

## March 6, 2025, AERC Board Convention Meeting Minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. PST.

Board members present were Bruce Burton, Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy, Connie Caudill, Marci Cunningham, Maureen Fehrs DVM, Bridget Helms, Dawn Hilliard, Nick Kohut DVM, Naomi Preston, Regina Rose, Jan Stevens, John Parke, Susan Kasemeyer, Vance Stine, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, Maribel Paulson, Tami Rougeau, Olin Balch DVM, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Bob Marshall DVM, Melissa Ribley DVM, Diane Connolly and Laurie Underwood. Also present were Director at Large elect Lara Worden, Co-Chair of the Veterinary Committee Jeanette Mero DVM and Executive Director Kathleen Henkel.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to accept the revised agenda, which Vance Stine seconded. Motion passed.

Naomi Preston moved to approve February 10, 2025, Board meeting minutes, which Khristin Seymore Norsworthy seconded. Motion passed with one abstention.

Jan Stevens made a motion which was seconded by Vance Stine to excuse Eric Rueter (travel issues), Susan Garlinghouse DVM (travel issues) and Mike Maul (travel issues) from the meeting, and to excuse Susan Kasemeyer (computer issues) and John Parke (prior work commitment) from the February 10, 2025, Board meeting. Motion passed.

Kathleen Henkel presented the statistical report:

Membership as of 02/19/2024	2,866
Membership as of 02/24/2025	2,678
Sanction fees as of 02/21/2024	\$12,845
Sanction fees as of 02/21/2025	\$14,705
Rider fees as of 02/21/2024	\$3,685
Rider fees as of 02/21/2025	\$5,781
New members as of 02/19/2024	167
New members as of 02/24/2025	149
Ride Starts to date - 2024 Season	1,022
Ride Starts to date - 2025 Season	890

Kathleen Henkel updated the Board on our attorney's request for more photos of items with the AERC logo for the trademark process.

Nick Kohut DVM read a report from Trails Committee co-chair Monica Chapman-Pickett concerning the "Hike the Hill" meeting in Washington DC. The report advised ride managers who hold rides on federal property to quickly obtain permits due to the uncertainty of the availability of government personnel, and to communicate with their land managers. The AERC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) expires next year. Monica Chapman-Pickett will work on the renewal.

### Motion from the Veterinary Committee to Update the AERC Drug Testing Policy

Melissa Ribley DVM and Jay Mero DVM, Veterinary Committee co-chairs presented the following motion.

#### Administration:

The testing for Prohibited Substances shall be supervised by a Drug Testing Subcommittee of the Veterinary Committee with consultation as necessary from the Legal Committee. The Drug Testing Subcommittee shall be composed of the Chair of the Drug Testing Subcommittee, along with two to three other members of the Veterinary Committee and the Chair of the Veterinary Committee. Testing services will be supervised by the ~~AERC Drug Testing Subcommittee~~ **the chair of the Drug Testing Subcommittee** and testers will be selected from the AERC pool of veterinarians with outside, private veterinarians hired as needed. The sample analysis of the collected samples will be performed by the Maddy Laboratory of the University of California at Davis. ~~The state of California and Canada are exempted from this testing, as the CA Equine Medications and Monitoring Program is responsible for all drug testing of equestrian events in the state of California and Equine Canada is responsible for drug testing in Canada.~~ The AERC Drug Testing Program will be funded by a rider drug testing fee of \$6 for each starting rider, **except for those rides in California and Canada where the California Equine Medication Monitoring Program and Equine Canada respectively provide testing services for a fee.** **AERC will provide testing in California and Canada as needed to represent those regions.**

#### Selection of Rides for Testing

~~The Drug Testing Subcommittee, with consultation with the AERC Executive Director when needed,~~ **Drug Testing Subcommittee Chair** shall select for each ride season ~~two rides per region, except for the Pacific Southwest Region, which is largely composed of California. At least one additional ride from any region will be tested, and both days of~~ **a minimum of one ride per region, with additional rides in those regions with proportionately higher numbers of starting riders.** ~~the National Championships for Prohibited Substances.~~ **The AERC 50 and 100 mile National Championship Rides will be tested. The number of rides and samples tested per ride may change based on budget restrictions.** The selection of rides to be tested will be kept confidential.

#### Selection of Equines for Testing

In each ride tested by AERC Drug Testers, the testers and technicians shall collect blood samples from twelve equines, **when there are a minimum of twelve equines available for testing at the ride.** Depending on the ride selected, testers may be directed to collect samples from multiple distances, with a minimum of twelve total samples collected for the ride day. Testing is to be performed in a non-directed manner representative of all equines competing. Testers ideally are to test from first place to last place, and in general will be directed to select equines for testing based on the number of ride entries, versus how many samples are to be collected per distance. Testers may select an equine that has not completed the ride and was eliminated from competition. Testers will be directed to collect their samples as soon as an equine has received its completion exam and before it leaves the veterinary area. Equines standing for Best Condition will be tested at the conclusion of their completion exam, even if it is before their Best Condition presentation.

#### Testing in California and Canada

AERC will ~~rely upon and~~ adopt the testing procedures of the Equine Medication Monitoring Program (EMMP) in AERC sanctioned endurance rides ~~taking place in California~~ **that are being tested by the EMMP.** The AERC will rely upon and adopt the testing procedures of Equine Canada in AERC sanctioned endurance rides that are sanctioned by Equine Canada. The AERC rider drug testing fees will be waived for ~~those~~ **those** rides held in California and those rides sanctioned by Equine Canada. The AERC will

charge a rider drug testing fee for rides held in Canada that are not sanctioned by Equine Canada, and those rides will be considered for drug testing by the AERC.

### Protest Procedure

The procedures for reviewing positive tests by the independent laboratory and filing protests are described in Rule 13 and the procedures for handling protests are described in Rule 14. Additionally, when the AERC Executive Director transmits any laboratory report to the Veterinary Committee and the Legal Committee for their initial review under Rule 13, the Executive Director shall not include the name of the horse tested or its rider. Also, once a protest has been filed, the ~~Drug Testing Subcommittee~~ **Protest and Grievance Committee** shall mail a letter to the protested party following the filing of a protest for violation of Rule 13 that shall give notice to the protested party of the right to a confirmatory analysis of the “B” sample at that party’s cost.

The current AERC Drug Testing Policy that is published on the AERC website was developed over 15 years ago and does not represent the testing procedures that are being followed today. Periodic review and updates are necessary as the logistics of AERC rides change over time.

The policy explains to members how the Drug Testing Program is to function, and it should accurately reflect today’s procedures. It will make for a smoother transition to the next Drug Testing Committee Chair to have an updated and accurate Policy available.

Discussion was held on the motion. The Board requested Jay Mero DVM to inquire about the possibility of AERC doing its own testing and collecting the fees in California. She has asked in the past but will inquire again.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

### **Motion from the Veterinary Committee Regarding the Addition of levamisole to AERC Rule 13 Appendix A Prohibited Substances. Clarification of Appendix C, Allowed Substances item 10, anthelmintics (dewormers)**

Melissa Ribley DVM, Veterinary Committee co-chair, presented the following motion.

Motion: Addition of levamisole to AERC Rule 13 Appendix A Prohibited Substances. Clarification of Appendix C, Allowed Substances item 10, anthelmintics (dewormers)

Update Rule 13 Appendix A Prohibited Substances to include levamisole.

Update Appendix C, Allowed Substances item 10) Anthelmintics (dewormers) *with the exception of levamisole.*

Levamisole is commercially available as a dewormer for cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. It also has conventional off-label uses in horses as an immunostimulant and as a medication for treatment of Equine Protozoal Myelitis (EPM). Levamisole metabolizes in the horse to aminorex and possibly also pemoline, both of which are potent methamphetamine-like stimulants which can take days to weeks to be eliminated from the body. The addition of levamisole to the prohibited substance list is consistent with the purpose of rule 13 which is to ensure equines compete under their natural abilities without the influence of any medication.

The addition of levamisole will provide guidance to AERC members who are administering this substance to their competing equines and add clarification to those who view levamisole as an anthelmintic (dewormer).

To be implemented immediately.

Motion from the Veterinary Committee passed unanimously.

**Motion from the Veterinary Committee Regarding to Add Rule 13.5.5**

Melissa Ribley DVM, Veterinary Committee co-chair, presented the following motion.

*Motion: Add rule 13.5.5: Ride managers that are in receipt of information regarding laboratory results from testing agencies outside of AERC are to treat this as confidential information and are to forward such information directly to the AERC office.*

The California Department of Food and Agriculture, through their Equine Medication Monitoring Program (EMMP) is responsible for drug testing of equine competitions in California including AERC sanctioned rides. In addition to a policy requirement of reporting laboratory detection of substances to the AERC, they additionally have a regulatory requirement to report this same information to the ride manager. AERC has an effective enforcement procedure outlined in Rule 13.5.4 that maintains the anonymity of the person responsible as well as the confidentiality of all communications related to a possible Rule 13 violation. This confidentiality and anonymity could be negatively impacted by not requiring the ride manager to ensure all means necessary are taken to maintain the confidentiality of any proceedings related to Rule 13.

The enforcement procedures can continue to be fairly and equitably implemented by requiring ride management to treat information relating to drug testing results as confidential information and relaying the information solely and directly to the AERC Executive Director.

To be implemented with the 2026 ride season.

Motion from Committee passed unanimously.

**Strategic Plan update presented by Tami Rougeau.**

The Strategic Plan is five years old, and it needs to be updated. Many of the original goals which were set have been achieved, especially in Finance and Governance. We will continue to work on membership goals and ways to achieve them, such as partnering with other organizations, mentoring, Green Beans and bringing in intro riders. Further discussions will be held at the hot topic meeting during the convention with our members.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Jan Stevens at 8:07 p.m. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill, Secretary