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AHC Meeting's Focus is Welfare of Horses

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Photo: File Photo

from the American Horse Council

The focus of this year's American Horse Council National Issues Forum will be the "Welfare of the Horse." The forum will be held June 16 in Washington, D.C., as part of the AHC's annual meeting.

Over the last year, concerns about the welfare of horses used in racing, showing, recreation, or work have been raised by fans, the general public, the media, and Congress. Such concerns have been expressed before, but perhaps not as broadly.

"Those involved in the horse industry day to day know that the horse community has long recognized its responsibilities for the safety, welfare, and stewardship of its horses," AHC president Jay Hickey said. "Unfortunately, those who are not so involved are often not as aware of our many welfare and safety requirements and efforts."

Equine organizations have been concerned about welfare and safety for many years; some have recently undertaken new initiatives and studies in the area. The public, media, and federal and state officials are often not aware of the extent of what the horse industry is doing, and has done, with respect to the care of its horses.

Each segment of the horse industry has its own rules, regulations, and welfare activities, and they aren't always coordinated.

"The AHC hopes that focusing on the 'Welfare of the Horse' at its National Issues Forum will be an opportunity to discuss the common goal of being good stewards of the horse and facilitate our all working together to that end, regardless of our varied activities," Hickey said.

The forum will be a discussion of the welfare and safety requirements various segments of the horse industry have in place or are proposing. It will allow the sharing of rules, studies, knowledge, and ideas so various segments of the horse community are aware of the activities of other segments.

"By doing this, we hope to provide not only an opportunity to educate ourselves, but also an opportunity to educate the public, media, and federal and state officials about how important the welfare and safety of the horse is to the industry," Hickey said.

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