**Sample Comments: *Please revise these to fit your situation***

Proposed Rule:

**Docket # APHIS-2011-0009**, *Horse Protection; Licensing of Designated Qualified Persons and Other Amendments*

**Sample # 1**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed rule that would change the process by which horse inspections at horse shows and sales are conducted. First, let me be clear that I am committed to provide the best care for my livestock as possible, and that I am absolutely opposed to techniques that result in the soring of horses. I agree that soring practices must be eliminated, and violators prosecuted. However, I do not agree with the rule changes USDA APHIS is proposing.

Any proposed rule must remove the subjective nature of the current inspection process and replace it with objective standards that are based on sound scientific principles. This proposal simply continues the same subjective protocols, just under a different set of inspectors. I urge USDA APHIS to withdraw this rule. Congress currently has legislation pending that would objectively address this issue, and rather than going around Congress, I would urge you to work with Congress and involve those in the industry who will be impacted to truly address the black eye of soring, and eliminate the minority of owners or trainers who sore horses rather than implement a rule that could indiscriminately destroy the entire industry. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**Sample # 2**

I am a livestock owner, and I truly care about the welfare of my animals. I am appalled that anyone would intentionally use soring techniques as a way to train horses. I fully agree this practice should not be allowed. However, the rule proposed by USDA APHIS will penalize the majority of solid horse owners and trainers who are utilizing proper training techniques that do not sore their animals. It does this by indiscriminately eliminating training tools, referred to as action devices. The broad statement of eliminating devices, agents or any device that could result in physical pain could mean essentially anything used in training any type of animal. It could also refer to therapeutic training aids that are used to provide relief or healing to animals. Just as human athletes utilize training aids and devices to recover from injuries, or to enhance training, action devices can be used in a very positive way by horse owners and trainers. I oppose this rule as proposed and encourage USDA APHIS to withdraw this rule and address the issue in a scientifically objective way. As written, this rule could be far reaching and destructive to an entire industry where the vast majority of folks are not breaking the rules.

**Sample # 3**

I oppose the soring of horses. But I also oppose this rule as written and encourage USDA APHIS to withdraw it completely. This rule really throws the baby out with the bath water because it essentially ignores the fact that most horse trainers simply are not using soring practices in training their horses. This rule implies that everyone is soring horses, and the industry has turned a blind eye to the problem and is ignoring the problem. Nothing is farther from the truth. The truth is the industry is addressing the issue, and has been effective in eliminating the major culprits from the major shows and sales through effective and objective inspections. This rule would throw out those standards, replace the inspectors with actual horse experience, and replace it with pretty much the same inspection standards, more requirements for inspectors and put in place inspectors who while they may be veterinarians, may have little or no experience working with horses or large animals. How can that possibly create a better way of reducing the incidence of soring other than to eliminate the industry as a whole? I oppose this rule, and I encourage USDA to withdraw it immediately.

**Sample # 4**

The Horse Protection Act of 1970 specifically prohibits training practices that result in the soring of horses. That is why it was passed by Congress. I am committed to the proper care and welfare of livestock in my care. Soring of horses is wrong, and should be addressed. However, this proposed rule simply goes too far. It is vague enough to be expanded well past the stated objective. It is vague in what training aids, for that matter, what breeds, or even livestock are covered by the rule. The rule imposes a new format for shows and sales to follow, but it really doesn’t include a truly objective way of identifying violators. It replaces one set of inspectors who have large animal, and specifically horse experience, with another set of inspectors with veterinary training, but who may have no large animal experience. These individuals are supposed to become experts on handling large animals and identifying scaring or soring issues after a fairly short training period. That just doesn’t really add up to good, sound business.

The inspection process seems to be working. I understand fewer than 10 percent of horses inspected actually show signs of soring when objective inspection techniques are utilized. Those techniques are not visual, or touch techniques, but utilize X-ray examinations of the horses hoof and leg area, utilize blood tests to analyze for foreign substances or in some cases involve a biopsy of an area to be examined for scar tissue. These techniques are objective, and could be useful in prosecuting violators, but these techniques are not included in the rule. The rule proposes using subjective techniques that have proven time and time again to not be reliable. I urge USDA to withdraw this useless rule, unless their real objective is to destroy a proud industry completely and then move on to another breed, or type of livestock and do the same. I love my animals, and want to protect them. This rule could result in me losing them. Is that the goal?