

June 26, 2015

Farriery Initiative

P.O Box 6564

Albuquerque, NM 87197

Dear Friends of Horses:

Enclosed is some information that may – or should be – of interest to you, to people that you represent, or horse-owners and users that you serve in some way. I am sure that you realize how each segment of the horse world that you work in or are involved with is inextricably linked to every other segment. What each of us does or does not do has a direct impact on everyone else. That may sound a little abstract, but we are all a part of a “machine” that functions and prospers only when all the parts, pieces, and interests work together in unison for a productive, healthy horse population.

Please, let me give you a bit of recent history of equine footcare and farriery in the United States, and let me introduce myself to you, and share some thoughts that underlie my convictions that the practice of equine footcare and farriery must come out of the “Dark Ages” of the past and present. In my considered opinion, it must move on from being just a job or a trade that lacks any standards or verified knowledge and skill to perform the critical work that a horse needs to be healthy and able to fulfill your reasonable expectations and demands. This I have learned from my lifelong work as a farrier. My journey started in 1948 on a dude ranch in Colorado where I watched horses subdued and subjected to trimming and shoeing so that they could be rented out. This made a living for the horseshoer, the owner, and provided an experience for the renter. I learned to copy what I saw being done, and it wasn't necessarily good. But it was “normal” because that is what everybody did.

World War II had just ended and thousands of veterans were in the job market. Veteran retraining schemes abounded. Some 150 Horseshoeing Schools proliferated across the country, giving people another choice in learning a peace-time occupation. Some schools were affiliated with public education systems, while others were privately operated. Each program was led by an individual who had been a more-or-less successful horseshoer in his previous life, either from one of the armed services or from the private sector. Each taught to the limits of their own knowledge and skill. Each taught what they knew or thought they knew. There was no standard curriculum, there was not a standard required for the instructor. The only requirement for successful completion of the course was that the student be able to trim and shoe a horse to any arbitrary standard set by the instructor.

Little has changed since then, except that there are only about 25 schools now. Some are quite sophisticated, led by very talented and able people. Others are less so. The bottom line is that there is no common, minimum acceptable standard in what is taught, how it is taught, or by whom it is taught. There is no common, minimum acceptable standard of testing the knowledge and skill of the student. There is no accreditation or process or standards to which instructors or schools are held. There are no

common, acceptable credentials that ensure a graduate has knowledge and skill to complete the work needed for the health of the horse and satisfaction of the consumer.

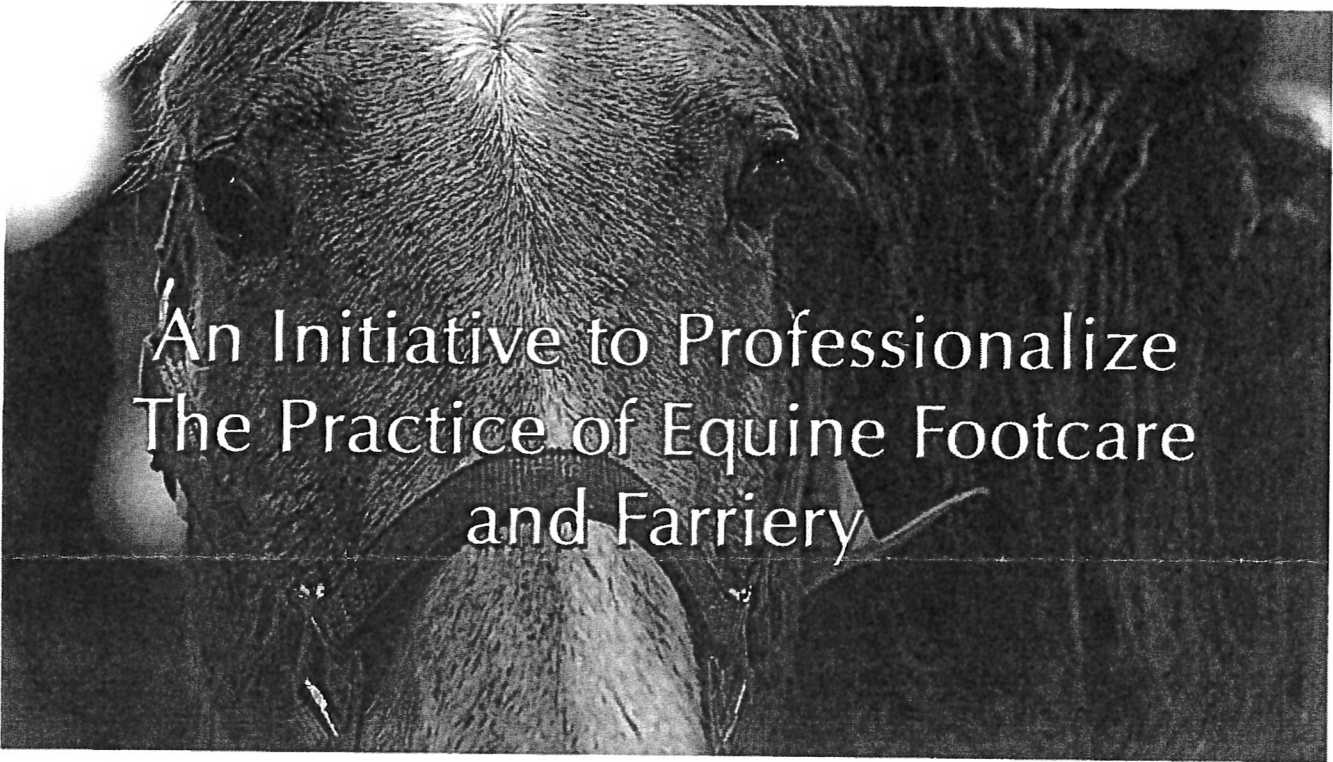
You may be wondering why I think and believe as I do. In 1971, I was instrumental in founding the American Farrier's Association (AFA) whose purpose was and is to upgrade the practice of farriery around the country. For the next 15 years I was its President. During that time, we started a "Certification" program in an effort to upgrade the practice of the every-day farrier. That program flourished and has been copied, one way or another, by succeeding associations or guilds of farriers in the United States and Canada. But there is no commonality or standard between the certification levels of each organization. Each is a reflection of the culture of the parent group, thus being self-serving and lacking in objective criteria. (Make no mistake – many individuals have become much better farriers and blacksmiths because of the certification programs and other competition-based programs.) But true professional standards and requirements remain absent regardless of the time and effort put into these activities. In 1985, as President of the AFA, I led the formation of the World Farriers Association (WFA), with the national farrier associations in Britain and Japan. You may remember that the European Economic Community was in the process of birthing at that time, and promised a free-trade opportunity between member countries. In that environment, businesses and workers in every member country could operate freely in every other member country. This was of great concern to horse people in Europe because farriers varied widely in knowledge and skill, depending on their own country's customs and systems. The WFA instigated the eventual formation of the European Federation of Farrier Associations (EFFA) that now has 14 countries affiliated. They have standardized the education, training, credentialing, and registration of farriers across the European Union. From 1988 to 2003, I led a world-wide equine charity that trained farriers, veterinarians, saddlers, and other equine care-givers in under-developed nations around the World. This was a reality check and a lesson in humility. It underscored the fact that nobody does anything to a standard that best serves the horse or the owner-user.

For more than 40 years I have encouraged professionalization of farriers by working within their ranks. This hasn't worked because there is no incentive to change, no penalty to be paid if our work is substandard or our conduct is non-professional. For these reasons, this initiative has been undertaken. It is a "win-win" proposal for everyone involved. Change is hard and sometimes painful. Compromises have to be made if common goals are to be achieved. I trust that you will consider this initiative as a positive contribution to the well-being of our horse friends and servants that bring that extra dimension to each of our lives. If I can answer any question you may have, speak with your constituents, or contribute to our mutual success, please give me that opportunity. I look forward to hearing from you and to a better future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walt".

Walt Taylor



# An Initiative to Professionalize The Practice of Equine Footcare and Farriery

This proposal is generated  
by two primary issues:

## 1. ANIMAL WELFARE

Millions of horses, donkeys, and mules in the United States endure needless pain and suffering caused by poor footcare and farriery practices. Many "farriers" or "horseshoers" are poorly trained, non-professional people with little knowledge or skill in performing this necessary work. No breed, class, activity, or kind of equine is spared suffering and debilitation from sub-standard work done by these individuals.

People who own, use, or are responsible for the care of equines bear the primary responsibility for well-being of the animals. Many are ill-equipped to make informed decisions about the standard of care provided by practitioners. They may simply trust a referral or recommendation from someone (who may be equally uninformed) or motivated

to choose the care-provider that is least expensive. Neither is an intelligent, responsible choice or course of action. The equine suffers the consequences of poor choices, bad decisions, and unskilled, non-professional work.

Damage done by sub-standard footcare may be temporary at best, or permanently disabling, at its worst. A few minutes of non-professional work may lead to injury that lasts from a few days to a year or more of needless suffering. In severe cases, an animal may never recover from injury inflicted by the farrier, and must be euthanized. This is an unnecessary and unacceptable waste of time, resources and innocent lives.

## 2. CONSUMER PROTECTION

There is no established or recognized 'standard of practice' for footcare and farriery. There is no established curriculum or accredited, standard-

ized educational program or training process for those wanting to learn to provide footcare and farriery. There is no standard for examination or determination of proficiency in footcare and farriery. There is no standard application of credentials that represents knowledge and skill levels of practitioners. There are few legal remedies, short of litigation, available to consumers that suffer loss due to nonprofessional services.

Litigation for recovery of loss is largely ineffective. Many practitioners are "part-timers" who have a regular job and earn 'sock-drawer' money for footcare and farriery done at their leisure. Most are uninsured against damage to or loss of an animal under their care and custody. Many are on an economic borderline that precludes their possession of assets that can be recovered against claims. They have little or nothing to lose should their work be called to question. The consumer has nowhere to turn for redress.

There is limited interest within the current farrier "trade" to embark on such a radical change from the status quo. Change will be difficult and painful. ANIMAL WELFARE and CONSUMER PROTECTION issues will remain unresolved unless accountability and professionalism of farriers is demanded by the general public, direct consumers, allied professions - and is mandated by State law.

Walt Taylor, Farrier

Founder and Founding President of the American Farrier's Association

Founder and President of the World Farriers Association

Contact Walt at [wfassoc@msn.com](mailto:wfassoc@msn.com) or phone at 505-345-6338

Mailing Address:

P.O. BOX 6564, Albuquerque, NM 87197.

## The Plan

- Enact State law that requires licensing of farriers within a workable time frame.
- Establish protocol to accredit existing or new farrier schools
- Develop standard, optimum classroom curriculum for training students to different knowledge and skill levels.
- Develop standard, optimum on-the-job training programs at different knowledge and skill levels as adjunct to classroom work.
- Develop objective and professional standards for testing and judging knowledge and skills.
- Develop credential system that recognizes different levels of knowledge and skills.
- Develop professional standards and code of conduct that encourages continued professional performance after credentials are granted.
- Develop processes and procedures to handle grievances, non-performance, legal ramifications, and consumer redress.

June 2015

July 6, 2015

Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH)

144 Russell Senate Office Bldg.

Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA)

475 Russell Senate Office Bldg.

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Ayotte and Warner:

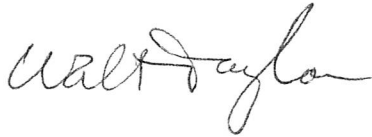
First, let me thank you for your compassion for horses, as demonstrated by your sponsorship of the PAST Act of 2015, S. 1121, in the current session of the Senate of the United States. This is a matter of great importance to the horse industry in the United States. Please thank the several Senators who have joined you as cosponsors in the Senate. I trust that the House of Representatives will soon parallel your action, and that Congress, as a whole, will amend the Horse Protection Act in short order. The needless suffering of horses caused by greed and gratuitous abuse must stop.

Secondly, let me introduce myself to you, and offer my help to pursue the legislative action that is needed. My name is Walt Taylor, and I live in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am and have been a farrier since 1948. In 1969, recognizing a need to upgrade the practice of footcare and farriery in the United States, I was instrumental in founding the American Farrier's Association (AFA) in 1971. I served as President of the AFA until 1986. In 1985, as President of the AFA, we collaborated with national farrier associations in Britain and Japan to organize the World Farriers Association (WFA). I still serve as President of the WFA. I have worked around the world as a working farrier and as a trainer of farriers in scores of countries. I have seen abuse caused by greed, fashion, and ignorance. Only the ignorant can be forgiven. That certainly is not the case with soring of these particular show horses.

My practice as a farrier over the last 67 years did not and does not include working with very many gaited horses that are trimmed and/or shod to exacerbate their natural gaits. I did a limited amount of that kind of work many years ago. My reasoning was that "If I don't do it, somebody else will and I won't earn the money that goes with it." That is a sad commentary on moral values. In no way do I stand in judgement of farriers and others that do this kind of thing. However, I find it unconscionable to abuse horses for monetary gain, fame, or fashion.

Please accept my whole-hearted support for ANY initiative to Prohibit All Soring Tactics. Thank you, again, for undertaking this action. If I may be of any help to the effort, please don't hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walt Taylor".

Walt Taylor, Farrier

P.O. Box 6564

Albuquerque, NM 87197

CC: American Horse Council

Humane Society of the United States

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

American Horse Protection Association

American Farrier's Association

American Association of Professional Farriers

Brotherhood of Working Farriers Association

July 29, 2015

*SAME letter to  
different people*

Rep. Ted Yoho ((R – FL)

Rep Kurt Schrader (D – OR)

511 Cannon House Office Building

2431 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressmen Yoho and Schrader:

First, let me thank you for your compassion for horses, as demonstrated by your sponsorship of the PAST Act of 2015, HR 3268, in the current session of the House of Representatives. This is a matter of great importance to the horse industry in the United States. I trust that several of your colleagues have or will join you as co-sponsors of this important legislation, and that the Congress, as a whole, will amend the Horse Protection Act in short order. The needless suffering of horses caused by greed and gratuitous abuse must stop.

Secondly, let me introduce myself to you, and offer my help to pursue the legislative action that is needed. My name is Walt Taylor, and I live in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am and have been a farrier since 1948. In 1969, recognizing a need to upgrade the practice of footcare and farriery in the United States, I was instrumental in founding the American Farrier's Association (AFA) in 1971. I served as President of the AFA until 1986. In 1985, as President of the AFA, we collaborated with national farrier associations in Britain and Japan to organize the World Farriers Association (WFA). I still serve as President of the WFA. I have worked around the world as a working farrier and as a trainer of farriers in scores of countries. I have seen abuse caused by greed, fashion, and ignorance. Only the ignorant can be forgiven. That certainly is not the case with soring of these particular show horses.

My practice as a farrier over the last 67 years did not and does not include working with very many gaited horses that are trimmed and/or shod to exacerbate their natural gaits. I did a limited amount of that kind of work many years ago. My reasoning was that "If I don't do it, somebody else will and I won't earn the money that goes with it." That is a sad commentary on moral values. In no way do I stand in judgement of farriers and others that do this kind of thing. However, I find it unconscionable to abuse horses for monetary gain, fame, or fashion.

Please accept my whole-hearted support for ANY initiative to Prohibit All Soring Tactics. Thank you, again, for undertaking this action. If I may be of any help to the effort, please don't hesitate to call on me.

For your general information, I have enclosed a copy of *An Initiative to Professionalize the Practice of Footcare and Farriery* in the United States. While this *Initiative* is intended to work at the State level, there are several benefits to national horse interests, as well. In many cases of soring that are of concern in the Horse Protection Act, a farrier is involved to some extent. Professionally educated and credentialed farriers would be less likely to participate in illegal and immoral acts, such as intentional soring.

Sincerely,

Walt Taylor, Farrier

P.O. Box 6564

Albuquerque, NM 87197

CC: American Horse Council

Humane Society of the United States

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

American Horse Protection Association

American Farrier's Association

American Association of Professional Farriers

Brotherhood of Working Farriers Association



September 5, 2015

“PROFESSIONALIZE FARRIERY INITIATIVE”

P.O. Box 6564

Albuquerque, NM 87197

Dear Friends of Horses:

In June, 2015, an *Initiative to Professionalize the Practice of Footcare and Farriery* was introduced to attendees of the Annual Convention of the American Horse Council (AHC) in Washington, D.C. The *Initiative* proposes a wholesale reorganization and reordering of footcare and farriery education, training, testing, and credentialing for individuals who will provide this critical care to equines in the future. There are now no standards for education or for practice of this indispensable work on your horses, donkeys, and mules. Millions of these beasts are abused or debilitated by poor, unprofessional work done by people who may have little or no knowledge or skill in providing farrier service to the animals. The suffering and abuse that is endured by your horses, and your loss of service and enjoyment of them, is unnecessary and almost totally preventable. Professionally educated, trained, and credentialed farriers are the answer to the problem.

The *Initiative* was greeted with overwhelming support by all segments of the American horse industry that were there. Almost everyone had a farrier “horror story” to share, and were very pleased to know that “help is on the way”. Following that, in late June you were furnished a copy of the *Initiative* along with a letter that supported its undertaking. If you don’t have a copy of the *Initiative* and that cover letter and want to refresh your memory, please let us know and we will send you another. The issues of animal abuse and consumer protection/satisfaction are too important to continue to ignore.

Let me share with you some examples that illustrate the problems that exist from the current lack of standards. These are from my own personal experience – real people with real horses with real problems. They illustrate clearly the real-world situation:

- One of my clients occasionally trims his own team-roping horses. His work is dismal, and he acknowledges that readily. He said that he had worked with a farrier at one time, and just “liked to keep his hand in”. When I asked my client why he trimmed a foot in a particular way, he said he didn’t know. He didn’t know about any aspect of balance of the foot and the limb, and had no idea why it was important. He said that the farrier he worked with never worried about things like that – he just rasped the hoof and nailed a shoe on. That man had been working as a “farrier” for several years and took people’s money to abuse their horses. When I asked his clients why they used his “services”, they told me that he didn’t charge very much for his work.

- While at the barn of a North American Team Roping Championship client, I was asked to evaluate the shoeing of a barrel racing horse that was on layover, on the way to another rodeo competition. The owner and her horse were in the “top ten” nationally, at the time. It was a wonder to me that the horse could walk, let alone compete successfully at that level. The owner said that one of her biggest problems was finding a competent farrier wherever she went to rodeo. She was at the mercy of who happened to live there.
- A family member of one of my clients hauls horses for one of the best team ropers to ever back a horse into the “box”. That roper is a many-times world champion. His success depends heavily on the horse(s) he uses. Drivers haul his horses to rodeos where he is entered, and have to be at the next location when he flies in to compete. The driver must keep the horses healthy and shod. One of the biggest and most difficult problems the drivers have is finding farriers competent to shoe these high-level performance horses. Many times, the horses are at the mercy of a farrier that happens to live near the rodeo site.

These examples happen to be associated with the sport of rodeo. We know that not all horse people or animal welfare interests support these kinds of activities. It is certain that the same or similar situations occur in all equestrian sports. The point is that without professional farriers to provide services that are commensurate with the horses involved, animal abuse and human loss of enjoyment result.

Horses that participate in the highest levels of performance or competition usually enjoy the services of the best farriers. But those horses and farriers are in the minority. Many millions of horses must make-do with least- or less-skilled farriers, who lack the background understanding and skills to do correct work. **These millions of horses and their owners are those to benefit most from this Initiative.** The relative wealth of people who own and use horses should not dictate the level of farrier care that horses receive. **YOU** are urged to get behind this *Initiative* and support it in every way possible. A happy, productive, healthy horse population will result from our collective efforts to *Professionalize the Practice of Footcare and Farriery* in the United States.

A small group of educators has begun consideration of an optimum professional curriculum for the education and training of farriers of the future. This is a daunting task, made more so by the fact that it has never been done. The goal is to move beyond the vocational- and distributive-oriented models of current farrier training. Lacking a standard and professional education, people will continue to practice footcare and farriery at current levels. Horses will continue to be abused and endure needless suffering. Consumers will remain underserved and without redress for incorrect work done by non-professionals. Let's join the rest of the developed World where farriers are educated, trained, tested, and credentialed to provide professional service to animals and human clients!

Questions, comments, and assistance may be directed to the PROFESSIONALIZE FARRIERY INITIATIVE, P.O. Box 6564, Albuquerque, NM 87197.

Walt Taylor, Farrier