

SHOW HIO to require Horse and Exhibitor Cards in 2026

The SHOW HIO will once again require horse and exhibitor cards for the upcoming 2026 show season. This will be the third year of the program, which is administered by the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association. The horse and exhibitor cards have raised \$714,000 the previous two years to pay for legal expenses in the industry. To purchase your horse and exhibitor cards visit www.TWHBEA.com/ShowCard.

How has the money been used?

All proceeds from the horse and exhibitor cards have gone to fund the legal expenses in the industry. These efforts have resulted in a successful challenge to the 2024 rulemaking that was set to go into effect on February 1, 2025 and would have resulted in the loss of the action device and pad for the performance horse among other changes. These funds were also used last year to challenge the USDA's current enforcement of the HPA and resulted in the preliminary injunction received in August that eliminated the scar rule, required USDA to provide due process prior to disqualification and allowed horses to show back in the same event after a disqualification if they pass inspection. Funds have also been used in the federal court case in TN challenging due process, scar rule and post-show inflammation.

Why is additional legal funding necessary?

The industry has achieved some historic, monumental wins over the past two years however the challenges still continue. The preliminary injunction is just that, preliminary. That Texas court case must reach a final ruling making relief permanent the industry got with the preliminary injunction. The TN case will also continue and the issue of post-show inflammation and whether the act of riding a horse could be considered a soring practice is a major issue the industry needs to clarify.

In addition, the USDA will most likely initiate a new rulemaking in 2026 to address many of the issues ruled on in the courts and has to address the issue of whether HIOs will move forward or enforcement turned over completely to a USDA led program. This elimination of the HIO program was in the 2024 rulemaking that became final and the industry challenged it as part of the rulemaking challenge in 2024/2025 but was unsuccessful in court which paved the way for USDA to assume total control of the enforcement of the HPA and eliminate the use of HIOs. That timeline has been extended again and will take effect currently on December 31, 2026 without further rulemaking action by USDA.

Who collects the money from the horse and exhibitor card?

The Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association is responsible for administering the program and asks all HIOs to participate to increase the funding for the legal challenges. SHOW believes strongly that these legal challenges are needed and have been instrumental in allowing the show horse to continue as we know it. TWHBEA does charge a fee of 8% to administer the program, with these monies being used for TWHBEA's advocacy efforts on behalf of the show horse.

How much are the cards?

The horse and exhibitor cards are \$100/ea

Are there exceptions granted?

The SHOW HIO will not require horse cards for Racking and Spotted Saddle Horse classes. Any horse show seeking other exemptions for classes should send their request to the SHOW HIO and it will process those expeditiously.

Why did SHOW lower its fee from \$30 per inspection to \$15 per inspection?

The SHOW HIO did not lower its inspection fee. It has been and will continue to be \$15 per inspection with the second and all subsequent inspections for a flat shod entry at the same show to be \$5 per inspection. For the past several years SHOW has charged an additional \$15 per inspection to pay for lobbying fees. SHOW feels just as strongly today as it has in the past several years that legislative challenges such as the PAST Act will continue to be a threat to the performance show horse and any legislative change would undo the wins the industry has had in the courts and rulemaking proceedings.

SHOW is still encouraging all shows to charge the extra \$15 per inspection to pay lobbying fees. These lobbying efforts are critical and without this funding model the industry will be forced to discontinue lobbying efforts or pay for them some other way. However, fees are an important factor for horse shows and exhibitors at those shows and all shows are not the same so SHOW felt it important to allow that to be a horse show management decision and not a requirement. Even though SHOW has not charged more than \$15 for inspections, the requirement of the additional \$15 has been used against the SHOW as a higher fee and thus the loss of affiliations.

For more information regarding the horse and exhibitor cards, how to purchase, etc. please contact TWHBEA.