

Sound Horse Groups Announce Victory in Lawsuit July 30, 2013

The American Horse Protection Association, along with three compliant, certified Horse Industry Organizations (HIOs), Friends of Sound Horses, International Walking Horse Association, and the National Walking Horse Association are pleased with the recent decision of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has full rulemaking authority to carry out the provisions of the Horse Protection Act.

The Court's decision upheld the authority of USDA to adopt a regulation requiring that HIOs that sponsor industry-based programs to identify and disqualify sore horses also have a system of minimum penalties to punish violators and deter soring practices. The organizations had jointly filed a friend-of-the-court (amicus) brief in the lawsuit asking the court to uphold the much needed regulations issued by the USDA to strengthen enforcement of the Horse Protection Act and bring an end to the cruel practice of "soring."

Soring of horses is the cruel and deliberate infliction of chemical or mechanical pain upon a horse's hooves and limbs to create an unnatural, exaggerated, high stepping gait for the show ring. Soring is a major animal welfare issue that has been illegal for over forty years under the federal Horse Protection Act (HPA) yet the practice is still widespread in show rings of Tennessee Walking Horses, Spotted Saddle Horses and Racking Horses.