



Developments in Europe -- Growing Pains or Pain from Not Growing?

Dear NRHA members,

With regard to our activities in Europe, NRHA is having what might affectionately be called growing pains. The good news is that there is a desire among many members in Europe to foster greater growth and activity. Better still, our board recently approved an NRHA affiliate in Spain. While not everyone agrees on the proper course of action to foster growth, this has become a very robust conversation. Toward this end, NRHA's board received a proposal to support continued growth at the May board meeting.

By the numbers

We've kept an eye on key activities in Europe and how those numbers have grown over the past several years (see summary to the right). However, the numbers only tell part of the story. We don't have the ability to measure demand for horses, demand for trainer's services or interest in clinics as other measures of health. We also know that while some countries in Europe have economies that are struggling, others are reasonably healthy.

In terms of the level of competition, we know that Europe features many fierce competitors as evidenced by Belgium's strong showing at the FEI World Reining Championships in Switzerland in August. The stands were packed at Corinna Schumacher's CS Ranch and the crowds were quite loud and enthusiastic.

Greater autonomy

As part of NRHA's recent governance changes, the Board also agreed that Europe should have greater autonomy in developing their own events. For example, the European Affiliate Council would approve show conditions for the NRHA European Derby and NRHA European Futurity. One would hope and presume that individuals on that continent would have a greater grasp of what would be most beneficial for their sport in their backyard. While it is extremely important that certain aspects of the world of reining are consistent on a global basis, judging and records for example, local influence and local decision must be a part of the plan.

Unfortunately, the proposal presented to the board in May, which called for the formation of a European Federation of Reining Horse Association, will not go forward as presented. Sometimes the first attempt does not succeed, but it can sow the seeds of a future triumph. We hope that this is the case.

To gain a deeper understanding of local issues and local needs, we plan to host a European summit in the coming months. The way forward deserves an open dialogue with the sharing of many points of view. We strive to provide the most fertile ground for our sport, regardless of location; for all of our members, including those in Europe who deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Rick Clark
NRHA President

European Stats - 2015 vs. 2010

Members:

4,768, up 6% from 4,505 in 2010

Entries:

17,728, up 34% from 13,153 in 2010

Shows:

188, up 19% from 158 in 2010

Competition licenses:

1,810, up 36% from 1,330 in 2010

Nominations:

942, up 6% from 882 in 2010