

**SERHA Letter to the NRHA Board of Directors  
August 2007**

On behalf of the Southeast Reining Horse Association we would like to address what we consider the two most divisive issues facing the NRHA. It should be no surprise that the proposed medication policy and membership fee structure are the top items on our list. To be economical in our words, we request that the NRHA Board of Directors table both issues at the upcoming board of directors meeting and leave them for further consideration and discussion before taking action that may irrevocably harm the viability of our National organization. The SERHA consists of a wide cross-section of NRHA members, from World Champions and Futurity finalists to first-year Rookie riders. Our association has a long history of financial viability rooted in the hard work and dedication of its members. Based on our success and history within the reining industry we consider ourselves well informed with respect to the results that the proposed medication policy is likely to produce. The method of data collection is so general that a large percentage of the data will be invalid. Just because a horse may test for something at a show is not an indication of what has been administered to the horse in preparation for entering the arena. There are many medications that may be administered days or even weeks prior to an event that members will be obligated to report or face the risk of sanctions. Why should members pay the NRHA to collect meaningless data such as this? With regard to the management burden placed on show staff, the proposed policy amounts to nothing more than an unfunded mandate. NRHA Affiliates will incur additional costs for collecting and processing the forms associated with the program without any form of compensation for their efforts. For a small SERHA show over 400 forms would be generated, weighing over four pounds. In addition to the overhead of collecting and tracking the forms there is the unavoidable impact that filling out forms will have on the show entry process.

Before the NRHA implements a medications policy we should first establish that a legitimate need exists. Only after the need for a medications policy has been clearly established should the development process begin. The formation of a policy should be done openly, with input solicited from across the entire membership as well as the professional caregivers that help care for our horses. Finally, any policy with such broad-reaching impact on our sport should only be implemented after being put to a vote by the membership. If this policy is supported by the NRHA Board of Directors be aware that SERHA will not collect a \$1.00 testing fee from each show entrant on behalf of NRHA. We feel justified in this stance because the current proposal was developed without any input from grass roots members. If and when the NRHA Directors make the decision to include the membership in developing and adopting a medications policy The South East Reining Horse Association will stand ready to support that process.

With regard to the increase in membership dues, we feel that the current proposal will do more to harm the organization than to remedy any shortfall. Such a drastic increase in dues will drive members away, ultimately resulting in a loss of sponsorship dollars. With fewer sponsorship dollars available dues will have to increase even more, and a toxic spiral will result. If you feel an increase in dues is unavoidable then we suggest that you adopt a policy of full disclosure and provide detailed financial records to the membership.

When the members have a clear view of the problem you stand a much higher probability of gaining support for a dues increase.

Overall, the SERHA has a hard time trusting the current NRHA leadership. We do not understand how the NRHA Board of Directors can reasonably put forth these proposals in the wake of the failed Strategic Plan when they clearly illustrate the same lack of communication between the Board and the NRHA membership. We are all bound by a common love of reining, help the members better understand the challenges faced by the organization and let's all work together to build a strong and vibrant organization that is once again the envy of the equine world.

Respectfully,

The Officers and Directors of SERHA