

AARS Mission Statement, Motto, Tag Lines, and Pledge



We've included the AARS Mission Statement, Motto, Tag Lines, and Pledge on the next page. You can get a snapshot of who we are simply by reading these public statements. Should you find them particularly interesting, the remaining pages of this article discuss them in detail.

AARS MISSION STATEMENT

1. To strengthen the wealth-creating capacity of our individual riding lesson program owners, and promote economic development of the horse industry at large
2. To make available to the general public the nation's most comprehensive, affordable, and enjoyable introduction to the sport and hobby of horses
3. To build strategic alliances, coalitions, and affiliations between our riding lesson programs serving the general market and the diverse support organizations and businesses that serve the horse industry's advanced specialty niches
4. To create innovative, ethical, and effective changes in the business culture of the U.S. horse industry, and to transform policy and influence opinion-makers regarding the business of horses

AARS MOTTO

The nation's most comprehensive and enjoyable introduction
to the sport and hobby of horses

AARS TAG LINES (3)

HORSES ~ The Hobby You Can Hug![™]

Your Horse is Waiting for You...[™]

You don't need to own a horse;
You can fall in love with ours![™]

AARS PLEDGE

On my honor, I pledge to treat horses in my care with respect and diligence; to never inflict or cause unnecessary pain or suffering to suit a passing fad; nor bend to negative peer pressure when participating in group decisions that will affect the physical or mental well being of the animal I have chosen to love.

AARS Mission Statement

The AARS Mission Statement is comprised of four parts; stated in order of importance. This means that our primary goal is the first statement and that we will spend all of our effort there until we can afford to move on to the second, and so on. Please remember this as you read through the four statements.

(1) The AARS was developed ***“to strengthen the wealth-creating capacity of our individual riding lesson program owners, and promote economic development of the horse industry at large.”*** Our first goal is to increase the income of those persons who are registered with the AARS. If you join us, that would be you. We believe that by increasing your income we can, in turn, increase the income of other businesses in the horse industry – trailer dealerships, saddle makers, tack shops, etc.

(2) The AARS was developed ***“to make available to the general public the nation’s most comprehensive, affordable, and enjoyable introduction to the sport and hobby of horses.”*** Our second goal is to make the horse industry more visible to people who are not yet part of it. We want to offer a program that is basic enough that it can be cost-competitive with similar novice-level physical activities such as dance, karate, gymnastics, and skating. Finally, we want to offer a program that is broad-based; one that serves as a worthy introduction to the broad sport and hobby we call horses.

(3) The AARS was developed ***“to build strategic alliances, coalitions, and affiliations between our riding lesson programs serving the general market and the diverse support organizations and businesses that serve the horse industry’s advanced specialty niches.”*** An *alliance* is a relation by common interest – two groups of equal value that have a reason to work together. A *coalition* is a temporary alliance developed to serve a short-term purpose. And *affiliation* indicates that an organization is associated with another in a subordinate relationship; such as a state club being an affiliate of a national association. The American Association of Riding Schools, Inc., wants to work with the horse industry at all levels and in all capacities to promote the sport and hobby of horses. We believe we are in a unique position to serve as a communicator between and among horse organizations, and the general public.

(4) The AARS was developed to “*create innovative, ethical, and effective changes in the business culture of the U.S. horse industry, and to transform policy and influence opinion-makers regarding the business of horses.*” *Innovative* means new. The AARS offers a new way to influence positions and processes in the horse industry. *Ethical* means we want to encourage new practices that are good for people and/or horses and discourage old practices that hurt people and/or horses. *Effective* means that, if we’re going to make an effort in a positive direction, we would hope it would actually cause the change we are attempting to make. This statement is a politically nice way of saying we believe the horse industry does not always behave as well as it should; and that we’d like to do something about it.

AARS Motto

The AARS Motto is, “*The nation’s most comprehensive and enjoyable introduction to the sport and hobby of horses™ .*” This is a marketing statement to the general public that lets them know they can count on the AARS to give them a fair overall view of the hobby; and that we will keep it fun.

AARS Tag Lines

Tag lines are like those catchy phrases you see on the sides of the cups at McDonalds®. As I write this, their tag line is “I’m Loving It™ .” That leads me to believe they’re running out of tag lines! I much prefer their old, “You Deserve a Break Today™ and “Keep Your Eyes on Your Fries!™” Tag lines are sound bites that emotionally tie a customer to a product. The AARS currently has three tag lines:

HORSES ~ The Hobby You Can Hug!™

Your Horse is Waiting for You...™

You Don’t Need to Own a Horse; You Can Fall in Love with Ours!™

The AARS Pledge

The AARS Pledge speaks to the inhumane treatment of animals. When I married Gary in 1980, he helped my brother load my horse equipment out of my folks' barn. When Gary raised his eyebrows in question, Tom alluded to the sexual connotation as he said, "Yeah, those horse women are really into whips and chains." A half dozen years later we left the class-A circuit because we were tired of the whips and chains. I grew weary of explaining things to novice level customers when there was no good way to explain them. I don't care whether it's wiring ears, gingering anuses, tattooing eyelids, draining blood, injecting tails, burning legs, setting tails, or anything else. I'm just old and tired of seeing it. Every subjectively judged sport or artistic endeavor - including modeling, dancing, and cycling just to name a few - have extremes that are unethical and embarrassing; but few of them compare to what we do to our horses.

On a continuous basis, I enjoy reading scientific research related to animal behavior (all animals) and, as a result, hold strong convictions about the mind of an animal. I believe they suffer emotional pain when they are repeatedly bought, sold, and moved from home to home. On average, human children, and dogs and cats might be displaced once or twice during their lifetime. But, horses are bought and sold much like motorcycles; wherein the owner is in constant need of a bigger, better model. It is no wonder that so many horses lack personal confidence, or have trouble learning human language. Those rare people who have been able to keep their horse at their own home for all of its life know how much a horse can know.

I don't have a problem saddling and riding a horse because I believe we all – adults, children, and animals - must earn our keep; but I believe it should be done with personal respect for the bonded servants they are. I support the efforts of the Humane Society of the United States and cannot, for the life of me, understand how anyone can work closely with horses and be at odds with HSUS. Who in their right mind could find an objection to protecting something that cannot protect itself; especially when it is clear that the U.S. horse industry does not have an interest in self-regulation. The AARS Pledge states that, "***On my honor, I pledge to treat horses in my care with respect and diligence; to never inflict or cause unnecessary pain or***

suffering to suit a passing fad; nor bend to negative peer pressure when participating in group decisions that will affect the physical or mental well being of the animal I have chosen to love.”

There is nothing in that statement that says I won't discipline my horse. I disciplined my son and he is better for it. I watch him discipline my granddaughter and I know I must have done something right. He is even-tempered and consistent in the care of his children – as we should be with our horses. He also happens to be, personally, quite tattooed. I don't think there is anything abusive about his tattoo's because they are self-inflicted; or rather inflicted by self-direction. But, if he attempted to tattoo my granddaughter, I'd be the first to fight to block it. I would consider it *inflicting or causing unnecessary pain or suffering to suit a passing fad*. So, this pledge says, *“If you want to abuse something, pierce your own body, slash your own skin, or run jalapeño peppers up your own A - but leave your horse alone.”*

This Pledge indicates that you cannot participate in many of the *industry-accepted enhancements* practiced in our various breed associations while maintaining a registration with the AARS. One might suggest that this will limit the ability for the AARS to expand within the current horse industry. Our response is that, just because it would be difficult to rectify an injustice, does not mean that we can justify ignoring it. Anyone who has completed an introductory psychology course knows that *justification* is a defense mechanism.

Colleen Pace, AARS