

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

9 CFR Part 11

[Docket No. 96-037-1]

Horse Protection; Public Meetings

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is hosting a series of public meetings to discuss proposed enforcement changes to the current Horse Protection Act. These proposals have been developed and are outlined in the APHIS "Strategic Plan" for Horse Protection. The development of the strategic plan is in line with our commitment to ensure appropriate care for horses regulated under the Horse Protection Act. We are reviewing the current regulations and standards promulgated under the Horse Protection Act, and are seeking recommendations and opinions from affected industries and other concerned members of the public to determine which revisions are necessary and appropriate in order to further reduce the incidence of soring and improve enforcement.

DATES: The first meeting will be held in Murfreesboro, TN, on July 26, 1996. The second meeting will be held in St. Louis, MO, on August 2, 1996. The third meeting will be held in Sacramento, CA, on August 16, 1996. Each meeting will be held from 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meetings will be held at the following locations:

1. Murfreesboro, TN: Middle Tennessee State University, Loop Drive, James Union Building, Tennessee Room, Murfreesboro, TN, (615) 898-2797. If traveling from Nashville, take I-24 to exit 78, then head east on Highway 96 (Old Fort Parkway) to Memorial Boulevard (Highway 231). Turn right on Clark Boulevard, then left onto

Greenland Drive. Park in the Greenland Drive parking lot and take the shuttle bus to the James Union Building.

2. St. Louis, MO: The Adams Mark Hotel, Fourth and Chestnut, St. Louis, MO, (314) 241-7400. If traveling from Lambert International Airport, take I-70 east to the Gateway Arch exit. The Adams Mark Hotel is located at the corner of Fourth and Chestnut.
3. Sacramento, CA: Red Lion Hotel, Red Lion Ballroom, Sierra and Cascade Sections, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, CA, (916) 929-8855. The Red Lion Hotel is at the corner of Point West Way and Arden Way.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. John V. Zisk, Director, Horse Protection, Animal Care Staff, REAC, APHIS, USDA, 4700 River Road Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737-1234, (301) 734-7833. Copies of the "Strategic Plan" are available through this office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The practice known as "soring" is the causing of suffering in show horses to affect their performance in the show ring. Under the Horse Protection Act (HPA) (11 U.S.C. *et seq.*), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is responsible for eliminating the practice of soring, by prohibiting the showing or selling of sored horses.

APHIS believes the regulations and standards established in accordance with the HPA may need to be updated, and APHIS officials have proposed program changes through a "Strategic Plan." In this plan, we have reviewed which areas of enforcement may require a change in regulations and standards based on our experience and knowledge of the program. In developing these proposed changes and conducting this review, APHIS is seeking recommendations and opinions regarding the following: The enforcement of the HPA by USDA-certified horse industry organizations; the certification status of horse industry organizations; uniform systems of rules, regulations, and penalties; training and research. As a forum for such recommendations and opinions, APHIS will hold three meetings to gather input from the public, including equine protection organizations and members of affected industries, such as the walking horse industry and related equine organizations. The meetings will

include four workshops facilitated by trained APHIS facilitators, as follows:

- (1) Self-regulatory enforcement of the HPA by USDA-certified horse industry organizations;
- (2) USDA certifications of horse industry organizations;
- (3) Uniform rules, regulations, and penalty systems; and
- (4) Training and research under the HPA.

In these workshops, group participation will be used to develop recommendations within specific topic areas. After the workshops have concluded, each workshop group will report its recommendations to the entire meeting.

APHIS will consider the recommendations received in developing any revisions to the current HPA regulations and standards. The Agency will initiate rulemaking for any changes deemed appropriate.

Each of the workshops will be conducted twice at each meeting, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Participants who intend to attend a full 1-day meeting are asked to register for only one workshop for the morning and a different workshop for the afternoon. Attendance may be limited for some workshops because of space availability.

Registration will be held the day of each meeting between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. at the entrance of the general assembly meeting rooms. The general sessions will begin at 8:30 a.m. Any person who is unable to attend the meetings, but who wishes to comment on any of the topics covered by the four workshops, may send written comments to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 27th day of June 1996.

Terry L. Medley,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 96-16997 Filed 7-2-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

Food Safety and Inspection Service

9 CFR Part 391

[Docket No. 96-013P]

Fee Increase for Inspection Services

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.