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AVMA issues statement in support of USDA's efforts to end soring

(SCHAUMBURG, Ill.) September 13, 2012—The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) issued the following statement in support of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) ongoing efforts to end the inhumane practice of soring.

“The American Veterinary Medical Association appreciates ongoing efforts by the United States Department of Agriculture's Horse Protection Program to keep its stakeholders informed regarding enforcement activities associated with the Horse Protection Act (HPA), including the recent posting of preliminary inspection results for the 2012 Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.

“Inspection results, when compared over time, can be an important measure of progress in achieving the goal of eliminating the inhumane practices associated with soring of horses. Unfortunately, these statistics from the 2012 Celebration reaffirm that soring remains prevalent in the industry more than 40 years after passage of the HPA. A violation rate of close to 10% is symptomatic of an industry that continues, decade after decade, to fail in its responsibilities to protect the welfare of these horses.

“Representatives of the AVMA attended the 2012 Celebration and observed enforcement activities in the inspection area. They found the USDA veterinary medical officers conducting inspections to be skilled and professional in the conduct of their activities. And, in contrast to allegations of selective enforcement at this year’s Celebration that have been levied by some of those in the industry, congruence between violation rates for 2011 (9.5%) and 2012 (9.0%) suggests the USDA’s approach to enforcement is consistent. Consistency among results provides further evidence that abuse within the Walking Horse industry is a systemic problem, not an isolated one.

“The AVMA urges the USDA to actively and effectively enforce the HPA while the agency continues to search for improved detection methods. Ultimately, the AVMA believes that elimination of action devices and the so-called performance packages from the show ring would be the most timely and effective way to stop this inhumane practice.”

For more information about the AVMA and its programs, please visit

www.avma.org.

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The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world, with more than 82,500 member veterinarians worldwide engaged in a wide variety of professional activities.