



PROTOCOL FOR THE DETECTION OF PRESSURE SHOEING: AN AMPLIFICATION OF THE PROCEDURES RECOMMENDED IN THE AAEP WHITE PAPER “PUTTING THE HORSE FIRST”

As outlined in the AAEP White Paper “Putting the Horse First: Veterinary Recommendations for Ending the Soring of Tennessee Walking Horses,” the initial physical inspection of the horses prior to entering the ring must include:

- a. Thermographic screening of the limbs to assist in defining specific anatomical areas requiring additional clinical examination and/or surface swabbing to detect forbidden substances.
 1. Continued experience with thermography will help to determine if this modality is useful in detecting repeatable, recognizable temperature patterns associated with pressure shoeing in horses which have not been subjected to treatment of their pasterns with irritants.
- b. Palpation of the limbs including:
 1. Routine evaluation of the limbs
 2. Assessment of digital pulses
 3. Critical assessment of specific areas suggested to be abnormal on thermographic examination
- c. Inspection of the hooves and shoes.
 1. Hoof tester examination, including pressure applied across the heels, may be compromised by the width of the branches of the shoes (flat-shod horses) and/or the presence of the package (padded horses); therefore their use is considered only as an additional means of evaluation, never as the sole means.
 2. Detect and eliminate the use of any devices utilized to tighten the bands which secure the ‘packages.’
- d. Digital radiographs of the feet of any horses which are considered suspicious for pressure shoeing or laminitis.
 1. Detect the use of acrylic extensions of the hoof capsule or sole surface.
 2. Detect the presence of materials utilized to produce increased pressure on the sole or frog.
 3. Detect evidence of laminitis including rotation of the third phalanx or sinking of the bony column within the hoof capsule.
- e. Examination of the horses in a standard pattern at a walk and extended walk, on a loose rein, in hand and under tack.

Positive findings, consistent with the intent to manipulate a horse’s performance with painful methods, will result in the initiation of the post-competition examination protocol and subsequent imposition of appropriate penalties.

Continued observation by qualified veterinarians of the competing horses for lameness while warming up and exhibiting is essential. Re-examination of selected horses as they exit the ring (with horses held in the make-up ring while examinations are completed) should include:

- a. Thermographic re-examination
- b. Digital radiographs of the feet, in randomly selected horses or horses found to have any physical or thermographic abnormalities, to detect and evaluate:
 1. Detect the use of acrylic extensions of the hoof capsule or sole surface.
 2. Detect the presence of materials utilized to produce increased pressure on the sole or frog.
 3. Detect evidence of laminitis including rotation of the third phalanx or sinking of the bony column within the hoof capsule.
 - i. Evaluate sole thickness.
- c. Removal of both front shoes of randomly selected horses or horses with abnormal physical findings, thermographic patterns and/or digital radiographic findings:
 1. Visual and hoof tester examination of unshod feet for evidence of methods directed at inducing pain, such as pressure devices of any configuration, excessive paring of the sole and/or frog, chronic bruising (evidence of acute and chronic hemorrhage) on the sole surface.
 - i. Weighing of shoes (flat-shod horses) or shoes and package (padded horses).

These evaluations can be conducted in a timely manner if adequate numbers of trained personnel are available and cooperation of exhibitors is mandated. Failure to submit to these testing methods may be considered evidence of non-compliance with the Horse Protection Act and result in subsequent disqualification from competition and the assignment of appropriate penalties should be considered.

Developed by the AAEP Tennessee Walking Horse Task Force, March 2009.