

Minutes of  
Annual General Meeting  
World Farriers Association  
Renaissance Riverview Hotel, Mobile, Alabama  
March 2, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Walt Taylor at 7:00 a.m., while those in attendance enjoyed a Continental Breakfast hosted by WFA. Everyone self-identified and signed a sheet of paper with their name and contact information. This meeting was only slightly better-attended than last year's.

The President introduced Dr. Ryo Kusunose, Executive Director of the Japan Farriers Association, representing Dr. Teruyuki Imahara, President of the Japan Farriers Association and WFA's Asian Vice President.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Secretary's Report

Minutes of the 2011 Annual Meeting were circulated by email to all interested parties following the meeting. A printed copy of those Minutes was given to each person present. There were no comments, additions, or corrections received. The Minutes stand approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report

Income from member's dues in 2011 was \$1050.00. Expenses were \$1,655.87: (Postage - \$125.95; Annual Meeting - \$334.94; International Reception - \$755.98; Web Site - \$214.00; Archives - \$175.00; Office Supplies - \$50.00). The bank balance on December 31, 2011, was \$21,059.44.

The Report was accepted as presented.

Asian Vice President

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am Ryo Kusunose, Executive Director of the Japan Farriers Association. I am here today on behalf of our President, Dr. Teruyuki Imahara. It is my great honor and pleasure to meet all the honorable delegates.

As you are all aware, a large earthquake hit the northeastern part of Japan on March 11 last year. The earthquake and following tsunami destructed a wide range of the coastal areas, leaving 20,000 people dead or still missing. The tsunami also affected the Fukushima nuclear power plant, and the cores of the plants were in meltdown. The radiation released by the destructed power plant still affects a large area.

Damages to the horse industry are as follows: Three race courses were damaged by the quake. However, they have been restored by now and horse racing has resumed. Three riding clubs and two schools which kept horses were extensively damaged by the tsunami. The tsunami killed 170 horses.

From all over the world, much support has been forwarded through the Japan Farriers Association to those people and areas affected by the disaster. Let me take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation. Presently, various efforts are being made in the affected area towards restoration.

Now, I would like to update you about the current status of Japan's horse shoeing and horse industry. I would also like to focus on our activities in Asia.

In Japan, the annual turnover of horse racing has declined consecutively for more than ten years. Last year, it dropped by 4.5% from the year before, partly as a consequence of the earthquake. And because of this, the financial situation of the Japan Farriers Association remained difficult, as the most part of its budget is financed by subsidy from the Japan Racing Association. At the end of last year, one small race course, located in southern Japan, was closed due to a financial difficulty. About 7,100 Thoroughbreds were produced in 2011. The figure is almost the same as for 2010.

In 2011, activities of the Japan Farriers Association basically remained unchanged from the previous year. Our education center admits 16 students every year. Among those 16 students who are expected to complete training this month, there is one from Taiwan. He will stay in Japan and continue training on a Thoroughbred farm in Hokkaido. In April, we will welcome 16 new students at the center. All of them are Japanese males and their age ranges from 18 to 30.

In October last year, we successfully held the 64<sup>th</sup> Japan Farriers Contests. We invited Mr. Jake Engler, a renowned farrier from the United States. It was really exciting for Japanese farriers to see his superb technical demonstration and take part in his hands-on training.

Regarding our activities in Asia, the 9<sup>th</sup> Asian Regional Farriery Competition was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in September 2011. Three Malaysian Jockey Clubs (namely Selangor, Penang, and Perak) take turns to sponsor this competition almost every year. Until last year, no Japanese farriers participated in the event. However, last year we received a letter of formal invitation and two Japanese farriers entered the competition for the first time. Representing Japan, Korea, Macau, and Malaysia, 43 contestants competed with each other for two days. As a result, one Japanese farrier won the overall competition and the other came second.

In October last year, we set up a booth at an International horse show in Shanghai, China, to inform Chinese horsemen of our activities and the technical aspect of Japanese horseshoeing.

As you know, the Chinese economy is growing rapidly. With this economic development, horse races without betting are held in various areas in China. In the near future, it is highly likely that the Chinese government will authorize horse racing with betting. The British-style of riding is also gaining popularity in China. However, veterinary service and horseshoeing technique which should support equestrian sports are still lagging behind. We are pleased to dispatch our experienced farriers to China for technical instruction whenever such request comes. We communicated this matter at the Shanghai show, too.

Situations in Asia, including Japan, are likely to change in coming years. We, at the JFA, would like to address these changes properly and do our best to contribute to the development of the horseshoeing industry in the Asian region.

Thank you for your attention.

The report was accepted as presented.

European Vice President: No report

Oceania Vice President: No report

Americas Vice President: No report

President:

Good morning! Thanks for taking the time and effort to come here this morning. I know that there are many demands on your time when you are here at the AFA Annual Convention, and we appreciate your making this a priority for this time period. Your interest and diligence is not diminished at all by the lack of interest, commitment, and participation by others who should be more involved with foot care and farriery on the international level. I believe that if it were not for the efforts of the WFA over the last two and a half decades, there would be much less liaison and interchange between farriers around the world.

Last year, Dr. Teruyuki Imahara, President of the Japan Farriers Association and the Asian Vice President of the WFA, observed with candor and emotion that the attendance at the annual meeting of the WFA had never been so low. Sadly, it is true. I share his feelings, but resist the temptation to conclude that the WFA has no role to play in furthering the education and opportunities for professional advancement for all farriers around the world. I would like to challenge everyone who reads this report and the Minutes of each Annual Meeting, and who cares at all about their involvement in farriery at home or abroad, take the time and effort to get involved with the WFA in the next year. You may be surprised by what is happening around the world, and by the opportunities you might have to get outside yourselves and contribute to others who are not as fortunate as you are.

For several years, as President of the WFA, I have been invited to be one of the Judges for the international blacksmithing and horseshoeing contests at the Fieracavalli (horse fair) that is held in Verona, Italy, in November of each year. It is one of the oldest continuously-running horse event in the World. Since its inauguration, it has been held regularly for 114 years. The fair draws equidae, commercial interests, and blacksmiths/farriers from all over the World to compete against and share with thousands of people that come from across Europe (and around the World) to enjoy the event.

For many years, one of the organizers and judges of the blacksmith/farrier contests at the Fair has been Signor Vincenzo Blasio, retired now from active duty with the farrier school of the Veterinary Corps of the Italian Army. Mr. Blasio came to my acquaintance in the mid-1980's when he and a team of Italian farriers competed in International contests in Stoneleigh, England. We have been friends since then.

At the 2011 Fieracavalli, Mr. Blasio was awarded an "Oscar" for his long service to farriery in Italy. The Academy making the award recognizes horse-industry figures who, over the years, have been particularly distinguished for their quality performance, dedication, and contribution to human and technical values in their profession in Italy. Mr. Blasio is a seventh-generation blacksmith/farrier, from the Naples Region of Italy, and now lives in Pinerolo in northern Italy. We add our congratulations to Mr. Blasio. The WFA worked with and through Mr. Blasio to help reconstitute the Italian Farriers Association in the early 1990's. Over the years, he has been and is a strong supporter of the WFA in his considerable area of influence.

Many times before, I have shared with you my concern for the future of the WFA. That there is a need to continue to work with farriers (and in farriery-related matters) around the world is indisputable. Much of my concern may be nothing more than 'hand wringing' and worry that comes with times when 'nothing' seems to be happening. The truth is that much is happening, everywhere. We meet people that report of exciting new

developments in their area; of new international initiatives where new liaisons and new friendships and working relationships are established; where new commercial enterprises are started to provide equipment and material for farriery and footcare activities. Educational opportunities for farriers and blacksmiths are expanding, as are competitions at all skill levels. I have come to realize and accept that it is not important whether or not the WFA has a direct hand in these activities. What is important is that it is happening, and it is happening because the WFA planted seeds years ago that are now bearing fruit for the entire equine industry, worldwide. If or when there is a need for assistance or advice, the WFA is or will be there to help in any way possible.

But the question of the WFA's physical presence in the future still begs. We need to look ahead, both in the short- and long-term, as to where we are going. Without a plan of some kind, failure is assured. Someone has to step up and pick-up. While I don't have an inclination to become less-involved right now, that time is approaching none-the-less. We - you have to be prepared for it. There are several scenarios that are plausible. Rather than bias or influence your thinking with my thoughts and concerns, I am asking you – whether you are here today at this meeting or reading this sometime after the meeting – to put this matter into your “in-box” or on your list of jobs that need to be done. Do it now. Don't throw up your hands and declare that you don't have any ideas or responsibilities. Don't wait for someone else to take the lead. Please, just DO IT.

During the coming year, get in touch with me however is most convenient for you, and let's talk about it. We should try to develop two or three alternative ways ahead during the year, and then discuss them and arrive at a joint decision at next year's meeting. This is serious business. It deserves your attention and your time. Don't let the world down by not caring or acting.

In accordance with our decision made at last year's meeting, I was unable to arrange for a WFA speaker at this year's AFA convention. That is regrettable, but it is not fatal. My efforts this year will be redoubled and, hopefully, a candidate will be found for next year's meeting. I will keep you advised.

This concludes my report to you. If you have any questions or concerns, either in public or in private, please know that I am open and receptive – and available – for your query or conversation.

Thank You!

Walt Taylor, President

March 3, 2012

The report was accepted as presented.

## ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Steve Eastman was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Farrier's Association. He reported that other internal affairs of the AFA have limited his liaison between the AFA and WFA.

Opening liaison with World Champion Blacksmiths was mentioned, but no action was taken.

No other associations were represented at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. WFA-sponsored speaker for AFA convention: It was suggested that the President look into the availability of Sr. Vincenzo Blasio of Italy as a possible sponsored speaker for the 2013 AFA convention. That will be done.
2. An “exchange” program for farriers working in less-developed countries to visit and learn in the United States was discussed. The President shared some of the many legal, social, and professional problems inherent in such an undertaking. No further action was taken.

NEW BUSINESS

1. The AFA is starting a new on-line magazine in the near future. Mr. Eastman suggested that the WFA contribute material to the effort both as an educational source for American farriers, and to raise the profile and work of the WFA. He suggested that ‘timeless’ articles from past issues of WTFE NEWS be submitted for publication in the new format. The DVD’s of WTFE-WFA could be advertised, as well. The President will follow-up on this.

ADJOURN

There being no more business to transact, the meeting ended at 8:00 a.m.

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