

June 19, 2015

Ms. Sonja Keating
USEF
4047 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington KY 40511

Dear Ms. Keating;

The National Hunter & Jumper Association Board of Directors recently met and had a lengthy discussion regarding the USEF Hearing process.

The Board of Directors unanimously agreed that more than 50% of those serving on the USEF Hearing Committee should represent the breed/discipline being discussed. In other words, if the hearing is in regards to a hunter charge, more than half of the hearing committee should be comprised of persons knowledgeable about the hunter discipline.

With the widely diverse rules of the separate breeds and disciplines, it is extremely unfair to the committee members and the charged party, and certainly not in the best interest of a fair and equitable result if a hearing committee is not familiar with that breed or discipline. There are many distinct requirements of competition which may be appropriate within one breed or discipline which may not be suitable within another and the members would, therefore, be unfamiliar with what is deemed acceptable.

The hearing process is extremely important and the rulings from the hearing committee can have serious consequences to the charged individual(s). It is therefore imperative that the panel is well versed in the details of what is acceptable or not acceptable within that given breed or discipline. Rules regarding but not limited to, equipment, ring procedure, conformation, gait requirements, training, and exhibiting protocols can be extremely divergent. For example; Trotting in or out of the in-gate is cause for elimination in hunters and hunt seat equitation, but is acceptable in other disciplines. Black stirrups are also cause for elimination in the Hunt Seat Equitation division. Using a dressage whip at a dressage show ring is acceptable but is grounds for elimination in an event dressage ring. These are just a few of numerous differences in breed and discipline criteria.

In today's specialized world of horse showing, there are not many individuals who are accustomed to disciplines other than their own and may find the rules of another discipline extremely confusing. It is important that the USEF Hearing Committee members not be overly burdened by their possible unfamiliarity with those differences.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Sherry Robertson
President, The National Hunter & Jumper Association