September 17, 2020

To the USDF Members and US Dressage Finals Competitors, Volunteers, Sponsors, Vendors, and Supporters,

Once again, I find myself writing a letter to all of you that I had not anticipated writing. With much regret, yet with my full confidence in the decision, the Executive Board has made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 US Dressage Finals presented by Adequan®. After seven remarkable, unforgettable years, the curse of the COVID-19 pandemic has struck our Federation’s premier national event.

In coming to this decision, which I assure you has not been made without a thorough evaluation first from the US Dressage Finals Organizing Committee, followed by the Executive Board’s examination that considered every scenario and option, we simply could not be confident in our ability to overcome the obstacles beyond our control: the ever-changing picture of the pandemic from state to state, the requirements of the US Equestrian COVID-19 Action Plan to which the Kentucky Horse Park requires strict compliance, the stresses of deep cleaning the premises on the heels of the National Horse Show that would precede the arrival of our dressage horses, and the limitations of what we could provide for competitors, volunteers, and officials with the restrictions placed upon the Park itself. After lengthy discussion, taking into consideration the health and well-being of our members, the Executive Board voted to cancel the 2020 US Dressage Finals, with full intentions to return the event to its glory in 2021 at the Kentucky Horse Park.

While I understand this seems to be another unfair blow to many who have worked so tirelessly to realize their dreams of competing at the Finals, all is not lost. Any competitor eligible for the 2020 US Dressage Finals, whether by placing or earning a qualifying wild card score, will be allowed to carry over their eligibility to the 2021 event. To be deemed “eligible,” competitors will still be required to complete a declaration and nomination for 2020. DECLARATIONS WILL REMAIN OPEN FOR ALL REGIONS THROUGHOUT THE END OF THE 2020 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON. The closing date is yet to be determined. However, at the end of the extended declaration time, all eligible competitors will be provided a window of time to complete their nomination. USDF will issue a press release soon with detailed instructions for the process that we will follow. This will include the details of how competitors from regions that were unable to hold their Regional Championship this year will be determined to be eligible via a maintained ranking list (at the time I am writing this letter, this applies only to Region 5 competitors who did not elect to declare for another region).

I feel compelled to repeat that this decision was not taken lightly, nor made without extensive research and modeling. I know that many of you are deeply disappointed, yet I hope that all of you will keep striving to achieve your riding and training goals. For some of you, perhaps this news will provide opportunities that were thought to be lost in the 2020 mayhem and now might allow you to plan to attend the Finals in 2021. It is our hope that with the carryover qualifiers from 2020, the addition of the junior/young rider division, and the return of the current series finalists, the 2021 US Dressage Finals will set a new standard and prove itself a can’t-miss event.

Good luck at your Regional Championships. Please be COVID-19 compliant and stay safe!

Lisa Gorretta
USDF President

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