

International Show's 'Maiden' Class Sees Record Prize Money & Entries at Sound, Flat-Shod Tennessee Walking Horse Event

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Animal Wellness Action, the Animal Wellness Foundation, and the Center for a Humane Economy applauded the Walking Horse Owners Association (WHOA) and its International Grand Championship show on a successful all-flat shod event that saw a record-breaking number of entries and prize money in the new "[maiden class](#)" featuring three-year-old walking horses that have never been previously shown. With more than [60 entries and \\$50,000 in prize money](#), the event is now the richest purse in the history of Tennessee Walking Horse competition.



Entries in the lineup awaiting results in the 2022 Maiden Class at the International Grand Championship show in Murfreesboro, Tennessee

This event comes on the heels of a recent U.S. House hearing and Subcommittee markup on the

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*Marty Irby, executive director
at Animal Wellness Action*

Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act that would eliminate the use of large, stacked shoes and ankle chains used at some Tennessee Walking Horse shows and put all competitors on a level playing field with much smaller shoes like the ones used in the maiden even last week. “Imagine Dragons” [claimed victory](#) in the 2022 maiden class with Hannah Myatt in the irons for the Jordan Howell Family of Murfreesboro.

“I’m elated to see the International Grand Championship show has made such tremendous progress with record breaking entries and the breed’s largest purse in history and applaud WHOA for their dedication to the sound and

natural walking horse,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action and a past president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders’ & Exhibitors’ Association (TWHBEA) who was honored in 2020 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, II for his work to protect Tennessee Walking Horses. “The success of this event proves that returning the Tennessee Walking Horse to its natural gait can and will put the breed in its rightful place as America’s horse – the horse that John Wayne, Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, and Elvis Presley once rode.”

In 2005, not long after Irby was elected to the TWHBEA International Board of Directors representing the State of Tennessee, Irby made a motion from the floor at the TWHBEA annual meeting to add a 2-year-old trail pleasure event, similar to the maiden class seen at the 2022 International Grand Championship, to the breed’s National Futurity for the first time beginning in 2006. The effort was met with great resistance from the “big lick” faction of the breed led by former trainer W. David Landrum, but the vote to add the division prevailed and established the class despite the naysayers.

The next year, in 2007, the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, the breed’s world championship show added a three-year-old and under Trail Pleasure World Championship that saw two divisions due to the astounding number of entries that year. The division has continued to grow ever since.

“I feel that the Tennessee Walking Horse will eventually be rewarded for the move to eliminate soring and any other demands made on this breed,” said Monty Roberts, ‘the Man Who Listens to Horses.’ “As God has sent them to us, the Tennessee Walking Horse is one of the most beautiful examples of Equus both simply standing there as well as in their movement. It is my



Marty Irby and Lion King following their 2006 TWHBEA National Futurity win in the show's first ever 2-year-old trail pleasure event



Monty Roberts Teaches Join-Up

opinion that the recent activity promoted by Marty Irby and the growing number of supporters in the breed will be looked upon with favor long after we are gone. While my time with the Tennessee Walkers was minimal, they consistently impressed me as being a natural marvel for looks and movement. Congratulations on the recent upward trend in fairness for the Tennessee Walking Horse."

"It's just good business to squeeze out animal cruelty from any kind of horse show," said Wayne Pacelle, president at the Center for a Humane Economy. "When you don't harm animals, you avoid legal risks, public-relations crises, regulatory and lawmaking initiatives, and so much more. Plus, you honor the animals at the center of the enterprise."

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards

forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.



Left to right: Marty Irby, Monty Roberts, and Ashley Avis at The Movement in June of 2021 in Solvang, CA

animal wellness action

The Center for a Humane Economy is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

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