

April 13, 2026, AERC Board Meeting Minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m. EST.

Board members present were Bruce Burton, Connie Caudill, Diane Connolly, Marci Cunningham, Bridget Helms, Dawn Hilliard, Bridget Helms, Susan Kasemeyer, Nick Kohut DVM, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Bob Marshall DVM, Mike Maul, Maribel Paulson, Naomi Preston, Melissa Ribley DVM, Regina Rose, Tami Rougeau, Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy, Jan Stevens, Vance Stine, Laurie Underwood, Ashley Wingert, Lara Worden and Executive Director Giulia Orth. Robert Ribley, Jay Mero DVM, Dee McDonald, Diane Rowley, Sarah Hunt and Trisha Dowling DVM also joined the call.

Connie Caudill moved to accept the agenda with Tami Rougeau seconding the motion. The motion was approved.

Bruce Burton moved to approve the February 9, 2026, and February 28, 2026, meeting minutes, which was seconded by Laurie Underwood. The motion was approved.

Connie Caudill made a motion to excuse Regina Rose (technical difficulties) and Tami Rougeau (family emergency) from the February 28, 2026, meeting, and John Parke (ride manager duties) and Maureen Fehrs DVM (travel conflict) from the April 13, 2026, meeting. Laurie Underwood seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Olin Balch DVM was absent from the April 13, 2026, meeting.

Giulia Orth presented the statistical report:

	2025	2026	Change	% Change
Total Members through April 2	3105	2881	-224	-7.2%
New Members through April 2	241	236	-5	-2.1%
Rider Fees through April 2	\$9,050	\$7,376	-\$1,674	-18.5%
Sanction Fees through April 2	\$15,828	\$16,220	+\$392	+2.5%

Starting Riders recorded from start of the ride season through April 2	1,983	1,538	-445	-22.4%
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* Pending results from 4 rides on 4/2/2026

Robert Ribley, Chair of the Election Committee, administered the oath of office to Regina Rose and Tami Rougeau as regional directors. Both were absent from the meeting held on February 28, 2026.

Nick Kohut, DVM nominated Regina Rose to chair the Sanctioning Committee and Jan Stevens to join the Executive Committee as the non-officer member. A motion was made by Tami Rougeau and seconded by Mollie Krumlaw-Smith to approve the nominations. The motion was unanimously approved.

Committee reports were reviewed from International Committee, National Championship Committee, Trails / Land Management Committee, Junior and Young Rider Committee and the Marketing Committee.

The Trail Committee and the Young Rider/Junior Committee shared some positive updates. Monica Chapman-Pickett reported that she received the draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the BLM, and Maribel Paulson from the Young Riders and Junior Committee reported that 40 new young members have joined AERC this year.

The Board reviewed the Ethics Committee charter and suggested revisions. Concerns included the lack of provisions to allow for a respondent defense and secret committee membership. Bruce Burton moved, seconded by Tami Rougeau, to return the charter to the Committee for revision. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to add levamisole metabolites: aminorex, compound 11, rexamino, and pemoline to AERC Rule 13 Appendix A Prohibited Substances. Melissa Ribley DVM presented the motion on behalf of the Veterinary Committee.

Add levamisole metabolites: aminorex, compound 11, rexamino, and pemoline to AERC Rule 13 Appendix A Prohibited Substances.

Background, analysis and benefit

Levamisole is a food animal dewormer that is sometimes administered as an immune modulator to horses to treat equine protozoal myelitis. Levamisole is not approved by the FDA for use in the horse and it is an AERC prohibited substance with no published detection time, and therefore no suggested withdrawal time, available. When administered to horses, levamisole can be metabolized into several compounds, including aminorex

(5-phenyl-4,5-dihydro-1,3-oxazol-2-amine), compound II (4-phenyl-2-imidazolidione), and rexamino (a structural isomer of aminorex). Aminorex has an amphetamine-like CNS stimulant and is classed as a Drug Enforcement Agency Schedule I drug. Aminorex and pemoline are Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority–banned substances. Pemoline is a metabolite of aminorex that also has CNS stimulatory effects. Therefore, most equine sport organizations ban the use of levamisole in competition horses. Levamisole and its CNS stimulatory metabolites can be detected for days to weeks following multiple doses so no withdrawal time guidance can be given (Adam et al 2024). Levamisole is already listed on the AERC Prohibited Substance list. The detection of the metabolites of levamisole in blood or urine samples indicate the administration of levamisole. The addition of these levamisole metabolites to the prohibited substance list will simplify and streamline the adjudication process of the AERC Drug Rule 13.

Will be implemented immediately.

Motion from the Veterinary Committee passed unanimously.

Motion to add selective androgenic receptor modulators (SARM), selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERM) and P450 aromatase inhibitors to Rule 13, Appendix B- Categories of Prohibited Substances. Melissa Ribley DVM presented the motion on behalf of the Veterinary Committee.

Motion from the Veterinary Committee to Update Rule 13:

1. Add selective androgenic receptor modulators (SARM), selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERM)) and P450 aromatase inhibitors to Rule 13, Appendix B Categories of Prohibited Substances.
2. Add ostarine to Appendix A Prohibited Substances.

Background, analysis and benefit:

Selective androgen receptor modulators (SARM), selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERM) and P450 aromatase inhibitors are classes of drugs that have demonstrated androgenic and anabolic effects such as enhancing muscle mass and physical performance in the horse. (1) They are classified as a Class 1 drugs due to their high potential for abuse and lack of legitimate therapeutic use in equine medicine. They are banned by the RMTC (Racing Medication and Testing Consortium). Ostarine is a drug classified as an SARM.

To be implemented immediately.

Motion from the Veterinary Committee passed unanimously.

Motion to update Rule 13 to add ophthalmic cyclosporine to Appendix C Allowed Substances. Melissa Ribley DVM presented the motion on behalf of the Veterinary Committee.

Update Rule 13: Add ophthalmic cyclosporine to Appendix C Allowed Substances.

Background, analysis and benefit:

Cyclosporine is an immunomodulating drug clinically used in the horse as an ophthalmic agent to treat eye diseases such as equine recurrent uveitis (also known as moonblindness) and autoimmune keratitis. There is very little to no systemic absorption of cyclosporine when applied topically to the eye or as an implant in the eye. Cyclosporine has a localized effect to the eye when applied to or in the eye.

Ophthalmic cyclosporine is allowed by Equine Canada and FEI and is not currently on the AERC prohibited substance list.

Equine recurrent uveitis is the most common cause of blindness in horses. It affects 2 – 25% of horses (1). ERU is thought to be caused by an autoimmune disease influenced by both genetic and environmental factors. While there is no known cure for ERU, controlling and preventing ERU commonly involves the use of ophthalmic cyclosporine either topically in the eye or by way of cyclosporine implants in the eye.

By allowing the use of ophthalmic cyclosporine during competition, we would be allowing a subset of endurance horses with either recurrent uveitis or keratitis that are otherwise healthy to continue competing safely in the sport of endurance. The alternative for horses with these conditions, if ophthalmic cyclosporine is prohibited, would be to remove the eye or end the endurance career for those horses. Allowing the use of ophthalmic cyclosporine would allow a subset of endurance horses with recurrent uveitis or keratitis to continue competing at AERC events.

To be implemented immediately.

After thorough discussion, the motion from the Veterinary Committee passed with two opposing.

Motion from the Protest and Grievance Committee

The P&G Committee requests that the Board consider imposing additional sanctions against Sarah Hunt for violating the terms of a P&G sanction.

Background, analysis and benefit:

A drug violation protest arising out of a positive drug result was filed against Sarah Hunt. The test followed the November 8, 2025 Fall Broxton Bridge ride and detected the presence of the prohibited substance, Levamisole, and its metabolites in Sarah Hunt's horse. The P&G handed down a decision on February 12, 2026 which forfeited Ms. Hunt's placing and completion in that ride and also suspended Ms. Hunt for a period of 6 months. An appeal was not timely filed so, as was stated

in the decision, the sanction took effect on the date of the P&G decision, February 12, 2026. Ms. Hunt continued to ride in competition after the protest was filed, including the FITS ride on March 6, 2026, which took place *after* the P&G sanction suspending her took effect, in violation of the P&G sanction.

The Board has the authority to impose an additional sanction in such circumstances under Rules 15.1.b, 15.3 and 15.4.

It is important to the integrity of AERC that it is clear that Rule violations are always taken seriously and that AERC is willing to take the steps necessary to enforce those rules, including sanctions imposed pursuant to a P&G ruling. In this case, it is likely that the administration of the potentially dangerous drug, Levamisole, gave a competitive edge to Ms. Hunt. The membership needs to be assured that AERC is committed to ensuring that there is a level playing field in competitions and that it takes the welfare of the horse seriously. The membership also needs to be aware that the Board will stand behind a valid P&G ruling and will take the necessary steps to ensure that such a ruling will be enforced by the Board.

Sarah Hunt's letter to the BOD – Sarah Hunt's appeal to the P&G final decision was rejected due to not having been received within the filing deadline, which was 3/14/2026. The appeal was received on 3/19/2026. Sarah Hunt has submitted a letter and documentation for board discussion and review.

After a thorough discussion. The motion from the Protest and Grievance Committee passed unanimously.

Vance Stine made a motion to extend Sarah Hunt's sanction by three months, but the motion did not pass because it lacked a second.

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith made a motion to follow the original decision of the Protest and Grievance Committee, and because it was violated, to add another six months onto the sanction. The motion was seconded by Tami Rougeau. The motion passed with one opposing.

Connie Caudill made a motion which was seconded by Vance Stine to enter executive session at 9:08 p.m.

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith made a motion which was seconded by Vance Stine to exit executive session at 9:34 p.m.

Connie Caudill moved to adjourn at 9:36 p.m., seconded by Jan Stevens.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill, Secretary.