



USHJA Hunter Breeding Task Force Meeting Minutes

April 30th & May 1st, 2018

Members Participating: Betty Oare (Chair), Oliver Brown, Diana Dodge, Nancy Frost, Kimberly Risser, Jay Raach, Jessie Lang, Karan Aurelius (8)

Members Not Present: Drew Taylor, Sue Lightner, Tish Quirk (3)

Also Present: Heidi Kurpaska (USHJA Sport Programs Assistant), Mary Babick (USHJA President), Howard Pike (NV Advisor) (3)

I. Roll Call

Mrs. Oare called the meeting to order and Ms. Kurpaska called roll. With 8 voting members present a quorum was met.

II. Adoption of Agenda

A) *Mr. Brown made a motion to adopt the agenda; Ms. Aurelius seconded the motion and the Task Force voted unanimously to approve the agenda.*

III. Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2018

A) *Ms. Frost made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Aurelius seconded the motion and the task force voted unanimously to approve the minutes.*

IV. Goals and Expectations: Opening

A) To begin the retreat, the committee opened the discussion to general goals and expectations for what is going on in the Hunter Breeding world, and where they would like to see the discipline go. The committee viewed a number of graphs produced by Ms. Kurpaska for Mr. Pike, which depict entries in each of the Hunter Breeding sections from 2013 to 2017. These graphs began the discussion of overall hunter breeding numbers being reduced, and that it is one of the huge problems in the discipline. The committee discussed that there needs to be a “brand strategy” for hunter breeding. There needs to be more promotion for American bred horses, and the committee needs to help create more promotional materials to be used in USEF and USHJA communication plans. The committee also discussed how the gap between hunter breeding and Young Hunter / Green hunter needs to be bridged, and that bridging this gap will help promote hunter

breeding, and continue the discipline further. The discussion of bridging the gap led to a discussion about education. The committee feels that education about hunter breeding is lacking, both for already established handlers, and for potential new handlers. The topic of education is something that the committee feels is most important for them to focus on in the coming years.

V. Sallie B. Wheeler

- A) The 2018 Sallie B. Wheeler Championships are coming up shortly, and the committee is focusing on working to fundraise the amount of \$40,000 needed to run the event. A chart was provided by Ms. Norwood depicting funds raised versus funds still needed. Ms. Risser stated that she has received multiple pledges and that funds should be sent shortly. Ms. Risser will continue to be the point of contact for Sallie B. Wheeler donations, and would like members to contact her with any updates they have on fundraising. Mr. Brown pledged to continue his previous donation from 2017.
- B) The committee continued a discussion from a previous call about having a round table / open forum where the competitors could speak with judges about how they judge a horse and the process they go through when pinning a class. The committee discussed that it would have to be after the competition is complete, but felt it would benefit the competitors and that they would like to get that kind of information from the judges. They will make a decision about this at a later date when details of the event come into place.

VI. Young Hunter Pony Championships

- A) Mr. Brown updated the committee on the status of the Young Hunter Pony Championships. The YHPC Ad Hoc is currently focusing on fundraising for the event. Mr. Brown is encouraged by the support for the event, and that the first donation came from Farnley Farm. The committee will have a call on Monday May 14th to discuss fundraising updates.
- B) Ms. Babick suggested to the committee that the Young Hunter Pony championships be held with the Pong Hunter Derby Championship in 2019, and that there be a West and East Coast championship. The committee felt this was a positive idea, and that it helped promote the pathway from a pony hunter breeding standpoint.
- C) The committee discussed the choice of dates for 2018, and that it conflicts with the WPCSA American National Show. This group of ponies is a large target group of the championships, and the committee would like to be more mindful in the future when selecting these dates. However it was also discussed that this week was the best selection for the 2018 dates in relation to indoors and the time of year.

VII. Junior/Amateur Handler Class

- A) The committee reviewed the proposed class specifications that had previously been drawn up by members. The purpose of creating this class is to promote more juniors and amateurs to compete in hunter breeding. The proposed specifications

state that the class would be judged on showmanship, and that juniors and amateurs could compete with any horse of their choosing. The class would NOT be judged on conformation. The committee discussed that this class runs at many shows in Zone 2 already, but that it would be beneficial to create a uniform set of specifications and judging guidelines.

- B) Ms. Babick spoke to the challenges of creating these specifications, since they are not attached to a current USHJA program. Without going through the RCP process, the committee is limited in what they can do with the specifications. She suggest that the best way to begin the class would be to create the section as an Outreach class.

VIII. Hunter Breeding Educational Clinics

- A) The committee opened this agenda item stressing that this is an extremely important project to their cause, and that furthering hunter breeding education is a priority to them. The committee reviewed the proposal that was previously submitted to the USHJA Executive Committee. The committee then reviewed a new version of the proposal with suggested edits. The committee agreed with the edits, and will continue to work on the proposal and continuing the process to create more education opportunities. The committee also discussed creating an educational video at the Sallie B. Wheeler Championship that would be a cost effective but beneficial way for handlers to get more education opportunities.
- B) The education Ad Hoc that helped create the proposal will continue to work on the project, as well as discussing new educational opportunities for hunter breeding. The committee would like to make a 5 year educational plan that will lay out the long term goals that were discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

IX. Age Verification - Young Hunter

- A) The topic of age verification had come up on previous calls, and has been a concern to many committee members. The concern is that horses are able to compete in hunter breeding without being age verified, but must be age verified when they move onto the young hunter division. The current documents that are accepted for age verification are of concern to many members because they are costly and tedious to obtain. On previous calls committee members had discussed ideas of allowing a birth certificate done by a veterinarian, as well as other ideas.
- B) Ms. Babick spoke to the committee about the creation of the Young Hunter division, and the current age verification requirements. To create a birth certificate would put the responsibility on USEF. This is something they will not do, and is the reason for the current requirements. It is not something they are willing to do, and Ms. Babick has negotiated at length with USEF.

X. Hunter Breeding Licensed Officials Guest Cards

- A) The committee continued a discussion from the last meeting about current rules for Hunter Breeding Licensed Officials guest cards. During the HB LO clinic at Redfield Farm, multiple judges brought up the current allowance for hunter

breeding guest cards. They felt that it did not encouraged judges to obtain their cards when they are able to get new guest cards every year.

- B) The committee discussed reducing the number of guest cards to a set lifetime amount. This would set a limit but would also give a sufficient amount of time for a judge to do their clinics and judging requirements before they get a card. The committee also discussed allowing “R” judges who have held a hunter breeding card two of the last five years to be grandfathered into their card. Ms. Kurpaska will work with the Licensed Officials department and get back to the committee on the next call with more information about moving forward with this change.

XI. Scoring

- A) Ms. Risser spoke to the committee about the benefits of adding scoring to hunter breeding. She feels that it would help give handlers transparency, and give them feedback after a class. This would help handlers understand a judge’s choice, and help the handlers feel as though they are leaving with an understanding of the pinning of a class. The committee also discussed the cons of this, and that a system would have to be created so that there was a set point system for the scoring. Ms. Oare felt from a judge’s standpoint, this would be difficult to do in such a short time.

XII. Pre-Open Forum Meeting

- A) The committee reviewed and discussed all emails submitted by members who could not attend the meeting in person. Many of the comments focused on the rule change to HU 188.4, and also double divisions. After reviewing the comments about HU 188.4, the committee still felt that the compromise to allow one handler at regional I and II, which was reached at the USHJA Annual meeting was the best choice for all competitors. In regards to double divisions, the committee would like to continue to do what is best for hunter breeding members as a whole. If this changes in the future, they will revisit the topic.

XIII. Open Forum

- A) The discussion at the open forum primarily focused on promotion of hunter breeding, and what can be done to promote the discipline. Attending members feel that there needs to be more exposure for hunter breeding to get members interested, and help them understand the importance of hunter breeding to creating their future performance horses. There needs to be more clinics and educational opportunities for handlers, and also education to bring in young people into hunter breeding. Attending members felt it was important to put young people who are already part of the sport into clinics with clinicians, so that other young people who may be interested don’t feel intimidated by already established adult handlers. Overall members would like to see hunter breeding become more welcoming and friendly to an interested young person. There should be awareness for hunter breeding, and non-threatening opportunities for further education.

XIV. Goals and Expectations: Closing

- A) After discussion about the purpose of hunter breeding is to create future performance horses and not halter horses, the committee would like to add the word “athleticism” to the hunter breeding portion of the USEF rulebook. Adding this language will stress and clarify that hunter breeding judges should be looking for athleticism and abilities present in a performance horse.
- B) *Mr. Brown made a motion to approve this rule change proposal; Ms. Aurelius seconded and the motion was approved unanimously by the committee.*
- C) The committee further discussed hunter breeding guest cards and felt the idea of a lifetime limit and allowing previous judges to be grandfathered in would be a good start. They would also like to see data of how many judges currently hold a hunter breeding card in relation to how many judges have held one in the past, but do not currently.
- D) The education Ad Hoc will create a five year education plan for hunter breeding, and continue to work on creating the clinic series starting in 2019. A short term goal would be to create a video on how to present a horse. The committee also feels that revamping and working on judge’s education is an important part of education as a whole. An important part of education is to heighten visibility to other parts of the sport. The committee would like to focus more on highlighting graduates of the hunter breeding discipline, and promote the pathway from hunter breeding competitor to top performance horse.
- E) After a discussion with Ms. Babick about the Young Hunter and Green Hunter divisions, the committee decided to create a rule change proposal to return to the old green status ruling. Ms. Babick will draft the language for the proposal.
- F) *Mr. Brown made a motion to create a rule change proposal to return to the old green status ruling; Ms. Frost seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*

XV. Old Business

- A) No old business was discussed.

XVI. New Business

- A) No old business was discussed.

XVII. Adjourn

- A) With no further business, meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Kurpaska
USHJA Sport Programs Assistant