

2008 Arabian Open Shows Championships Most Successful Ever!

By Laura Mickelson, AOSC chair

The third Arabian Open Shows Championships (AOSC), created, sponsored, and run by the Minnesota Arabian Horse Association, moved to Labor Day weekend for 2008 amid concerns that the holiday weekend would not be a good draw.



Boy, were we wrong to worry! The show was three times larger than 2007 with 68 horses and 338 entries. A number of people came the night before and made a party of it! Several barns used this show to give their students some show ring experience and as an inexpensive warm-up for Fall Fest. We sold so many stalls, that we opened the main barn!

We were very pleased with the number of horses from other breeds—our promotional efforts (and the Jackpot classes) paid off! Overall the quality of all horses shown was very high and we look forward to this show becoming even more competitive.

The AOSC classes were held as part of a WSCA open show with some Arabian-only classes at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Lake Elmo on August 31, 2008. New for 2008 were Jackpot classes that were very well received with 46 entries between the 2 classes. The winner of the English pleasure jackpot took home \$150—not bad for a \$10 entry fee! Horses came from Wisconsin and a wide area of Minnesota proving that this concept has appeal outside of the local area. Everyone had a wonderful time and the even the weather cooperated!



Judges were Lori Conway for the AOSC classes and Phil Callahan for the WSCA and the other Arabian classes. Lori continued our practice of giving tips to exhibitors to help them improve their performance. This was, as always, much appreciated by all and will continue. A special thanks to Lori for donating her time!



AOSC exhibitors were thrilled with the qualifier ribbons and especially impressed with the new custom designed autumn-themed garlands for champion and the fancy neck sashes for reserve.



These garlands were created by Champion Silks, the same person who makes the garlands for the Arabian national shows and will be the trademark award for the AOSC classes into the future. Top 5 ribbons comparable to Region 10 awards were also a hit. As a special treat, the AOSC winners received free win photos, courtesy of MAHA, and with special thanks to Anita Grant for again serving as photographer.



Horses qualified for the AOSC by competing in 3 unrated shows, including the other classes held on the same day as the championships. Our main purpose is to showcase these wonderful Arabians trained and show by their amateur owners to quality judges in a championship setting. It was very gratifying to see the joy and excitement that these championships generated. MAHA is on the right track with programs like this and the reaction of the exhibitors proves it.

Our main promotional goal is to convince people who own or would like to own an Arabian that they don't need to switch breeds if they want to compete in open shows and that message came across loud and clear at this show! We need to concentrate on what we have in common—the love of these magnificent Arabian horses and build a club that welcomes and appreciates the efforts of all members who share that love. With the number of non-Arabians showing this year, we were able to fulfill another of our promotional goals—to show the world that Arabians are as useful as they are beautiful and to provide incentives to show Arabians in open competitions.



Part of MAHA's efforts to connect to this wider world of Arabian owners is the calendar of open shows held in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and in the Dakotas that have Arabian classes or are of interest to people showing Arabians that I have been creating and distributing for the last two years. This calendar is available on the MAHA (www.mnarabhorse.com) and the Region 10 web sites (www.region10arabians.com) and is also emailed to an ever-growing list of people in the 5 state area. The calendar also includes a list of Arabian-friendly open shows judges, as recommended by exhibitors. If you want to be added to this list, please email me at lauramickelson@aol.com.

The show looks to make a profit and this is due in great part to the generosity of our patrons, sponsors and, of course, the wonderful volunteers! Special thanks to Lori Conway for Conway Arabians patronships as well as donating her time to judge the show.



I would like to thank the AOSC Committee members: Natalie Anderson, Jane Boots, Anita Grant, Christina Mattson, and Kathy Zalusky for their hard work both before and during the show. Special thanks to the show volunteers: Brian and Sandy Feuling, Lisa Lewis, Christina Mattson, Toni Marie O'Daniel, Linda Selchow, Shirley and Mike Theede, and Elaine Yungerberg. I can't tell you how much I appreciate your efforts!

Finally I would like to thank our show patrons and sponsors without whom this show would simply not be possible. Special, special thanks to MAHA's outgoing president Brian Feuling for his amazing work getting all of the classes sponsored and in adding Corporate Sponsorships from Classic Fencing and Construction, Houle's Farm, Garden, and Pet, Pferd Farrier, and Stillwater

Vet. A complete list of patrons and sponsors is posted on MAHA's website. Our largest single sponsor was Midwest Training and David Boggs who contributed \$200! Please patronize and thank these wonderful people, farms, and businesses who so generously supported this show!

The 2009 show will also be at the Washington County Fairgrounds on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend (September 6, 2009). We will be adding junior horse classes next year, use the main barn so there will be plenty of stalls, and the show office will open Saturday night for those who want to come early. We can always use fresh faces and ideas, so if you want to join the show committee or comment on the show, please contact me at lauramickelson@aol.com.

Thanks again to everyone who supported the show!

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2008 Arabian Open Show Championships
WSCA/Open Show**

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