

AERC-I requests that the AERC board draft a letter to USEF regarding concerns that have arisen due to ongoing horse welfare infractions in Group VII. We feel the important aspects of the letter should include:

1. We applaud the proactive stance the FEI took last year and recognize that the recent events causing this furor are from a national endurance event, not an FEI sanctioned event. However, we feel strongly that the behavior that it demonstrates represents ongoing and deeply seated lack of concern for the horse in this sport. While the previous sanctions may have led to an improvement of horse welfare in FEI events taking place in Group VII, this ongoing behavior allows the general public to believe:

- a. the FEI condones it
- b. all endurance competitors behave similarly

Both of these conclusions will lead to disastrous results for endurance and horse sport in general.

2. Clearly there are many competitors in Group VII that are advocates for horse welfare, in particular the progress made by Sheik Sultan Al Nahyan is to be applauded. Therefore a appropriate response to this situation will require thoughtful scrutiny rather than a knee-jerk reaction.

3. We feel that an appropriate response from the FEI will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- a. timeliness; the longer there is no response the more people will assume FEI and USEF do not care about horse welfare issues
- b. Moving or cancelling the 2016 WEC
- c. 12 month suspension for rider, trainer and owner of any horses sustaining a catastrophic injury at an event
- d. 6 month suspension for rider, trainer and owner of any horse being hazed on course.
- e. 30 day deadline for filing of protests
- f. Harassment of officials, veterinarians, videographers or observers will result in a 6 month suspension from the sport

AERC-I also feels strongly AERC needs to show its commitment to horse welfare at this time and begin a similar rule structure. For example,

- a. If extenuating circumstances are not found after an investigation, the rider, trainer, and owner of a horse dying at an AERC ride will be suspended from AERC competition for 12 months.
- b. 6 month suspension for rider, trainer and/or owner of any horse being hazed on course.