



AMERICAN ENDURANCE RIDE CONFERENCE
"To Finish Is To Win"

September 26, 2016

Chrystine J. Tauber, President
United States Equestrian Foundation

Dear Ms. Tauber,

Last weekend, the endurance riding world watched the World Endurance Championship in Slovakia with much excitement and anticipation for a more positive outcome than has been observed in recent FEI endurance events. Sadly, we were all disappointed with a needless equine fatality and numerous eliminations due to over-riding. Further, we were disappointed that the FEI appeared to "spin" a story in their initial press release rather than simply stating a significant injury had occurred and was being fully investigated. In the wake of this event, the American Endurance Ride Conference is very concerned about ongoing abuses in international endurance riding and requests that the following recommendations be forwarded to FEI:

1. In the future, championship courses (indeed all endurance events) should be designed to include technical variations that require high quality horsemanship (as described in the Endurance Rules, article 801).
2. Continued stringent drug testing to include sensitivity tests on the legs of horses to detect nerve blocking agents.
3. Further emphasis on the model of endurance riding which emphasizes the goal of "fit to continue".
4. Crewing on trail should be eliminated or drastically reduced. The constant crewing has transformed the sport from one that rewards good horsemanship to one that rewards large crews and encourages over-riding of the horse. Many 160 km rides in the U.S. are successfully run without any crewing on trail. AERC strongly believes that this is an important horse welfare issue.
5. Significantly increased suspensions for stables, trainers, owners AND riders whose horses are found to be metabolically compromised from over-riding (i.e. suspension from competing in any FEI event for 24 months). Clearly the previously levied penalties were inadequate. For example, all 5 horses from Dubai (MRM and Fazzi 3 stables) were disqualified for metabolic reasons (over-ridden) and one horse suffered a catastrophic injury despite the previously levied short term suspensions and educational measures undertaken by FEI.

The enforcement of high veterinary standards and rules appears to be improved over the past year. However, the events at the 2016 WEC indicate the need for continued and increased emphasis on horse welfare in FEI events. It is our hope that continued insistence upon strict rule enforcement and high veterinary standards will result in a cleaner and safer sport for all endurance riders and their horses worldwide. We also hope that these recommendations will encourage FEI to continue to support clean endurance and horse welfare.

Sincerely,

Michael Campbell, President and Dr. Meg Sleeper, Chair International Committee
American Endurance Ride Conference

cc: Jan Stevens, Kristen Brett