



Status and Comments on the Positive Doping Tests at the European Championships for American Quarter Horses 2012

It will at this point in time be known by a lot of western riders in Europe, that 2 out of 12 tested horses at the European Championships (EC) were tested positive for usage of prohibited drugs according to the FEI list. As a consequence FEQHA cancelled all results obtained by the 2 horses at the EC, prizes and awards had to be given back to the organisers, a new order of placing had to be established, and AQHA has been asked to cancel the potential AQHA points earned at this particular show. There are in this case no further major consequences like bans for horses, owner or riders.

We have recently learned that one of the horses also tested positive at the Q12 and consequences of this has also been published. The latter case is however a matter between DQHA and the involved. This statement does therefore not have any comment to it.

We see that a number of statements from various stakeholders and journalists have appeared in the press over the last few days. We find this positive, since only debate and information can bring the medication aspect of our sport into a more professional level, now it as it appears have lost its virginity.

FEQHA would like to contribute to this information. Therefore, please find below a description of what has happened, what considerations and decisions it has caused and how we work to plan for the future.

1. The 12 doping tests were conducted as blood tests at the 2012 EC strictly according to FEI rules and sent for testing at the FEI approved laboratory in Cologne.
2. On October 3 the FEQHA Executive Committee was informed in a correspondence from the show office that two of the tested horses had prohibited medications in their blood.
3. Drug tests have been performed by FEQHA for nearly a decade now, but so far none were positive. The Executive Committee therefore spent time to discuss and decide the level of sanctions. As a minimum disqualifications were inevitable, but potential further sanctions needed a thorough consideration before decision.
4. This process had both positive and negative consequences for the 2 horses and the people around them. Positive, because the Executive Committee after this work decided would not impose any bans on the involved before such were authorised and communicated, instead stick to the minimum this time: Disqualify the horses from the EC, cancel results, awards and update the placing, which had to be done in respect for the competition. Negative, because we had to spend some weeks on dialogues with AQHA and external experts in order to make the right decisions on the short and long term.



5. On October 29 FEQHA informed the involved persons around the 2 horses about the findings, the consequences we had decided, but also invited them to put their viewpoints forward and to inform them about the possibility of have a B-test conducted. One owner wanted to have the B-test conducted, the other owner did not.
6. On December 21 FEQHA received the results of the conducted B-test, which confirmed the results of the A-test. FEQHA did not receive any information or arguments from the involved strong enough to change the notified consequences.
7. On December 22 FEQHA then informed the involved about the execution of our verdict and the same day it was published on the FEQHA website.
8. Looking forward FEQHA has initiated work to update, specify and communicate an authorised policy before end April. We do this in order to make it possible for all potential participants in the European Championships 2013 to learn it in details. We call it the project for fair sport and we will prior to the next FEQHA meeting early February have a workshop together with representatives from DQHA, since they have similar challenges like us.

We have in the published statements noted a number of attacks on FEQHA and our EC organiser even including conspiracy theories. We will not comment on that, just state the following:

- The FEI list of prohibited substances at the European Championships were clear months before the show and everybody could easily and quickly check what was allowed and what not.
- It is a fact that 2 horses had prohibited substances from this list in their blood when tested, thereby violating the drug rules. In this situation FEQHA clearly has to act.
- FEQHA has had a good and respectful direct dialogue with involved individuals who wanted to talk with us. Some of them have raised challenges we have to look out for in the future. This includes for example how to deal with the potential risk of competitors or others who might attempt to drug other people's horses.

After all what we want is a fair sport. We aim to stop those who might try to get a competitive advantage over others through medicating their horse with prohibited substances. But we also realise that part of the fairness is to be very clear in our policies and the communication of them.

With sincere regards

The Executive Committee
FEQHA