

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ApHC RULE CHANGES FOR 2016

1. By allowing “guest judges” at ApHC shows, aren’t we causing direct harm to our own carded judges? Do guest judges have to pay the same fees as ApHC-carded judges?

The guest judge program is really an attempt to satisfy a number of needs in our industry. First and foremost, we need to stimulate the marketplace with the creation of new shows. Our hope is that regional clubs embrace the opportunity to offer a single or double-judge show that is more cost-effective for local and regional exhibitors. One of the ways to cut costs is to have the ability to hire a judge locally instead of having the major added expense of travel and hotel for judges. Guest judges must be carded with an approved organization, they have to pass an ApHC rulebook test, they must be ApHC members and each individual judge is only allowed to serve as a guest judge twice. After that, we hope that their exposure to the Appaloosa breed will encourage them to apply for their ApHC judging credentials. This in turn would satisfy a second need in our industry and result in a greater number of ApHC-carded judges available to be hired for approved shows in the future.

New, affordable shows mean more opportunities and incentive to show and this drives demand for Appaloosa horses.

All breed associations are facing similar problems as ApHC – reductions in membership, registrations and program participation. We’d like to be the first to say that not only do we realize this but we’re doing something to allow groups to come together for the preservation of the industry as a whole and hoping to continue to secure a market share within that industry for Appaloosa horses and their owners. Cross-breed groups working together to reduce expenses and offer events for members is a major step in acknowledging that we’re all in this together and will work collectively to solve industry problems.

Ultimately, we hope that the rest of the industry follows our lead in recognizing that judges carded with the organizations we’ve included in our guest judge program have passed through a rigorous process to become credentialed. Many of those on our list are organizations that we work hand-in-hand with through the Color Breed Council Judge’s Seminar so we are very familiar with the process and level of education required. And should other organizations embrace this concept, it will create additional judging opportunities for all judges – including those carded with ApHC.

2. If want to win an overall year-end high-point award and must also win a high-point in a territory, what if my horse is in a different territory than where I live? Do I need to buy regional club memberships everywhere?

Territory high point awards will be based upon placings at shows held in each territory. It is highly likely that a horse and/or exhibitor would show up on the high point list in more than one territory because people, especially those who are traveling to shows in an effort to achieve an overall high point award, are competing at shows in multiple territories. You are not restricted to showing in only one territory nor does the territory in which you primarily show need to be the territory where you live. If you live in Missouri and have your horses in training in Florida, that’s o.k. Wherever you show regardless of where you live, is where you’ll earn points toward territorial awards.

You do not need to buy regional club memberships in every place you show. However, you will need to be a member of at least one regional club in order to show at the World Show. And, you may be a member of multiple regional clubs if you are working toward qualifying for the World Show through one or more of those clubs. You are only eligible to receive a nomination for the World Show from a regional club if you are a member of that club and if you are showing in classes at shows sponsored or co-sponsored by that club.

3. Allowing regional clubs to nominate their top nine horses from a class to the World seems like it will become too easy to qualify. What's the prestige in that?

We've increased the number of national points by class to qualify for the World Show in both open and non-pro classes. In making it more difficult to qualify through that point system, we're attempting to support regional clubs by giving them more opportunities to nominate their members to qualify for the World Show. And to receive a nomination from a club, the exhibitor must support that club with a membership fee and by attending the shows that club sponsors or co-sponsors. While some people think that nine per class is too many, it's important to understand that fewer people will be able to qualify through the national point system so we've expanded the regional club opportunities.

We've also eliminated the need to have 1 national point in order to be nominated through the regional club system. The reason for this is because we know that some people go to a show, get 1 national point and then don't show again until the National or World Show. Or they get their 1 point at the National Show and haven't shown regionally. However, now if you have to be in the top 9 in that class from your club, you must continue to show to ensure your spot on that list. And it doesn't matter if you show and are the only entry (which doesn't result in points) or if you show and don't place high enough to earn points, you still have an opportunity to qualify through the regional club as long as you keep showing at their shows. We're offering tools to regional clubs to get their members back to their horse shows.

4. Why does the ApHC think it needs to tell regional clubs they must do this or that to maintain their affiliation status?

Regional clubs and international affiliates are partners with the Appaloosa Horse Club. We NEED one another! And partners have to work together to achieve common goals. Our common goals are to promote and preserve the Appaloosa breed. We do that through membership and participation in ApHC programs that perpetuate the desire to breed and own Appaloosa horses. In order to do that, we need to let regional clubs know what we need them to do on the local and regional level to increase those metrics. That means hosting events, educating the public at large, promoting the breed and general outreach to the equine community. And by requiring regional clubs to participate in these efforts, we're identifying those groups that are in business for the same reasons the ApHC exists.

We also know that at times ApHC rules have created obstacles that get in the way of success. That's one reason we've chosen to de-regulate many areas within the show system to allow regional clubs and international affiliates more choices in hosting events. Now clubs will be able to structure shows, classes and events in ways that work in their specific areas because we also know that the same approach doesn't work in every corner of the world.

And because we've de-regulated and have given regional clubs cost-savings tools, we hope that clubs will take advantage of this to expand their reach, search for customers in new unexplored areas and host additional events where Appaloosa owners and members can participate with their horses.

Regional clubs and their membership base are the key to success for the show industry. A committed, focused and enthusiastic group that uses the new opportunities available to them will see increases in memberships and show participation. That's the bottom line.

5. How realistic is it to tell show managers that they can choose any approved classes for a show? Won't they be pressured by exhibitors to just keep offering everything?

It's certainly possible that there will be pressure to just continue offering all classes. But show managers should take the lead in organizing their shows in a way that will make the show successful – both from a financial standpoint and from an “experience” standpoint. And if exhibitors want to have specific class opportunities, it should be incumbent upon those exhibitors to assist show management by volunteering time, seeking sponsorship, becoming active regional club members and promoting the show to like-minded exhibitors to ensure the financial success of those classes. Working together with exhibitors is the fundamental key to having a successful show.

6. Why the need to increase qualifying/national points if shows are smaller and fewer?

The vast majority of horses (almost 75%) are able, under current point requirements, to qualify for the World Show through the national point system. By increasing national points, we're creating incentive to become members of one or more regional clubs to pursue World Show qualification through those clubs. By increasing national points, there is incentive for regional clubs to also offer more shows for members to attend. Successful regional clubs – through increases in membership and participation – lead to more success for ApHC and a greater potential demand for Appaloosa horses.

Points totals required for qualification were reviewed by class and changes were made to the number of points required depending upon the number of horses showing in those classes and the number of horses that were able to qualify through the point system by class versus through the regional club system.

Creating territorial recognition for class winners is also incentive to add events within the territory. We know that some territories are geographically very large. But with new options, regional clubs can respond to the needs of their club membership in offering events that will be supported by club members and can lead to recognition of their members within the territory. This is especially important for members who don't travel the country showing but want to be able to show closer to home.

7. Why was the “phantom” judge dropped as it was assisting Regional Clubs in reducing their costs of putting on a horse show?

The change in the program which now allows a Regional Club to secure a guest judge continues to support our efforts into lowering costs. Regional clubs will now be able to hire a judge that is local and not have to incur the additional costs of airfare or other travel related costs. This change also affords the members to show to judges and not have a “phantom” judge whose points are doubled.

Regional clubs were only allowed to take advantage of the “phantom” judge option one time per year. The guest judge program allows clubs the opportunity to have 3 guest judges per year. So if your club currently offers a show, you could add a guest judge to the roster, you may also create an additional one-judge show to attract more local participants and you could partner with a local affiliate to offer Appaloosa exhibitors the opportunity to attend a specialty event (like a reining or cutting) to earn ApHC points. The opportunities are endless and have the potential to create a lot of activity in the Appaloosa industry.

8. Why were these changes passed and why did the BOD utilize the rule 70D to pass them immediately?

In order to make such changes to the existing program, programming is needed to accommodate the changes. The “roll-out” of such a change would require a timeline that dictates such programming would need to be completed before September 1, 2015 (beginning of 2016 World Show qualification period). And if not deployed by this time, the changes would have to be delayed and not be effective until 2017. The ApHC leadership felt in order to be proactive and get in front of the on-going decrease in membership, transfers, and breeding that this may assist in the efforts of increasing numbers at our shows, with membership, and cause more to breed while not delaying any further actions

The BOD has been talking about changes to the show industry for many years. And it’s important to understand that the BOD started this specific process over a year ago. Last March, they set in motion a process to examine in detail many functions of the ApHC business and work toward changes that will energize the members and create opportunities for breeders.

Time is of the essence not only in terms of solvency, but to be able to educate members prior to rule changes being implemented and to get the “work” done that is associated with all the changes.

9. Why did you change the non-pro ownership rules? Won’t that create more incentive to actually not buy a horse?

We understand that over the years, restrictions on non-pro ownership have been put in place in an effort to “level the playing field”. In reality, those ownership rules have limited the ability of potential members to play at all. In attempting to create a place where new members can try us out – any non-pro member can show any horse at any show. They won’t be eligible for points though if they don’t own the horse. But to keep people from doing this perpetually and then purchasing a horse to then show in novice classes, we’ll still track the points they weren’t awarded because they didn’t own the horse at the time it was shown and those points will count toward novice eligibility.

And by allowing unrelated non-pros to co-own a horse used in regional competition, we've recognized the reality of horse ownership. It's expensive, time-consuming and involves a lot of logistical challenges! So we're hoping to create a place where people can share in expenses and still have the benefits of horse ownership and the challenge and reward of showing. This change also acknowledges societal changes in what constitutes a traditional family and embraces all the ways that families exist by inviting everyone to participate with us.

Unrelated non-pros have to choose which one of them will show the horse at the National and/or World Shows. But we've opened the door to regional competition and to making horse ownership more affordable and accessible.

10. It's a lot to take in at once. Why couldn't it be done incrementally?

There are a lot of challenges we face in the equine industry. A loss of rural lifestyle, competition with technologically based activities and a society where all our time is scheduled and free time is a thing of the past. Rising costs of fuel, food and just about everything else mean fewer dollars for recreational activities. All of these things have contributed to declines in the equine market and within the Appaloosa Horse Club. Many of these declines are alarming and necessitate bold and creative problem-solving.

We've taken the time to do a broad study of our show industry and have developed a program to revitalize it as a whole. Doing one thing at a time doesn't work in this scenario because each provision builds upon the one before it to create expanded opportunities for exhibitors and regional clubs.

We also understand that it will take time to really understand the whole program. That's why we want to spread the word and take this year to educate members, judges and regional clubs so that everyone can start making plans now for 2016.

Appaloosa enthusiasts are a dedicated and passionate group of people. Working together, we can responsibly solve our problems and lead to large-scale growth in our industry. We are asking for members to embrace these opportunities and work with us to create a new future for the Appaloosa breed.