



MMVS Temporarily Suspended

Program temporarily halted pending further review.

March 7, 2016

AQHA



The MMVS has been temporarily suspended.

The misuse of medication in the racing American Quarter Horse industry continues to be a serious animal welfare issue, and one that AQHA, with the support of horsemen and the racing industry alike, is working to address. In 2013, AQHA announced the launch of its Multiple Medication Violation System (MMVS). After much discussion, the AQHA Executive Committee has determined that it is appropriate at this time to conduct a thorough evaluation of the MMVS program, as well as how AQHA can best address medication abuse in the racing industry. During this evaluation, the MMVS will be temporarily suspended.

There will be no MMVS penalties issued for races that occurred prior to March 7, 2016, or during the MMVS evaluation period thereafter. With respect to MMVS penalties (or points accumulated toward suspension), which have already been imposed, AQHA is commuting the suspensions and registration revocations effective immediately. Specifically, the end date for any active suspension or revocation will be March 7. AQHA will begin notifying affected individuals and racing jurisdictions by written correspondence.

During the temporary suspension of the MMVS program, AQHA will continue to collect medication violation data on Quarter Horses for the purpose of tracking violation trends.

Additionally, AQHA will also continue to employ the clenbuterol hair testing program for the 2016 regional AQHA Challenge races.

The goals of the MMVS are to provide a national tracking system of drug violators, impose uniform and serious consequences for repeat violators and violators who use forbidden drugs or historically abuse therapeutic medications, and bolster the environment of reciprocity throughout the racing jurisdictions to further curtail violators from simply moving from one jurisdiction to another.

“As with any new program or rule, AQHA continually evaluates the cost and benefit of the program to ensure that AQHA resources are devoted in the most effective way for achieving the goals of the program,” said AQHA President Dr. Glenn Blodgett.

The creation by AQHA of a comprehensive database of drug violations, across all racing jurisdictions, has required tremendous resources and one that going forward would require AQHA to triple the number of staff assigned to the program. These additional staff members would be needed to properly document violations, enter such violations in the database, and to provide notices of violations to both the racing jurisdictions and the violators themselves.

“The AQHA Executive Committee has determined that the time is right to conduct a thorough evaluation of the MMVS prior to allocating additional resources to the program,” said Dr. Blodgett. “In order to conduct the necessary evaluation, it makes sense to temporarily suspend the MMVS program so that the current resources and staff assigned to processing MMVS files can instead turn their attention and efforts to the evaluation process.”

As for the evaluation, it will be conducted with the assistance of the AQHA Racing Council and AQHA Racing Committee to determine whether the MMVS as constituted is effectively and efficiently capturing state rulings, deterring drug violations and encouraging meaningful movement by the racing jurisdictions to adopt uniform rules and penalties that appropriately discipline violators including through the use of a reciprocity component. Another area of evaluation will likely include a comprehensive study of the effects and use of various banned or dangerous medications in the industry. This topic will be discussed during Racing Committee meetings at the 2016 AQHA Convention later this week in Las Vegas.

“Before beginning this evaluation process, we believe many things have already been learned and we as an Association have become more cognizant of the need for real change if the Quarter Horse racing industry intends to grow and thrive,” said Dr. Blodgett. “It has only been through the implementation of the MMVS that a comprehensive national database exists, which contains the data of both violators and drugs that have been the subject of state rulings.

“The AQHA Executive Committee and all of AQHA wishes to thank the members of the Racing Council and Racing Committee, and others in the racing industry, who have provided countless hours of their time in getting the MMVS started,” continued Dr. Blodgett. “We are confident that following our evaluation of the MMVS and the many complicated issues that have been identified since its inception, we will come up with even more positive steps that can be taken to address the problem of medication abuse in racing and ensure that the American Quarter Horse racing industry thrives in the future.”

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ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

The American Quarter Horse Association, located in Amarillo, Texas, is the world's largest equine breed registry and membership organization.

AQHA members share a passion for the American Quarter Horse and the vast lifestyle created by the world's most popular horse.

Whether you're a seasoned horse show veteran, a fan of the race track, a backyard horse enthusiast or simply someone dreaming of someday owning a horse, AQHA membership ([/membership/](#)) will benefit you in countless ways.

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