

2016 APHA Convention Report

Respectfully submitted by: Linda Vance

Once again, this year's APHA Convention was four days of action packed meetings for conducting Association business, educational opportunities, tributes to some of the people and horses who have made our Association so great, as well as a little time left over for networking with other Paint Horse Enthusiasts from throughout the USA and some foreign countries! This year's Convention was one of the largest ever for APHA; a big "thank-you" to the Virginia Paint Horse Club and members who did an outstanding job of showing off their "southern hospitality" by hosting this event.

We started off the Convention with a Chair and Vice Chair meeting with the Executive Committee to learn about additional agenda items for standing committee meetings to be held; as well we learned of a newly developed web-based program of self-educational videos to be released soon. Info also provided was that APHA registrations are still down 6% but on the flip side, AQHA is down 12%. Discussed innovating rather than regulating as this runs people off and stymies growth. We need to make it easier to play or do business with APHA. Membership has stabilized at the 50,000 mark, we need to focus on getting more people to participate.

This was followed by a General Membership meeting where David Land, representing the Virginia Club, welcomed us to Virginia and one of the largest attendances ever. Following, we heard from Jay Hickey of the American Horse Council who let us know that some good tax changes have been passed for horse operations (restored Sec 179 for expense deductions up to \$500,000 permanent retro to 2015, racehorses can be expensed over 3 years), HB2 has changed regarding workers, horse slaughter legislation is not going anywhere soon, tightening up on the showing of certain breeds in any type of artificial movement altering device, and the Equine Disease Communication Center is up and running providing info on diseases being transmitted. Check out the Time to Ride Program which starts 6/1/2016 - it is a unique program through the Horse Council to bring newcomers into the horse industry.

It was further reported that APHA finished 2015 in the black financially; and we have also made good strides in our governance, leadership and membership engagement efforts. We are now leading the way (and AQHA is following us!) in several areas such as governance policies regarding the selection of our prospective Executive Committee members, etc. Reasons APHA is doing better than other breed associations: Breeder's Trust per point payout, increased market share by 1/2 % while AQHA lost 1/2 % market share for the first time since 2002, registrations are down by 6% for APHA but down 12% for AQHA in same time frame, World Show entries are up for APHA by 13% horses participating are up by 6%.

APHA is still ranked among the highest associations in terms of financial stability and with having the lowest fees to make the burden on our members as little as possible. In the recent past we have had to use investment income to help with the operations cost; and now that we no longer need to utilize those funds for operations, it frees up funds to help with scholarships and added funds for shows. The increase in the World Show entries was largely due to cutting and roping entries. The Youth World Show games will be held in Germany for 2016 with 14 countries being represented.

Horse IQ is a newly developed web-based educational video experience where you can see classes and find out what the judges are looking for and how certain penalties come about.

This will be launching very soon and should prove to be a great tool for our members use. As well, they are working on an on-line Professional Directory for services, etc. APHA is also at this time looking at possibly relocating our offices, general store and heritage museum down to the Stockyards area of Fort Worth. More info on this exciting opportunity as it develops. Dodge Ram is a new corporate partner for APHA.

A genetics and DNA presentation by Dr. Samantha Brooks, University of Florida, was very interesting and informative. The information that has been discovered through the DNA testing can improve the breed, but only if we use it. We learned that they are continually finding spotting patterns which may produce white.

The Standing Committee meetings proved to be lively at times due to the large amount of rule change proposals up for discussion. A few rules that were not voted out of their respective Committee meetings were brought to the floor for a vote via the petition process which always adds an element of suspense. For a full listing of the rule change proposals that did pass and will go into effect in 2017, please see the APHA website.

Another very energetic, interactive presentation by Dr. Rick Rigsby on "Effective Communication" gave us some great insight on how to become better communicators and how it will help us build a better association. Unfortunately, due to my duties as Chairperson for the Rules Committee this year, I was unable to attend most of the other educational presentations on the agenda as I was attending to business. I did hear good things about all of the other topics presented on making your show better, the Regional Club presentation and the Game Plan. Next year's Convention will be back in Texas again, so make your plans to attend early to take advantage of educational opportunities that will again be presented.

APHA, as previously stated, ended 2015 in the "black" financially posting a net profit of \$50,526, and we are financially very strong. The Youth World Show lost more than it did in 2014; however the Fall World Show made \$37,000. As we move into 2016, the standing committees are already working hard on new issues as well as continuing to carry through with their work on some of the same issues we always deal with such as "What is a Paint Horse", importance of genetics and DNA, social media usage - how it can either help or hurt us as an Association, possible addition of more Intermediate levels at the World Show, ways to engage and connect with more Paint Horse enthusiasts and how to help our Youth become and stay involved.

Once again, I would like to thank our Paint Horse Family here in Washington State and the Northwest for the opportunity to represent you at the National level. I assure you that our Northwest Directors represent you well and do us proud at these functions; furthermore, they are well respected by the other National Directors, and are known for being knowledgeable about the issues at hand. It is refreshing and encouraging to have such a great group of Directors to be a part of and to work with. As always, if you have any further questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me.