



To all EC members

Dear President,

Dear Madam, Sir,

Recently, a new incident occurred during a show. A stallion attacked his handler, became loose and attacked other horses and people before he was restrained again.

Not only this particular incident, but all the other similar incidents are bothering ITHA. Every time we get massive reactions from handlers. Of course we are the first concerned, but we also know that every horse lover is very upset with these situations. Therefore it's time that we put this problem in the spotlight and try to give a solution.

In the constitution of ITHA there is mentioned that the goals for ITHA is to support the well-being of the Arabian horse and also the handlers, trainers and grooms.

A similar goal is described in the constitution of ECAHO: their aim to encourage the improvement and welfare of the Arabian horse and also to maintain and promote the public interest in the Arabian horse. Finally there is also mentioned to encourage the promotion worldwide of Arabian horses.

ITHA supports all these noble goals for 200%.

The incidents with dangerous horses (mostly stallions) are an infringement and threat of these goals.

Officials, handlers, photographers, owners, spectators,... are at risk. The other horses competing at that moment are also in danger if they are attacked. Who is liable for the damages caused? These incidents are also a big blow for the public opinion who is watching are attending the shows. Is this the image we want to bring from our beloved Arabian horses? Of course this is food for those who already criticise the use of horses in sport. Finally it is a real pity for the horse itself who gets so dangerous in a few moments time. We all know this is not the behaviour of an Arabian horse, these are really expectations.

Therefore we cannot close our eyes for these incidents. We have to act against and create firm measures to do so. It is important for the physical health, for the image of our sport and for the appearance of the Arabian horse. Also very important for the health of the horse who caused the situation. It should be a firm warning that if you don't treat the horse with respect and dignity, you risk a heavy punishment.

We propose to introduce a red card system for these dangerous horses, if an accident occurs the horse gets a red card, meaning the disqualification for the show and immediate suspension for an indefinite time. The definitive suspension period should be determined afterwards by SDC or EC, with a possible fine. A minimal term of 1 year seems appropriate. The horse can be longer, depending on the seriousness of the incident. Before returning in competition a research should be done if the horse is ready for a safe comeback. If nevertheless a new incident occurs a final exclusion must be pronounced.

During the time the horse is excluded we should also consider training methods to give the horse rest and a mind setback. When the horse returns in competition there must be a great vigilance for eventual abuse of tranquilizers.

We are aware that incidents can always happen, but it is our duty to minimise the possibility of an incident and if it occurs we should implement tough measures to avoid and to punish this behaviour.

It is our strong wish to collaborate with ECAHO and find a possible way to deal with this situation as soon as possible. As always ITHA is ready to discuss this proposal and all other matters that can bring a positive change.

Sincerely,

ITHA President

Johan Van Oostenryck