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September 6, 2005

Mark Rey—USDA Under Secretary—USDA
Listening Session—Eastern Idaho State Fair—Blackfoot, Idaho
September 6, 2005

Re: Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002

Of the six topics offered for comment or written comment, I wish to address the last: How should agricultural product development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill? My premise is simply that the equine industry has grown so dramatically in numbers, economic importance, and involvement in conservation and environmental areas that we should no longer be officially ignored. I realize the American Horse Council is an important and active resource for the USDA effectively representing groups. However, there is no official status for horse owners, nor are they included in Federal or most State census reports of commodities and animals. (I believe Kentucky is an exception.)

During the 1950s, the National Association of Stallion Registration Boards, along with horses were removed from the USDA lists of concerns. Because of the decline in their numbers, they were no longer considered a viable part of agriculture. Today, there are many times more horses in our nation than at any time in our history. It is urgent the equine industry be reinstated within the USDA to allow opportunity for representation along with cattle, sheep and other traditional animals that USDA essentially supervises. This will open the door for horses to be included in the Agricultural Departments of state governments resulting in all kinds of benefits, not the least being inclusion in State statistical reporting.

My concerns include the following: will there be any consideration given to the equine industry in the 2002 Farm Bill for including resumption of assistance in foreign marketing (an effort the Department supported during the 1970s) and a rapidly growing part of most breed associations; in research specifically for horses; or for "product development" that I would interpret as promotion. Having been actively involved in the equine industry for more than half a century, I am aware that promotion is primarily the responsibility of various groups and associations. Official USDA enlistment would be an extremely valuable asset in those efforts.

Along with the associations I am currently active with, I look forward to your response.

Edith M. Stanger
Attachments/4

*Double Arrow
Appaloosas*



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Currently:

Chairperson-Idaho Horse Board
Chairperson-Idaho Horse Council Scholarship Committee
President-National Appaloosa Youth Foundation
Owner/Manager Double Arrow Ranch

Co-Founder, Past President – Idaho Horse Council
Past member Board of Directors – Appaloosa Horse Club (National Breed Registry)
Past President – Intermountain Appaloosa Horse Club

Awarded: Life-time Membership, Intermountain Appaloosa Horse Club
Hall of Fame membership- Eastern Idaho Horsemen's Association
Hall of Fame membership – Idaho Horse Council
Hall of Fame membership – International Appaloosa Horse Club
Idaho Falls Greater Chamber of Commerce
Annual Award for Outstanding Service to Agriculture

Author – FIFTY YEARS OF APPALOOSA HISTORY (Published 1997)

Participated in: USDA sponsored participation-Segundo Exposition
Nacional de Equinos—Guatemala C A
People To People US Government tour of Europe and the Soviet Union
National Appaloosa EXPO – Mexico City, Mexico

Elected – Bonneville County (Idaho) Commissioner