



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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## **Corruption Targeted in New Reward Program to Protect Tennessee Walking Horses**

***Numerous competitors at the Celebration have histories of violating the Horse Protection Act***

(Aug. 21, 2013)—On opening day of the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration's 75th anniversary event, The Humane Society of the United States is announcing a new reward program to help expose corrupt activities within the industry. The HSUS will pay up to \$5,000 for any tip leading to an arrest and conviction for bribery, intimidation, fraud or other corrupt activities related to the inspection of Tennessee walking horse shows.

The corruption reward tip line is part of The HSUS' ongoing commitment to end the practice of horse "soring," which is the deliberate infliction of pain to Tennessee walking horses' legs and hooves to force them to perform an artificially high-stepping gait for the show ring. Callers to The HSUS' [existing reward tip line](#) to report Horse Protection Act violations have also reported wrongdoing by horse industry officials, including show managers, individuals responsible for inspecting horses or any horse industry organizations certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to enforce the federal Horse Protection Act. Callers also expressed fears of retaliation, inspiring the need for an additional reward program. Initiating the program at the start of the Celebration was particularly important due to the number of participants who have a history of violating the Horse Protection Act.

Keith Dane, director of equine protection for The HSUS, said: "Soring horses is not only despicable abuse, it's also cheating—and corruption and cheating go hand-in-hand in this sector of the Tennessee walking horse industry. Our rewards provide an incentive for industry participants to report instances of abuse and horse show corruption and ensure that the information is relayed to the proper authorities. When the Celebration's leading competitors reads like a who's who of Horse Protection Act violators, we know that soring is not limited to a 'few bad apples,' and we're calling on industry participants to help us eliminate soring for good."

According to publicly available databases, five of the horses who have been entered into the aged stallions qualifying classes for the 2013 Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration World Grand Championship, the show's top prize, have been the subject of citations for violations of the Horse Protection Act. In addition, the owners and riders of all of the horses entered into these qualifying classes, and each of the top-25 ranked trainers in the industry's Riders Cup program, all have previous Horse Protection Act citations.

Moody Star, a horse who has been entered into the 2013 Celebration aged stallion class, won the Reserve World Grand Champion at the 2010 Celebration and was documented to have been sored in The HSUS' 2011 [undercover investigation](#) of former Hall of Fame [walking horse trainer Jackie McConnell](#), who was training the horse at the time. Ownership of Moody Star was transferred to Dr. Jack Kwok from his wife, long time industry participant and owner Wilsene Moody Kwok, who is currently the subject of a [federal complaint for alleged violations](#) of the Horse Protection Act. Dr. Kwok is executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

Billboards have been placed in Shelbyville, Tenn., home of the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration show to advertise The HSUS' [national soring tip line](#) in English and Spanish, which offers an up to \$10,000 reward to anyone providing information that leads to the arrest and conviction of a violator of the Horse Protection Act or any state law prohibiting horse soring. The HSUS reward program [contributed to the conviction](#) of a spotted saddle and walking horse trainer for violations of the Horse Protection Act. Tips on industry corruption may be reported on the soring reward tip line at 855-NO SORING or 855-667-6746, and The HSUS will protect the identities of callers.

**Celebration frontrunners with HPA citation histories:**

- Horses Siege, I'm Deuce, The Metalist, Moody Star and Honors have been the subject of HPA citations in the past.
- The owners of all the horses entered into the stake classes all have at least one citation, with a combined total of 44 citations among them. These owners include Dr. Jack & Wilsene Moody Kwok, Kay & Jim Green, Fred Allred, Judy & Ron Jones, Karen Bean, Glendon Stivers, Billy Max/Deborah Woods, Gloria Warr/Rhonda Major, Virginia Stewart/Evergreen Walking Horse Farm, Luckey Easterling, Lee/Mike McGartland, Molly Walters, Keith/Dan McSwain, and Rhonda Stewart/Stewart's Nursery & Farms.
- Of the 12 riders who will show these horses in the qualifying class, all have received citations for violating the Horse Protection Act, with a combined total of 187 violations. Nine are ranked in the Riders Cup awards, including Charlie Green, Jimmy McConnell, Casey Wright, Herbert Derickson, Scott Beatty, Bobby Hugh, Dick Peebles, Larry Edwards and Bill Cantrell. Others cited but not ranked in Riders Cup include Chad Williams, Charlie Witherspoon, and Danny Hughes.
- Charlie Green, the winner of the 2012 Riders Cup award, who won more than \$15,000 for his horse show activities, has a rap sheet of 47 citations for soring and related issues, and is in second place to secure the Riders Cup recognition again this year.
- Larry Edwards, the rider of the horse believed to be the favorite to claim the top honors in the stake class has a history of 18 recent citations for HPA violations.

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