. We were also challenged to do 1 day horse shows, which can be done at someone's barns, which would also offer a much more relaxed show with less financial burden.

The AHA website is being updated, still a work in process. They are running slightly behind their planned timeframe, however, it all looks very promising.

Club members are encouraged to get AHA competition cards, choose breed over discipline (eg dressage USEF cards). AHA loses money when people make the decision of discipline over breed.

The Learn To Ride Program, which will be on the website, lists barns that offer a riding program. Encourage trainers to offer this program. Usually, the people who start riding stay with that barn, and then when the time is right, they buy horses through this barn. It offers a steady income to the trainers and exposes more people to the Arabian breed. Thus, helping to fulfill the outreach portion of our mission.

Breeding of the Arabian horse has been in decline in both the Purebred and HA/AA since 2005. Of course, it is most definitely dependent upon the US economy. 14 Breeds have been reviewed and have been found to be in the same situation. In 2014 there was a 9% increase compared to the same time of last year. An aging horse population might be the reason for seeing an increase in the breeding numbers.

The AHA Treasurer Bob Nash spoke and stated that we have had a great 2 years, crediting the AHA staff with their financial management. However, we are seeing a decline in memberships and registration.

There are some bright spots with the revenue seen, such as the Canadian Nationals where the profit was greater than budgeted for.

SPORT HORSE COMMITTEE

The Sport Horse Committee discussion was to review and discuss Resolutions 15 and 16. It was felt that Resolution 15 would be a benefit as it would provide an entry level in the Low Working Hunter division. Whereas, the goal of Resolution 16 is to bring the jumping arena in line with the open breed arena. Both would then translate into Sport Horse Nationals being able to offer more for the exhibitor.

There was also discussion held on a couple of topics with regards to Sport Horse Classes. We were reminded that as of 2015 double bridles will be allowed in the Sport Horse Under Saddle Classes.

There was also the concept of another class being added to the Sport Horse division, Sport Horse Sportmanship/Sport Horse Presentation; name to be determined later. In the Open World this class is offered, it is where the handler is the one being judged. A subcommittee is to be formed to get feedback on this concept, with the mandate that they are to have a draft prepared by spring to allow for a resolution to be able to be put forth by August 15.

There was discussion of ranking/placing system, it primarily affects Nationals or where 2 Dressage judges were used. A new system was used this year. A handbook will show changes with the card system (2 judges) Dressage Judges judge dressage type, whereas the Hunter Judges judge hunter types. It was noted that Hunter Judges have a different system of judging that can be quite varied. No mandate will be given to any show; they will have a choice of what they want to use. A committee was formed with the directive that they were to review the cards from SP Nationals and do both type of point system to see if there was a great difference of outcome. Research for hard data to help direct the committee with understanding as to what judging system works best. Splitting types was very beneficial to SP Nationals. It was recommended that a package with the judging system should be forwarded to the exhibitor and should be explained in the prize list.

It was also recommended to get Eventing Judges to be allowed to judge Sport Horse classes. It was recommended that a draft be prepared for next year so that it too could be a resolution to be put for.

DRESSAGE COMMITTEE

The Dressage Committee was charged with reviewing Resolutions 12 and 18, which have passed. Noted that there were recommendations that made changes to the Dressage Seat Equitation classes.

Also, there are new tests out from Training Levels all the way to the 4th level. These are out as of Dec 1, 2014. It was noted that fees would need to increase because you will need to look at running dressage over 2 days. Max number of rides in a day would be between 52-56 rides at the old length of time. New times mean setting the number of rides a day at a lower number. This would impact shows that normally ran those numbers of dressage rides.

An item of topic that might be of interest to us was discussed. It was recommended that we add Western Dressage to the schedule. Western Dressage is being taken up by an "aging population" because it is softer (on the body), than classic dressage, but that it still utilizes the dressage skill/technic. According to the Western Dressage Association website there has been 430 rides last year, with 21

breeds participating. At present there are 14 Judges licensed with USEF to judge this sport. Western Dressage will be at the SHN as an exhibition in 2015. At present Achievement awards towards Western Dressage are being adapted. The equipment booklet is listed under the WDA/USEF website. The timetable on the website is accurate, you could use it for your planning schedule.

If anyone has any questions with regards to the resolutions, or the Committee meetings that I have spoken to, please contact me.

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