

Dated Friday, March 1st, 2024

To the Members of the Kentucky State Fair Board:

I hope this letter finds you well.

The undersigned represent thousands of classes ridden and driven at the World's Championship Horse Show. We have taken American Saddlebreds, Hackney Ponies, and Roadsters down the chute and felt the excitement as we hit the ring. We are amateurs, trainers, instructors, owners, and breeders. We are the present and future of this industry and this horse show. We value the traditions and opportunities provided by the Kentucky State Fair and the World's Championship Horse Show.

We are also extremely concerned and disappointed. Recent decisions regarding the World's Championship Horse Show have us worried...

The decision to disassociate the World's Championship Horse Show from the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) has been met with widespread disappointment and confusion within the American Saddlebred community. This decision not only affects the integrity and prestige of the event, our industry, and our breed, but also undermines the longstanding partnership between the Kentucky State Fair and the broader equestrian community.

As ambassadors of the American Saddlebred and those leading this industry into the future, we believe it is essential for our voices to be heard and considered in matters that impact our beloved sport and its pinnacle event – we urge you to reconsider the decision to disassociate the World's Championship Horse Show from the USEF.

Though not without fault and continued room for improvement, the partnership between the Kentucky State Fair, the World's Championship Horse Show and the USEF has been instrumental in promoting and maintaining the excellence, sportsmanship, and fair competition within the American Saddlebred community. By maintaining this partnership, we feel that the World's Championship Horse Show can continue to uphold its reputation as one of the premier events in not only the American Saddlebred, but also the larger equestrian world while also fostering a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie among participants.

In addition, and even more concerning than the actual decision, is the manner in which it was made. We understand there was no consultation with the breed associations or the UPHA. There was no consideration given to the possible broader ramifications in the industry. If you had asked, you would have heard.

We understand the complexities involved in such decisions and appreciate the dedication of the Kentucky State Fair Board to the success of the event. However, we believe that the perspectives of the exhibitors, owners, breeders, and professionals must be taken into account, as we are the stewards of our sport and its traditions.

Please take this letter as an invitation to involve more representatives from our various breeds—American Saddlebreds, Hackney Ponies, and Roasters—in decisions about our pinnacle event. While we respect tradition, we're also looking ahead to the future.

Thank you for considering our concerns and for your commitment to the Kentucky State Fair and the World's Championship Horse Show. We hope that our voices will be heard and that together we can work towards a resolution that honors the legacy of our sport and ensures its continued vitality for generations to come.