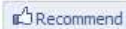




Walking Horse Show Officials Investigate Alleged Bribery

by: Pat Raia

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An exhibitor at the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration is under investigation for allegedly attempting to bribe a Designated Qualified Person (DQP) during a pre-performance inspection.

DQPs are employed by horse show managers to examine horses for compliance with Horse Protection Act (HPA) rules against soring. Soring is the deliberate injury to horses' feet and legs to achieve an exaggerated gait.

Horses that DQPs deem noncompliant during pre-performance inspection are not allowed to compete.

Celebration Chief Executive Officer Doyle Meadows, PhD, declined to disclose details about the incident details pending an official statement from the organization in charge of Celebration operations.

"We're probably real close to making a statement," Meadows said.

If facts of the incident are verified, the exhibitor could face penalties including fines and suspension from participating in future shows. However, the exact nature of the penalties is uncertain, Meadows said.

The revised edition of *Olympic Equestrian* highlights and chronicles the most celebrated equestrian athletes in the sport where men and women compete on a level playing field.

"There's not a (penalty) template for interfering with a DQP," he said.

Low HPA compliance has plagued the Tennessee Walking Horse industry's premier event in recent years. In response, Celebration directors expanded inspection protocol, and activated a new group to oversee event operations and promote cooperation with USDA inspectors.

The Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration continues through Sept. 6, when the breed's World Grand Champion will be chosen.

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