

# GO



# PRO



APHA FILE PHOTO

Joining the APHA Professional Horsemen program connects you to a network of the industry's most upstanding equine professionals.



JESSICA HEIN

*In all business aspects of the horse industry, APHA Professional Horsemen work with integrity, kindness and ethics.*

**G**uided by a strong ethical compass, members of the APHA Professional Horsemen program are leading the industry as models of exemplary integrity.

The APHA Professional Horsemen program offers recognition and networking for those earning their livings through Paint Horses. Professionals from all backgrounds—which include competing at the breed's highest level, judging and instructing exhibitors of all skill levels—come together based on common morals and ethics.

Program Coordinator Steven Imhof explains the Professional Horsemen mission statement aptly defines the program's goals. It reads, "To enhance and promote industry professionals of the APHA as the premier purveyors of equine services. The association serves to foster credibility, proficiency and advocacy through the endorsement of superior industry standards that will enable professionals to excel in a sustainable career."

"APHA Professional Horsemen is a collection of exemplary industry members," Steven said. "They lead by example, and I have no reservations about pointing a newcomer to this outstanding group of men and women."

Is becoming an APHA Professional Horseman right for you? Find out what industry leaders and program members have to say.

## **Brian Henry**

*Grand Junction, Colorado*

I joined APHA Professional Horsemen because the Code of Ethics reflects the type of business I run. My affiliation with the program tells my customers I'm going to be honest with them about my prices and their horses' abilities. It also says that I'm going to be humane in how I train—even if that means taking a longer road to success.

The program's members are the professional image of APHA throughout the horse industry. From

judges to trainers, we all serve as role models to everyone else—Youth, Amateurs and our professional peers. We set a precedence of what is expected from APHA professionals.

Joining the APHA Professional Horsemen shows you're ready for the next step of commitment to the industry and the breed. It means you're pledging to be kind and fair in everything you do.

## **Delena Doyle**

*Azle, Texas*

I have served as an equipment judge at all levels of Paint Horse showing, and I've also presented at the Judge's Academy regarding what is legal and humane in horse training and tack. As a judge and APHA Professional Horseman, I feel it is my responsibility to make sure industry participants are respecting, honoring and humanely training horses.

Designation as an APHA Professional Horseman is a mark of prestige and integrity. As a judge, it highlights your honesty. It means you won't be swayed in your decision based on the reputation of a particular horse or exhibitor—you will give a fair judgment call of every performance.

For trainers, APHA Professional Horsemen is like a license. You don't have to meet any qualifications to market yourself as a trainer, but being accepted into the Professional Horsemen program tells the industry that you strive for a higher moral standard.

## **Jean Flagler**

*Perrysburg, New York*

I run a multi-discipline lesson and training operation with clients encompassing a wide range of age and experience. I also have many Youth under my instruction—including an interscholastic team—and I'm sure they're watching me as I work and train. My actions, kindness and honesty show them how an equine professional should act.

Though I mostly train and show at the local level, I still think it's

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"APHA Professional Horsemen recognizes the virtues I already practice in my life and adds some extra credibility behind my name."



**Carrie Kessler**

"Clients can expect to be treated with honesty."



**Nikki Longacre**

important to earn national certifications and titles such as APHA Professional Horseman. The affiliation gives some backing to my professional claims—I'm not just calling myself an honest professional; my peers have deemed me worthy of the title.

I hope as many people as possible apply and join the Professional Horsemen family. The more people we have setting an example of what is ethical and right, the more we can change the association and horse industry for the better.

### **Carrie Kessler**

*Roland, Arkansas*

When you wear the APHA Professional Horsemen lapel pin you mark yourself as an ambassador of the Paint Horse breed, and your character reflects the best of the association.

As a judge, I often wear my pin at open and 4-H shows. There, I do my best to encourage young exhibitors and make sure they're having as much fun as possible showing—they're our next generation of industry leaders. When Youth see my pin, I hope it encourages them to join APHA and become honest and kind professionals themselves.

APHA Professional Horsemen recognizes the virtues I already practice

in my life and adds some extra credibility behind my name. It's not surprising then that I love to wear my pin!

### **Nikki Longacre**

*Glenpool, Oklahoma*

My husband, Keith, and I train and show halter and roping horses. The APHA Professional Horsemen Code of Ethics sums up the premise of our business; we always try to operate with strong principles and ethics.

When a trainer is certified as a Professional Horseman, clients can expect to be treated with honesty. They come to rely on the person to be knowledgeable of the industry and to give good advice. A Professional Horseman is someone they can always trust and depend on.

Keith and I joined the Professional Horsemen program soon after its establishment because we felt we needed to support the industry that provides our livelihood. I think anyone who is a professional in an organization should support its programs. It's simply the right thing to do. **PHJ**

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*Rachel Florman is contract assistant editor of the Paint Horse Journal. To comment on this article email feedback@apha.com.*

## **Step Up** .....

Ready to join the ranks of APHA Professional Horsemen? To qualify, an applicant must be an equine professional, an APHA member in good standing, complete an application, pay yearly dues of \$25 and pass a committee review.

The Professional Horsemen certification committee reviews all applications and interviews references. An applicant's professional activity must reflect the Professional Horsemen Code of Ethics that they have pledged to uphold.

Program information and applications are available at [apha.com/programs/profhorsemen](http://apha.com/programs/profhorsemen).