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TOXIC FORAGE: WHAT’S HIDING IN YOUR HAY?

Laminitis treatment AND PREVENTION
Important Advances
The "Big Lick" gait of the Tennessee Walking Horse which has been labeled as a "bastardized gait" by horsemen all over the world is when a horse raises its front feet extremely high with each painful step and reaches forward to extremes with its hind feet in order to shift its body weight and weight of the rider to the un-sore hind feet. The Big Lick is a result of a process known as "soring the horse." The big lie that has been perpetrated for years is that a horse can be trained to walk this way. The truth has finally been revealed to the world that it is not a result of training, but of soring. (by Harold source: www.billygoboy.com)

The Tennessee Walking Horse was not always sored. The breed originated in central Tennessee as a farmer’s even-tempered “using” horse and possessed a natural, 4-beat gait that didn’t jar the rider. He was the family’s means of transportation as well as a farm work animal. For approximately 100 years the horse’s gaits were refined through selective breeding. In 1935, local farmers gathered at the courthouse in Lewisburg, TN and formed the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders’ & Exhibitors’ Association (TWHBEA).

The breed grew in popularity as movie stars – such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers – obtained Tennessee Walking Horses. Later, singer Elvis Presley embraced the breed. As we know, American society changed and the agrarian model gave way to manufacturing jobs such as were found in the automobile industry. The Tennessee Walking Horse became a luxury item for the affluent to exhibit at horse shows across the South.

In the mid-1950s, horse trainers (in order to please owners and win ribbons) started “fixing” or soring Tennessee Walker show horses to visually enhance their gaits – to make the horses take longer steps behind and exaggerate their front leg action. The shoes on the front feet were several pads or “stacks” that added six to eight inches to the horse’s height. Moving at speed, these horses were an exciting spectacle for show attendees.

To obtain the exaggerated gait the crowds enjoyed, the trainers would use chemical irritants to sensitize the skin on the pasterns, then put a “boot” on top of it – sometimes with chains under it – to get the front leg action and deep walking behind.

The process accelerated through the 1960s, and the public gradually became aware that animals were being abused in the name of recreation for humans. The Nashville Tennessean newspaper did an expose in 1969, and in 1970 the Horse Protection Act passed the United States Congress.
Despite the USDA’s attempts to regulate Tennessee Walking Horse shows, the same soring issues the Nashville newspaper wrote about in 1969 are as prevalent or worse today. In 2013, the Prevent All Soring Tactics Act legislation was introduced in the United States Congress as H.R. 1518/S. 1406.

In early September 2013, my client Pat Stout, VP Horse Shows TWHBEA, decided to poll the breed association membership on the H.R. 1518/S. 1406, Prevent All Soring Tactics Act. From her home in Cookeville, Tennessee, she mailed about 6,950 postcards to eligible to vote TWHBEA members. The postcard ballots asked the members to vote “YES” or “NO” on the HR 1518/S1406, Prevent All Soring Tactics Act legislation. This amendment to the Horse Protection Act would remove the pads and chains from the Tennessee Walking Show Horses, eliminate the corrupt HIO system and make horse soring a federal felony.

On October 16, 2013, the results were tabulated by Greg Cook, CPA, and the association members voted in a landslide 63% “YES” for passage of HR 1518/S1406 with an impressive 26% of the eligible members participating. Below is a map from www.billygoboy.com based on the opinion poll results that reflects America and the world wants the soring to end.

**SOUND HORSE ADVOCATE DONNA BENEFIELD TESTIFIED BEFORE CONGRESS:**

“**What they do to sore a horse:**

- Apply chemicals to the pasterns (ankles), the cannon bone (shin) of the horse, such as oil of mustard, croton oil, kerosene, lighter fluid, diesel fuel, salicylic acid, WD-40, various types of soaps (dish soap, GoJo, etc.), DMSO, only to name a few. The legs are then wrapped in plastic for 24 to 48 hours. During this process, horses too sore to stand up in the stall may be tied to the wall to prevent them lying down or chewing the wraps off their burning legs.

- Grind the soles of the feet using an electric grinder, until beads of blood come to the surface, before they apply the stack or shoe. On flat-shod horses, false soles placed over the real soles of the horse’s hoof serve to cover up the abuse.

- There will be claims that there have been no tickets for a pressure-shod horse. This is false. When a horse is found to be pressure shod or sore in the soles of his feet, the ticket is written as a bilateral sore ticket, not pressure shoeing.

- Apply alligator clips to the scrotum, anus, vulva, tongue, tail, or the teat of the horse to create a painful distraction during inspection.

- Insert foreign objects between the soles of the horse’s feet and the stacks to cause pain during movement. These are undetectable on the padded horses.
Seal wooden blocks, golf balls, quarters stacked and wrapped in electrical tape, and wedges of wood or plastic under the sole of the foot. If the USDA is not present they may leave these items in place. They will remove them prior to inspection.

Stand horses on steel bolts or wooden blocks placed on the sole of the foot. The horse is tied to a wall to prevent him lying down and is forced to stand in place for hours or days. They are then removed before the horse is shown, but the pain created lasts through the performance. Because the stacks or shoes obstruct access to the sole of the hoof, the effects of this abuse are impossible to detect.

Sand a strip of the hoof wall down to the quick, apply a pad (called a nail-on pad) to the bottom of the foot, and then attach a stack to this pad. A band is then applied across the top of the area of sanded hoof and tightened to create pressure on the sensitive sole and hoof wall.

Reasons why these things are not detected during inspection:

- Horses are “stewarded” Stewarding is when one person will do a mock inspection of the horse’s pasterns and another person will hold the horse. When the horse reacts to the pain, the holder will hit the horse in the head with a 2 x 4, an axe handle, a baseball bat, among other things, until he stops reacting to the pain. He then has been taught not to react to inspection at the horse show. (As seen on the ABC Nightline Show, with Jackie McConnell)
- Numbing agents are applied topically or injected by the trainer or a sympathetic industry veterinarian to block the pain, so the horse will not display a pain response during inspection.
- A zip tie or piano wire is placed on the gums of the horses to create pain thereby taking their mind off of the pain in their feet.
- Surgical staples are placed under the horse’s mane to create pain and to distract the horse from the pain in his feet.
- Horses are stood in a bucket of ice water prior to inspection to numb them and not be detected by swabbing when the USDA is present and swabbing the horses’ pasterns for foreign substances.
- Black Magic spray, tattoo ink, graphite, and glue-on hair (among other things) are used to hide illegal scars.
- Bit burrs are placed under the saddle girth to create pain somewhere other than their feet. The USDA requires that all saddles must be removed before inspection because of the prevalence of this practice.
- Sunblock is applied to interfere with the thermograph machine.
- They inject the horses with drugs to enable the horse to pass the locomotion and palpation exam.
- They put the in the the husband or practice “country law” to support it all.
- They use shovel handles, piano wire and other objects to create hideous wounds on the horses.

If you want to help stop soring, please contact your congressman or senator to support the PAST Act. In particular, U. S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) needs to hear from people all over America and the world. Senator Alexander’s Campaign Finance Chair is Stephen Smith who is also the President of the Tennessee Walking Horse breed registry. Mr. Smith has received an AHPA violation notice in the past. He opposes the PAST Act, despite a majority of the TWHBEA members polled voted landslide 63% in favor of the PAST Act passage. Here are the email addresses for Senator Alexander’s Chief of Staff:
david_cleary@alexander.senate.gov,
curtis_swager@alexander.senate.gov,
Also, U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-TN):
Todd_womack@corker.senate.gov
Hunter_bethea@corker.senate.gov

About the author:
Clant M. Seay, a fifth-generation Mississippian, owned Laurelwood Farm in Kosciusko, Mississippi where he raised World Grand Champion caliber Tennessee Walking Horses from 1981 to 2005. His was a “boutique” operation with a small, select band of broodmares bred to the best stallions available. Clant was “hands-on” being present when the foals were born, imprinting them, teaching the colts to respect – not fear – people. He square baled hay and practiced “country law” to support it all. He now lives in Oxford, Mississippi, home of the University of Mississippi, where he writes. cmseaylaw@aol.com

Here are links to contact congressmen and senators and track bill progress:


http://forthetnwalkinghorse.blogspot.com/2013/12/how-you-can-help-current-list-of-house.html

http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d113:s.01406:

https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr1518