

# NORTH AMERICAN RIDERS GROUP

## NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 9, SUMMER 2014

**Together,** we can improve our sport.

### AFTER FIVE YEARS, OUR FOCUS LOOKING FORWARD

Established five years ago, the North American Riders Group continues to address national and international issues effecting the sport of show jumping. With representation throughout the world through our own organization as well as via NARG Board Members participation, our involvement in governance is increasing and our voice is heard. There is always room for improvement and we strive to recognize this within NARG, our governing bodies as well as in our sport.

After extensive discussion, NARG determined a list of priorities that we seek to continue to address:

#### YOUNG HORSES

- Pipeline
- Costs
- Owner incentives

#### NARG TOP 25, YEAR FIVE

- Improving process
- Creating a Top 25 Task Force
- Reviewing & increasing important events in N.A./U.S.A.

#### HORSE SHOWS

- The USEF Mileage rule
- Limiting consecutive weeks in a circuit
- Exhibitors Bill of Rights, addressing issues facing competitors
- Developing a stronger fan base

#### USEF

- Fair judicial system, Stewards paid by USEF
- Water Jump – uniform quality standards

*As a rider advocacy group, we support top equestrian sport in North America. We seek to inform, ask questions, garner feedback and open your mind. Our motive is to motivate. Knowledge is power and together, only together, can we improve our sport.*

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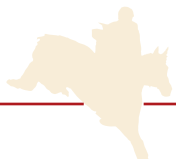
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### NORTH AMERICAN RIDERS GROUP

PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	BOARD MEMBERS	Enrique Gonzales
Chris Kappler	Beezie Madden	Norman Dello Joio	Mark Samuel
		Jimmy Torano	Missy Clark
VICE PRESIDENT	TREASURER	Murray Kessler	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
McLain Ward	Kent Farrington	Will Simpson	Jen Markee

### OUR SPONSORS





## MILESTONES THROUGH THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF NARG

It's a winding road we travel...

# 2009

- Established by-laws & finalized non-profit status
- Submitted prize money alignment rule change to USEF
- Collaborated with USEF/FEI Committees on a quantitative evaluation process for North American (N.A.) World Cup (W.C.) Qualifiers

- Worked with show management - presented initial evaluations, addressed footing issues and negotiated favorable solutions
- Weighed in on FEI Progressive List

# 2010

- Released biggest initiative to date, the NARG Top 25 horse show ranking system
- Established NARG position on mileage rule
- Released a formal statement on the FEI Progressive List
- Assisted with all press aspects, as well as identified lawyers to support McLain Ward regarding World Cup elimination

- Supported Blood Rule Proposal to FEI by Dr. Ober & ISHVA Board
- Supported the new FEI prize money award structure for world ranking classes

# 2011

- Addressed USOC regarding top level of sport
- Launched the Young Riders handbook
- Weighed in on debate regarding water jumps
- Created a relationship with IJRC



- Input to WC Evaluation & Standards
- Continued progress on important rule changes such as Mileage Rule and Prize Money Allocation
- Year Two for NARG Top 25 continues to influence positive change
- Introduced and presented NARG Rider's Grant

# 2012

- NARG narrows focus to show jumping
- NARG members take active roles on USEF & USHJA committees
- Four additional 5\* events in N.A.
- Invited to provide input for new FEI hind boot rule

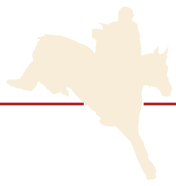
# 2013

- Improved USEF structure in place - 3 of 19 USEF Board Members are on NARG Board, plus members on several committees

- Board Members Kessler elected to USEF Board, Samuels elected to FEI Canadian Group IV Chair
- Influenced improved footing across N.A., including Spruce, Devon, Royal, WIHS & PNHS
- Supported rule change to put penalty discretion back in control of USEF Hearing Committee

- Addressed USEF regarding inconsistent show management requirements for vaccinations
- NARG works closely with IJRC on global issues, such as FEI wild cards and yellow card suspension issues

- Continued to address national issues with USEF & FEI including stewards, show standards, mileage rule, etc.
- North American shows illustrate improvement as Top 25 process evolves
- NARG Rider's Grant receives extended support from Southern and Heathcott families



## JUNE 2014: IJRC & NARG UNIFY

### **International Riders Club & North American Riders Group Join Forces**

*Excerpt from full release, written by Barbara Leoni*

From now on, riders will have a unique voice in front of the International Federation for Equestrian Sports and in the world. As of the 14th of May, the two not-for-profit associations, the International Jumping Riders Club (IJRC) and the North American Riders Group, (NARG), have signed an historic letter of intent in which the former is recognized by the latter as the primary riders' jumping representative in international equestrian sport to Lausanne's headquarters eyes. On the other hand, the "European" IJRC Club sees in the NARG the primary Jumping riders' association in North America.

The mutual desire is to promote the influence and the direct participation of the riders at the governance table, where lately their rights seem to slide in a secondary position. The IJRC's and the NARG's goal is, in fact, to ensure the sport's fairness and to protect it, checking the FEI rules to be appropriate, enforceable and respectful of the horse's welfare.

The cooperation will be realized by naming two or three representatives of the North American association to be part of the IJRC Board. In case one of the representatives could not attend a specific meeting, the NARG will appoint a substitute among its members to be welcomed to the Board. In this way, the IJRC is enabled to represent the views of North American riders to the FEI as the primary riders group.

The document has immediate effect and the IJRC statutes will be accordingly modified during the next IJRC General Assembly by the end of 2014. In the meanwhile, a letter has been sent by the NARG President, Chris Kappler, to the FEI to communicate the new agreement between the two associations.

The two organizations both believe that the IJRC has earned the right to be regarded by the FEI as the primary global show jumping riders' organization and they ask jointly that the MOU with the FEI will take consideration of the Club as the primary voice of international riders.

The NARG and IJRC are proud of their achievement. By working together they have crafted a solution that allows NARG to work within the IJRC to strengthen its ability to represent the global voice of show jumping riders, in a moment when they strongly need it.



## YOUNG HORSES IN NORTH AMERICA – WHERE FOR ART THOU?

When you think about the term ‘young horse’, what comes to mind? Most likely an image of a talented show jumper prospect. And where do you find this sport horse? In the show ring in North America? Or in Europe at any number of places – one of many large breeding farms, or offshoot sales barns; breed auctions, like the well-attended Holsteiner Verband; or shows that feature young horse classes, for example, a one-day National Show or the Young Horse Championships.

NARG understands why riders flock to Europe to purchase horses as well as compete; many of our Board Members and members are there annually. For decades several European countries in close proximity have produced great horses as well as riders. The infrastructure is well established – the costs are often significantly lower in many aspects and the selection seemingly superior. And the European scene has and always will have an alluring appeal.

However we feel strongly that to see the sport grow, prosper and improve in North America we need to focus on what is missing here at home. We’ve done that with horse shows and the NARG Top 25. For our goals of improving the sport in North America, the ‘grassroots’ is defined as the young horses (as well as the young riders, which is another topic altogether) that will become the show jumping stars of the future. Although the pipeline is well-established and successful in Europe, through research we discovered several pockets of a viable young horse market in North America. The issue is not the lack of quality; it is the lack of a solid pipeline, the lack of affordable ways to market, and the infrastructure from riders to shows to support it.

### IN EUROPE

Many European countries have large, well-known sale barns with extensive breeding operations, for example, Stal Hendrix, established in 1947 in The Netherlands, where almost every week the Hendrix riders compete with the young horses in the lower classes to give them solid miles. And Paul Schockemoehle in Germany, where between two locations there are approximately 350 horses in training, 200 employees and 35 stallions. What rings true of these and other European barns is the long-standing history, generations of breeding knowledge and success as well as staff, including riders, who specialize in all the aspects of bringing along young horses.

Add to that the robust European young horse pipeline. Essentially an entire arm of the equine industry in Europe is devoted to breeding, developing and marketing young horses. The young horse’s career begins with National and Training shows focused on developing competition horses with very reasonable fees, ultimately leading to large championships and breed auctions. The breed regions, for example Holstein or Oldenburg in Germany, organize shows and regional events, where young horses compete to qualify. Each association sends their top horses to the championships, where all the breeds come together for this magnanimous year-end final, the FEI World Championships for Young Horses. To illustrate the numbers, in 2013 the six-year-old division had approximately two hundred entries.

In general costs to show a young horse at a CSI 2★ or 3★ is ~250 Euros (= ~\$340) for classes, stall and manure disposal for the week, plus cost of feed, shipping and lodging. However the one-day shows are a popular choice, where horses can trailer in for the day for ~15 Euros (= ~\$48) and fence height ranges from .8m to 1.35m.

Note there is no mileage rule in Europe.

### IN NORTH AMERICA

There are several quality breeding operations of various sizes in North America. From Spruce Meadows in Western

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## YOUNG HORSES IN NORTH AMERICA – WHERE FOR ART THOU? *CONT. FROM PG. 5*

Canada to La Silla in Monterrey, Mexico, Wild Turkey Farm and Branscomb Farm on the West Coast to Iron Spring Farm and Spy Coast Farm on the East Coast, just to name a few of the top breeders. With bloodlines stemming from stallions purchased in Europe, commitment and quality are not lost on these knowledgeable North American breeders; many of their offspring are achieving success and gaining credibility.

The issue is not with the breeders per se, it is with the lack of a pipeline in which to bring young horses along, give them good miles and expose them to a buying market. Among the challenges are distance, costs and lack of a unified infrastructure.

A majority of the 'National' horse shows have numerous classes specific to American system, i.e. hunter and equitation divisions, which create the need for multiple rings where riders and trainers are spread throughout the show. With that there isn't much time, energy or space to focus on young horses. Wouldn't it be advantageous to have young horse shows that exposed prospects for all of these disciplines? Where the trainer/rider focus could turn to showing and/or seeing quality young horses?

The fact is, unlike Europe, the focus in North America is not on the young horse. 'National' shows have a completely different meaning here, applying to a USEF standard. Training shows are not readily available; the young horse classes at the bigger horse shows include a host of other fees, often creating a barrier to entry. There isn't currently a large group of riders that specialize in working with and competing on young horses nor a circuit for them. There are Young Horse Championships on the American East, Midwest and West coasts, but the participation is not even close to the level of Europe. More importantly these events aren't widely viewed as a place to seek and find young prospects.

Another barrier is cost. Comparing the numbers from Europe, to show a young horse at a USEF-recognized event with a grand prix (comparable to FEI 2★, 3★ shows), can be upwards of \$500 for classes, stalls and a host of fees from associations etc, plus cost of feed, shipping and lodging. A few, not all, show managers have stepped up to help defray costs by offering no entry fees for YH classes, no nomination fees and discounted stalls, which is encouraging. Although the shows don't focus on show jumpers, or young horses, with a bit of cost reduction, the fees are getting closer to Europe CSI2★ and 3★ shows.

Young horses can compete and get miles at smaller shows or schooling shows. Some of these are not unrecognized by the USEF and do not have to uphold show standards. (Not that all recognized shows uphold the standards, but they are supposed to.) So the footing, the courses, the facility may be super or may be sub-standard. Plus if trainers have quality young horses they often take them on the road to bigger shows, and don't have the time or opportunity to show locally. Not to mention that the riders and trainers at the smaller shows aren't necessarily in the market for young horses, so the exposure is negligible.

### **A PATH UNPAVED**

All that explained, there are glimmers of hope on the North American horizon. Over the years, several committed individuals have attempted to bring a touch of the European young horse concept to North America. The International Jumper Futurity (IJF) for four-year-olds and the Young Jumper Championships (YJC), for five- to eight-year-olds, have evolved from these efforts.

Proud to offer a championships that breeders and trainers can aspire to graduate their young horses from, the youngjumpers.com web site, home to IJF and YJC, has a long list of registered stallions as well as stories

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on horses that have started their show jumping careers through this program.

Notably a new Young Horse Trainers School, founded by Linda Allen and Julie Winkel, offers a six-day intensive for 'all those interested in the horse sport from the Young Horse perspective.' After hosting one at Winkel's Maplewood Stables location in Reno, Nevada in 2013, this past June, DiAnn Langer, U.S. Show Jumping Rider Chef d'Equipe, hosted the school at her Red Top Farm in Aiken, S.C.

Various show managers are offering their own championships, with qualifying classes throughout the year, encouraging this market to grow. A relatively new Young Horse Show series started just a few years ago. Gaining the support of breeders and show managers, the concept developed by Jean Yves Tola focuses purely on the yearlings to five-year-olds. The entry fees are reasonable and the one-day event often piggybacks on to a bigger show, where the trainers are already present and could add the day to their schedule. The first "test" show was at Spy Coast Farm's Lexington location in 2010. In 2011 the series expanded to more locations plus offered the first Young Horse Show Finals in early December, welcoming 30 young horses to Wellington. Spy Coast Farm owner Lisa Lourie and show managers on both coasts continue to support this burgeoning young horse showcase.

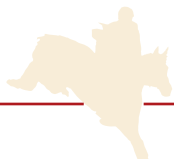
The aspect with the longest history is the Young Jumper Championships, established almost over a quarter of a century ago. Certainly enough time to see multiple horses come through the program and go on with their careers. The organization has developed relationships with show managements, offering over 300 qualifiers for various ages at a host of shows and three year-end championships at well-attended shows in California, Kentucky and New York. Successful but stilted by the tendency for North Americans to go overseas and purchase a horse that is beyond this program and, more importantly, by the costs of bringing a young horse along in our expensive recognized shows. Possibly the reduced costs show managers are now establishing will help to change this over the next few years, and the program will see an increase in membership and participation in championships.

Lisa Lourie of Spy Coast Farm recognizes the issues. As she explains, "Probably the biggest thing I learned was that while it is relatively easy to breed a foal here in America, it is difficult to train it and bring it to market. The infrastructure simply does not exist to properly develop young sport horses economically in this country. Spy Coast Farm is committed to helping develop that infrastructure. We are networking with many others across the country to develop the framework for a young horse pipeline to breed and develop young horses here in America. We are trying to build a fair and robust industry."

Her vision has changed over the last few years. She sees that the need goes beyond simply breeding quality show jumpers; more importantly, we must train and prepare these young horses. And she, like NARG, sees the importance of being involved with the governance of our sport. "My goals have gone more national. Where once I was content to just run my own breeding program, now I am more involved with USEF and USHJA and see the need to improve the breeding and training end of the equine industry."

It may be true that comparing North America with Europe is simply not comparing apples to apples, and never will be, but to set achievable goals for our young horse market will certainly improve our sport. It's essential to support North American breeders and a pipeline to develop the horses through a solid, recognizable and affordable pipeline.

Lourie concludes with this call to action: "I implore our Olympic athletes to put their mares and stallions back into the U.S. breeding system, to make them accessible to quality breeders who can bring their progeny to market for our athletes. We all need to do our part to create the pipeline. Young riders need to know how to properly train young horses, not just made mounts, because that is the future. Few will be able to afford made mounts and few know how to bring along young horses. This is the gap we need to fill."



## NARG ON THE SCENE



"I am most impressed, and I mean that genuinely, with the work you've done here with NARG. Not only to do this in the United States but to bring Mexico and Canada into it... And where do you get this kind of feedback? Only from you. And to have the foresight to establish this organization... I can tell you it has helped us immensely."

- Ron Southern, Co-Chairman of Spruce Meadows

"We are totally committed to following the NARG philosophy and improving Horse Shows by the Bay. We study the metrics and summary that NARG provides each year and seek to incorporate their suggested changes."

- Alex Rheinheimer, Owner/Manager of Horse Shows by the Bay



# tbird.

The NARG evaluation notes Thunderbird's commitment to annual improvements, impeccably maintained footing, tremendous exhibitor experience and stabling facilities as highlights for competitors.

- from the Aldergrove Star

"We work hard all year long to put together our world-class horse shows, and we are thrilled that our efforts have been recognized by the NARG - especially with the improvement in our ranking."

- Richard M. Feldman, Chairman of the Lake Placid Horse Show Association



"We're thrilled that NARG recognized the effort we put forth to make sure we lived up to our claim of being 'the rider's show'. It is very rewarding when your hard work is recognized by the best in the sport."

- Jeff Papows, Silver Oak Jumper Tournament Show Chairman

