

UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION  
PROPOSED RULE CHANGE TO STOP EQUINE TAIL ALTERATION  
SUBMITTED 6.1.16  
PROPONENT: Julie Lynn Andrew

INTENT:

This rule is to prevent the alteration of any horse or pony's tail that is competing in any USEF competition. This rule is intended to be added to the Prohibited Practices section of the USEF rule book. Its focus is on the welfare of all horses and ponies in competition. Pursuant to the AAEP statement, this rule directly affects any horse or pony having had their tail altered, prior to competition. Regarding tail alteration, "The American Association of Equine Practitioners condemns the alteration of the tail of the horse for cosmetic or competitive purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, docking, nicking (i.e., cutting) and blocking. When performed for cosmetic purposes, these procedures do not contribute to the health or welfare of the horse and are primarily used for gain in the show ring (nicking/cutting, blocking and docking) or because of historical custom (docking)." This statement, alone, should have caused USEF to act, by passing a rule to cease this needless practice.

Essentially, in addition to the welfare concerns, by not acting for the welfare of horses and ponies with regard to this issue, the USEF is promoting illegal tail alteration. As an example, the procedure of tail cutting, which is surgical, can only be performed legally by a licensed Veterinarian. If the Veterinarians subscribe to the AAEP welfare statement, and refuse to perform these procedures, any tail cutting, or alteration, that is done will have been done illegally. To allow this to continue is to support this practice, both legally, and illegally. Additionally, the FEI, which governs International Horse Sport, does not allow tail alteration of any kind. USEF, as the governing body for all United State Equine Sports, should be in parity with FEI, on this issue. Absent a rule from USEF, unlicensed individuals would be strongly inclined to continue this practice, illegally. Putting rules in place making all manner of tail alteration illegal will effectively stop this practice at all levels. Also, please note that the Rulebook Chapter referenced above is not correct, as no chapter for Prohibited Practices currently exists.

1. Commencing on January 1, 2017, no horse or pony may be exhibited at any USEF show with tail alteration of any kind. Specifically, any horse or pony foaled after January 1, 2016, may not have a tail which has been cut, stretched, docked, altered in any way, or has been kept in a tail set or bustle. No horse or pony may be exhibited without a natural tail carriage, and any device or substance used to alter the natural tail carriage shall be illegal.

2. Horses or ponies with tails which have been surgically altered, or altered by any other means, prior to January 1, 2017, may compete without prejudice, as long as the owner can provide an affidavit from a licensed Veterinarian verifying the date that the tail was altered by them. The American Association of Equine Practitioners condemns the alteration of the tail in and form or fashion.

3. No horse or pony may compete in a class in any division with tail carriage that has been altered in any manner, or by any means. Violations of this rule are considered serious infractions, because such alterations constitute a major infraction on the Prohibited Practices of the USEF.

4. The following are specifically prohibited on any show grounds: tail sets, bustles, high tail cruppers, tail braces, and any other artificial appliance or chemical, such as ginger, capsaicin, etc. or a shoe lace, used to tie, or alter the tail carriage from its natural posture in any way. Any horse or pony on the grounds at any show, which is found to have any of the foregoing used on it, will have the owners/trainers subject to section 5.f of this rule.

5. Ginger, Capsaicin and Other Irritants.

a. No horse or pony may compete in a class in any division with any chemical or other irritant of any kind present in it's anus, vulva, rectal area or vaginal area, regardless of the origin of the irritant and whether it was applied or its presence resulted from the dietary, environmental, or unknown origins, and whether the horses tail carriage was affected by its presence.

b. The trainer (see GR147 Trainer Definition and GR404 Responsibility and Accountability of Trainers) owners, and their agents, of a horse entered to compete in a class in any division are the insurers of the horse's condition and compliance with this Rule, and accordingly they are responsible and accountable for safeguarding the horse and controlling its diet and environment prior to, during, and following the class, and at the time of the sampling provided for below, so as to prevent exposure to a chemical or other irritant of any kind, regardless of its origin, whether exposure was intention, and whether the horse's tail carriage was affected by its presence. These individuals/entities are subject to charges of rule violation should the sampling and testing provided for below be positive for the presence of a chemical or irritant of any kind.

c. Any trainer, owner, agent or other person who administers, or attempts to administer, instructs, aids, conspires with another to administer a chemical or other irritant of any kind onto the anus, vulva, rectal area, or vaginal area of a

horse entered to compete in any division shall be subject to penalties as provided in f. below.

d. The Federation may cause the collection of swab samples and have tested substances present on the anus, vulva, rectal area or vaginal area of horses following their exit from the ring, in connection with a class or division as follows: The Federation shall choose all horses in such a class to be sampled, or may select one or more placings from the class for sampling, or may select some of those horses from such a class for sampling. In making such selections, the Federation will act on the advice of the Federation Drugs & Medications Administrator and may act on the request of competition management and/or a judge of the class, but is not required to do so; After notification by the Federation that swab sampling will occur, competition management shall appoint only a licensed Veterinarian or Veterinarians to supervise the sampling, who may utilize technicians working under direct supervision of the Veterinarian(s); That this Veterinarian/Veterinarian(s) work under the Federation Drugs and Medications Administrator's direction for these duties; Competition management shall ensure that the appointed Veterinarian coordinates with the Federation Drugs & Medication Administrator to implement the chain of custody required by the laboratory for identifying each horse/pony from which each sample was taken; Competition Management shall ensure that the appointed Veterinarian follows the instructions of the Federation Drugs and Medical Administrator by forwarding the samples for testing to the Iowa State University Laboratory or another comparable laboratory acceptable to the Federation, and shall implement the chain of custody by the laboratory for transporting the samples to and from the laboratory and while at the laboratory. All results will be reported to the Federation Drugs & Medication Administrator only.

e. The trainer, owner, and their agents of a horse competing in a class in any division must submit to the above sample collections performed by representatives of competition management, and they must do so without any unnecessary delays. They must cooperate with the sample collection personnel as defined above by exhibiting polite attitude toward them and actions toward them and must assist them by helping to restrain the horse/pony properly during the sample collections.

f. In the event the Hearing Committee determines that a violation has occurred, the trainer, owner, and/or their agents each shall be subject to any and all penalties imposed by the Hearing Committee at its discretion pursuant to chapters 6 & 8, including suspensions, fines, and the revocation and redistribution of winnings, notice or notices of which shall be published on the Federation's website. The suggested minimum penalty for a first offense is the revocation of all of the horse's winnings in connection with the entire competition in question, and a suspension of 60 days with a fine of \$2500.

Subsequent violations of this rule by any of the above individuals/ entities shall be subject to greater penalties as determined at the discretion of the Hearing Committee.