



Dear Fellow AQHA Members,

As I look back on my past five years serving on AQHA's Executive Committee, I'm extremely proud to see where the Association has been and where it is headed in the future. I want to thank you all for your support as I have served AQHA. It truly has been a ride I will never forget.

AQHA has reached many milestones this past year, beginning with the launch of introductory shows. Introductory shows dramatically increase the accessibility and broaden the range of AQHA shows in a way the Association has never done before. Introductory shows allow members to earn AQHA points and Incentive Fund money at open or 4-H shows. They provide an opportunity for many more American Quarter Horse owners to participate in the AQHA show experience.

The Ford AQHYA World Championship Show moved from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City in 2008, and entries increased 38 percent to 2,748. The 1,010 youth exhibitors were able to enjoy the many improvements at State Fair Park, which also is host to the Bank of America Amateur and FedEx Open World Shows.

The 2008 Bank of America Amateur and FedEx Open World Shows grew as well, with 3,494 entries, an increase of nearly 200 from 2007 figures. With the increase in entries, AQHA, for the first time, used the Performance Arena for some preliminary classes. Thanks to the generous support of AQHA's corporate partners, exhibitors competed for more than \$2.7 million in cash and prizes.

Another first for the World Show in 2008 was the introduction of Most Valuable Horse Awards. The MVH Awards recognize the highest point-earning horses in six open divisions: western, roping, English, pattern/cow, speed and timed. Each MVH winner received \$5,000 cash and special recognition at the show.

AQHA introduced two new corporate partners. Merial became the official animal health-care partner, and AQHA Medical came to provide medical benefits for AQHA members and their families. AQHA proves it is concerned about the health and welfare of not only American Quarter Horses, but owners and riders as well.

AQHA is continuing its dedication to protecting the welfare of American Quarter Horses with the Animal Welfare Assurance Task Force. The Association's main objectives are to educate members and the general public on animal welfare issues and identify and eliminate any inhumane training practices that might currently be perceived as acceptable while strengthening sanctions for noncompliance. The task force is off to a strong start in 2009 with specific action plans for racing, showing and breeding.

It has been a solid year for AQHA despite high fuel prices and economic woes, demonstrating the dedication of AQHA members to their Association and to their American Quarter Horses. Registrations saw a slight increase in 2008, and racing purses were up along with the number of race starters, proving once again that AQHA has the strength to withstand during an economic crisis. It is during times like these that I am even more proud to be a part of this Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as AQHA president. It has been an experience like none other. I will always be grateful to this amazing animal and the owners, exhibitors and riders who love the American Quarter Horse as much as I do.

Sincerely,


 Ken Mummy
 AQHA President