

MODEL LETTER TO THE EDITOR ON SORING

(Remember to edit this letter and make it your own. Letters are more likely to be printed if they are not identical to others.)

[Date]

To the Editor:

I am writing to bring your attention to a cruel practice called "soring" that persists in the gaited horse industry, despite being outlawed by Congress over 40 years ago.

Today, unscrupulous trainers still apply caustic chemicals, chains, straps, and other painful devices to the front legs of gaited horses to produce an artificial high-stepping gait for the show ring. This trademark gait, called "The Big Lick," is rewarded with championship ribbons and financial gain for owners and trainers alike. For horses, the "Big Lick" spells nothing but torture and abuse.

In 1970 Congress enacted The Horse Protection Act to make it illegal to show, sell, transport, or exhibit a horse that had been sored. But despite government intervention, the practice remains pervasive today. Why? Because practitioners still have too much to gain by soring and too little to lose when caught. According to the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), a leading veterinary organization, "Soring is one of the most significant welfare issues facing the equine industry today."

A recent undercover investigation by The Humane Society of the United States captured renowned Tennessee walking horse trainer Jackie McConnell and his associates on videotape soring horses and beating them with sticks and cattle prods. The investigation resulted in a 52-count indictment against McConnell--including 18 felony counts.

It is time to strengthen the Horse Protection Act and end this cruel practice. A federal bill (H.R. 1518 has just been introduced by Representatives Ed Whitfield (R-KY) and Steve Cohen (D-TN) that would amend the Horse Protection Act to end the failed system of industry self-policing, ban the use of certain devices associated with soring, strengthen penalties, and hold accountable all those involved in this cruel practice.

Please contact your representatives in Congress and ask them to co-sponsor this vital legislation so horses won't have to endure abuse to enrich their owners and trainers.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Local group]