



Judges Update: Summer 2016

1. The AQHA Judges Committee met at the 2016 AQHA Convention and selected the following classes for education and recertification at the judges conference scheduled for December 12-14, 2016 at the Sheraton DFW in Irving, Texas. The classes are: Tie-Down Roping, Heading, Heeling, Ranch Riding as well as a segment on updates for the pattern classes (Showmanship, Horsemanship and Equitation). There will also be a session on Versatility Ranch Horse (VRH) classes. Every all-around judge is invited to participate in the testing session on VRH. Judges who make a passing grade will be added to the list of VRH judges. Those testing but do not make a passing grade on the entire VRH exam will not be added to the list but WILL be approved to judge the classes, where they made a passing grade, at AQHA shows. I expect this conference to be one of the best ever as the clinicians are already working on their presentations. Careful consideration will be given to the recertification process on the classes so it is fair and reasonable for all involved. A more detailed schedule will be available soon and can be found at <https://aqha.com/journal/resources/judges/seminars/>.
2. A second item passed by the judges committee was the enhancement of our online judges profile, increasing the data that can be viewed by show management. This update will have to wait until the IT system at AQHA is finalized but we would like to be gathering information as soon as possible. Attached to this update is a sheet for your information which you can return to AQHA, attention Judges Department, anytime. We will take pictures at the December Judges Conference so everyone is up-to-date!!
3. Some judges say they are not receiving the emails sent to them by AQHA. First, make sure your email address, mailing address and phone numbers are correct. You can find this by either calling AQHA's customer service or by going to <http://services2.aqha.com/shows/misc/judgesinternetlist/> and type in your first or last name (but not both). There are times judge's email servers will not accept group emails if the address is not recognized. To fix this, add AQHA to your contact list. The correct email address is aqha@aqha.com. With this change, your server will not reject any group email from AQHA!
4. After considering recommendations from the AQHA Animal Welfare Commission, the AQHA Executive Committee made two changes regarding animal welfare issues.
 - a. Effective June 1, 2016, belly bands are no longer allowed on horses. Belly bands are generally made of elastic and fit around the horse's barrel. As a judge, you will not witness belly bands in the show arena but you could see them in an adjacent warm-up arena. If you

should witness one outside the show arena, notify the show management or an AQHA steward if one is at the show. As with all violations, you should report it to AQHA.

- b. Effective January 1, 2017, a rule will be enacted that will not allow paint, dye or other colorant on certain parts of the horse. The exact rule has not been finalized and paint, dye or other colorants are still allowed until that time. However, this does not take away the fact that you shall disqualify any horse/exhibitor whose horse has signs of negligent treatment that may be covered up with these colorants. Again, you shall note the horse's show number on your placing card in the appropriate place and submit a full report to AQHA.
5. AQHA has received numerous comments from ranch riding exhibitors regarding the overuse of ranch riding pattern 3. Like in any other discipline, ranch riding exhibitors want a variance of patterns. Please take this into consideration and remember, you have the option of drawing your own pattern! If you chose to do that, make sure you have 3 optional maneuvers along with the required gaits in both directions and a back-up.
 6. Judges do NOT have the liberty to make up their own scoring system in showmanship, horsemanship and hunt seat equitation. As stipulated in the *AQHA Handbook of Rules and Regulations* and taught at the 2014 AQHA Judges Conference, all runs are to be scored between 0-100. Along with that, judges must use the OFP column, as well as the maneuver columns, to accurately rate the exhibitor (Excellent, very good, good or fair). Barring penalties, the exhibitor's score should fall in that range with the maneuver scores determining how high or low the final score will be. Exhibitors, trainers and parents read the rules and expect the judge to adjudicate by those rules.
 7. Here are several reminders:
 - a. In reining, riders can now use their second hand to untangle or straighten the bite of their reins anytime during the pattern as long as the second hand does NOT touch the reins in front of the rein hand.
 - b. When judging Level 1 or Rookie classes; do not disqualify an exhibitor except for lameness, abuse or excessive schooling. In other cases where an exhibitor has incurred a penalty of zero, you place them below all exhibitors.
 - c. Pay attention to the 30 day/150 mile rule. It is easy to overlook when shows are in neighboring states but within the 150 mile radius.
 - d. Nasal strips are approved for use in speed event classes
 - e. You should be receiving 2 copies of the show confirmation letter. As you know, one must be signed and returned to AQHA. Keep the other for your files in case you need the show's assigned number when communicating with the AQHA competition department.

Have a great summer and feel free to contact me if you have questions.