



Dressage Shows Get New Designations, Classes

USEF competition levels and opportunity classes stand to benefit competitors

BY MARGARET FREEMAN

The term “level” now has a new designation for US dressage competitions. The new categories should help riders to decide which shows to attend. They’re also designed to encourage “show newbies” to try competing, and to help new show organizers get their feet wet.

The trick will be to know when “levels” means show levels and when it refers to the traditional test levels of Training, First, and so on.

Show Levels

As of December 1, 2009, every US Equestrian Federation (USEF) dressage show must be classified as one of five levels. The level designations indicate specific facilities and standards. They range from Level 1 (a one-day show limited to 75 horses) to Level 5 (CDIs, selection trials, and national championships).

Level 1 is intended as an “Introduction to Licensed

Competitions." Grass and chain rings are permitted. There are few minimum requirements except those specified in current USEF rules.

Level 2 can be one or more days. Grass and chain rings are permitted.

Level 3 must be two or more days. No grass rings are permitted. Warm-up footing must be similar to that in the main arena. Stabling is required on the grounds. There must be a sound system. A minimum of two USEF "S" judges is required.

Level 4 must be three or more days. Great American/USDF Regional Championships will be held at this level. There must be good all-weather footing.

Level 5 must be held per FEI/national-championship rules.

Opportunity Classes

Along with show levels comes the introduction of opportunity classes: designated dressage tests through Second Level for which riders do not have to pay the USEF and USDF fees that are standard for USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized dressage competition.

Riders who enter opportunity classes are exempt from USEF/USDF rider/horse registration, membership, and


drug/medication fees unless they also enter other dressage classes (if the show allows cross-entering). Riders entering USDF Introductory Level tests at USEF shows were already exempt from membership fees. With the opportunity classes being offered at USEF-licensed competitions, all other dressage rules apply, including USEF dress and saddlery plus applicable general and drugs/medication rules.

Scores from opportunity classes will not count toward USEF or USDF awards or programs. They may be restricted to adult amateurs, but then the rider must either have amateur status on file with the USEF or pay the \$30 nonmember amateur-card fee. Any USEF- or FEI-licensed judge may officiate at opportunity classes.

A show's level determines which opportunity classes may be held. A Level 1 competition may offer two tests per level at Training through Second Levels. A Level 2 competition may offer two tests per level per day at Training and First Levels. A Level 3 competition may offer two tests per day at Training Level. Levels 4 and 5 may not offer opportunity classes.

View a chart outlining the show levels at the USEF Web site (usef.org). The rules for opportunity classes are listed in the USEF Rule Book (also available on usef.org) under GR821 (General Rules) and DR126 (Dressage Rules). ▲

Who Uses Equilite Products?



- Olympic Bronze Medalist – Dressage
- 2009 USEF Equestrian of the Year
- 2009 FEI Rolex World Cup Winner
- Equilite User

“**W**E HAVE used *Sore No More Liniment* under our wraps, with terrific results, on horses with chronic swelling. The horses legs we have put it on have consistently stayed tighter than ever before.” **STEFFEN PETERS**

— Actual Testimonial. Not a Paid Endorsement.

1-800-942-5483
Call to find the dealer nearest you



EQUILITE
Member of the Arreast Family of Products

www.SoreNoMore.net
www.equilite.com