



**Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service**

**Animal Care**

2150 Centre Ave.  
Bldg. B, Mailstop  
3W11  
Fort Collins, CO  
80526

---

July 1, 2026

Dear Management of Horse Shows, Exhibitions, Sales, and Auctions (Management), Horse Industry Organizations and Associations (HIOs), and Designated Qualified Persons (DQPs); and Owners, Trainers, Exhibitors, Custodians involved in Horse Protection Act (HPA) Regulated Events:

This letter provides an update on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s work under the HPA to eliminate soring and promote fair competition through the use of modern diagnostic tools to detect soring and masking agents.

In 2021, USDA and the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders Foundation jointly commissioned a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) study that, among other things, recommended collecting swabs from the pasterns of horses at HPA-covered events for prohibited substances testing, and, following the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) model, collect blood samples to identify medications that may alter a horse's pain response during inspections.

To begin implementing these recommendations, USDA will start gathering information to determine the prevalence and types of prohibited substances present in Tennessee Walking horses and racking horses at HPA-covered events. This initial scoping will occur without collecting **personally identifiable information about the horse, its owner, custodian, rider, or any other person associated with the horse**. USDA will release aggregate findings from each event.

USDA has contracted with USEF to provide experienced veterinary staff to collect blood samples. USEF will follow its standard procedures, sampling randomly selected horses as well as any horse USDA staff or DQPs identify as concerning based on behavior. A licensed veterinarian independently contracted by USEF, assisted by a USEF technician, will collect three vials of blood per horse and record general information about the sample (e.g., pre- or post-show, padded or flat-shod). As noted above, no personally identifying information will be collected.

USEF will send these samples to Industrial Laboratories, the same independent laboratory it uses for other equine competitions. Industrial Laboratories will analyze blood samples for substances on the Blood Sample Target List of Substances (included below).

For pastern testing, USDA inspectors will swab both front pasterns using a standardized method and send the swabs to Industrial Laboratories for analysis for the Swab Sample Target List of Substances (included below).

USDA will share aggregated findings from both the blood and swab analyses with industry stakeholders and publicly on our website.

We appreciate your partnership as we work together to eliminate soring and ensure fair competition for all participants. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Dr. Emi Roberson at [emily.a.roberson@usda.gov](mailto:emily.a.roberson@usda.gov) or (405) 394-4846.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Juarez  
Deputy Administrator  
Animal Care

## Blood Sample Target List of Substances

Acepromazine  
Alfentanil  
Apomorphine  
Benzocaine  
Benzodiazepines  
Bupivacaine  
Buprenorphine  
Butorphanol  
Capsaicin  
Carfentanil  
Carprofen  
Codeine  
Diazepam  
Detomidine  
Epinephrine  
Etidocaine  
Etorphine  
Fluoxetine  
Gabapentin  
Haloperidol  
Hydrocodone  
Hydromorphone

Ketamine  
Lidocaine  
Medetomidine  
Meloxicam  
Mepivacaine  
Methadone  
Morphine  
Naloxone  
Opiates  
Oxymorphone  
Phenobarbital  
Prilocaine  
Procaine  
Promazine  
Reserpine  
Romifidine  
Sufentanil  
Tramadol  
Trazodone  
Xylazine  
Xylocaine

## Swab Sample Target List of Substances

Absinthium oil (wormwood oil)	Guaiacol
Allyl isothiocyanate (mustard oil)	Hydrated lime
Alpha-pinene	Hydrocortisone
Aluminum sulfate	Iodine resublimed (pure elemental iodine)
Ammonium bituminosulfonate (ichthammol)	Idoform
Ammonium hydroxide	Isopropyl myristate
Benzalkonium chloride	Isopropyl palmitate
Benzocaine	Kerosene
Benzoic acid	Lidocaine
Benzyl benzoate (benzene)	Limonene
Benzyl cinnamate	Menthol
Beta-pinene	Menthone
Borax	Methyl salicylate
Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)	Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM)
Camphor	Mineral spirits (Stoddard solvent)
Capsaicin	Nonivamide
Capsicum oleoresin	O-Aminoazotoluene
Chloroxylenol (PCMX)	Octyl methoxycinnamate
Cineole	Phenol
Cinnamaldehyde	Phenylbutazone
Copper naphthenate	Potassium alum
Copper sulfate (cupric sulfate)	Potassium iodide
Decamethylcyclopentasiloxane (D5)	Pramoxine
Dexamethasone	Prilocaine
Dibucaine (cinchocaine)	Salicylic acid
Diclofenac	Sulfur
Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO)	Terpinene
Diesel fuel	Terpineol
Dyclonine	Tetracaine
Ethylbenzene	Thymol
Eugenol	Toluene
Ferrous sulfate	Turpentine
Gasoline	Xylenes
	Xylocaine