

ACHIEVE *ALL-STAR* AFFILIATE STATUS

Like-minded competitors enthusiastic about reined cow horse can create an approved affiliate that benefits their interest by following the advice of these successful cow horse groups.

Compiled by Kate Bradley Byars

Hosting a cow horse show can sound so simple, but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of planning an event, and then making it legal with the National Reined Cow Horse Association, it can become downright daunting. Yet, more affiliates are joining the NRCHA each year as cow horse competitions spread across the U.S., Canada and overseas.

What are the benefits of becoming an NRCHA affiliate? Is it worth the time and effort? Three established NRCHA affiliates—Colorado Reined Cowhorse Association, New York Reined Cow Horse Association and the South Texas Reined Cow Horse Association—say yes, and here they list not only why, but how to go about accrediting your group.

COURTESY OF THE COLORADO REINED COWHORSE ASSOCIATION / M.J. ANDERSON





At affiliate-level shows, everyone pitches in for the success of the group, like the Colorado Reined Cowhorse Association board members working the gate at this show.

“Achieving affiliate status is definitely worth it to our members so that our shows are sanctioned by NRCHA,” said Tina McCleary, secretary of the South Texas Reined Cow Horse Association, a group of approximately 320 members that show near Bryan, Texas. “We are eligible for the affiliate sponsorship and youth sponsorships given by NRCHA by following the guidelines.”

From filling out forms to corralling volunteers, achieving affiliate status can take time. However, the benefits outweigh any headaches early on.

FROM THE NRCHA

Before a group of cow horse riders can vie for annual year-end awards through the NRCHA by riding in local shows, someone has to handle the paperwork. While that isn’t usually the most popular job, it is necessary.

Emily Konkel, NRCHA shows manager, works with members daily to ensure that shows are approved in their affiliate groups so that they count toward member goals. Affiliate members not only ride for their local group’s awards, but also:

- ◆ Regional Awards presented by the NRCHA
- ◆ Qualification points for the NRCHA Celebration of Champions World Championship Show
- ◆ Year-end points for NRCHA National Champion awards.

According to Konkel, the most common misconception she sees with cow horse groups that apply for affiliate status is that they think it will be harder than it is when it is actually quite simple.

“Brand new groups aren’t always 100 percent prepared with the required members,” Konkel said. “It is important for a new affiliate to keep in mind that their members don’t necessarily have to live in the state that the affiliate is located in. For example, a person may join the Michigan affiliate but live in New York.”

To apply to be an NRCHA affiliate, there are four must-haves:

1. 20 members with a current NRCHA membership
2. Provide a copy of affiliate constitution and bylaws
3. Provide a complete list of members by March 15 each year (minimum of 20)
4. Submit \$100 annual Affiliate Fee

Achieving those four things and sending in an Affiliate Application Form is the first big step. Then, those groups can take advantage of the support NRCHA

extends through the following:

◆ NRCHA Foundation Youth

The NRCHA Foundation awards two individuals from each NRCHA affiliate with a scholarship—Youth Fence recipient receives \$500; Youth Limited recipient receives \$250.

◆ NRCHA Affiliate Sponsorship Program

To assist affiliates the NRCHA provides a \$500 NRCHA Sponsorship to each affiliate if they meet the affiliate terms and conditions.

◆ NRCHA Affiliate of the Year

This award recognizes the affiliate that increases membership and show entries, is innovative at shows, and increases payout and other considerations with a \$1,500 award. The runner-up receives \$1,000.

With so much to gain from applying for affiliate status, members that band together in their local area can reap rewards from filing out the paperwork and sticking together.

NRCHA Affiliate Application Form

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming an affiliate of the NRCHA. We look forward to including your group to our fast growing family of affiliates worldwide. In order to become an affiliate, an annual fee of \$100 is due November 15th, of each show season and delinquent on March 1st of the same show season. Membership dues not paid by March 15th of each year shall be considered delinquent and all rights and privileges of membership shall be forfeited. In addition to the annual fee, a minimum of 20 active members in your organization is required. The Show Managers and Show Secretary must be NRCHA members as well. If you meet with the aforementioned requirements, please fill out the form below:

	MEMBER NAME	NRCHA #	ON BOARD
Affiliate Name:	1.		
Contact Name:	2.		
Phone:	3.		
Contact Email:	4.		
Website:	5.		
Mailing Address:	6.		
City / State / Zip:	7.		
Country:	8.		
Which states or geographical region does your affiliate represent?	9.		
	10.		
	11.		
	12.		
	13.		
	14.		
	15.		
	16.		
	17.		
	18.		
	19.		
	20.		

Affiliate Requirements:

- 20 Members with a current NRCHA membership
- Provide a copy of their Constitution and Bylaws
- Provide a complete list of members by March 15 each year

Membership List:
Please list the 20 active members and their NRCHA number and indicate which are Board Members. All board members must be active NRCHA members.

256 N Highway 377 / Pilot Point, Texas 76258 / 940-488-1500 / Fax: 940-488-1899



In 2019, the New York Reined Cow Horse Association was presented with the NRCHA Affiliate of the Year award.

BAND TOGETHER

Like any group activity, it isn't always simple for everyone to follow through with an idea. Here, affiliate secretaries and members from across the U.S. offer advice on how to get a group together, keep it together, and make a solid investment in the local cow horse industry by becoming an NRCHA affiliate.

For McCleary, local support got the ball rolling on their events.

"Talk to your local horse community and see if you have a need or the support for an affiliate in your area," she said. "Build a board full of people who are doers and who have complimentary skill sets. Be organized by having all of your ducks in a row before you go public, like a website, show dates, an email and social media.

"Because if people are hungry for cow horse shows in the area, they will jump at a chance to show closer to home," she continued. "The small things can get overlooked, like providing show entry forms online and pre-entering. Yet those things help an affiliate run a show smoothly."

Cindy Pfeifer, NYRCHA show secretary, recommends groups start small. Don't use all the sponsor money for the first show's prizes, she said.



Amenities like RV hookups and safe stalling allow members near and far to attend an affiliate's event.

"Keep entry fees to a minimum and payouts low [as] this will draw those interested in trying it without emptying their wallet," she said. "Always keep your eye on the bottom line—listen to

your treasurer! It isn't always an overnight success – it takes a lot of dedicated members who are willing to work hard both before, during and after shows."

Take into consideration that the first show or two may be small and plan a facility accordingly.

"As a club, we started out in small facilities where we could afford to take a hit [if entries lacked]," said NYRCHA Show Manager and Vice President Lisa Sykes. "We didn't over-commit ourselves on awards or money. We gradually built our selves up to a larger facility."

Jacob Partridge, NYRCHA Green Rider director said, that with an established budget, trying new things or providing more awards is easier to take on for the affiliate. While the premier events can provide ideas to affiliates, don't forget that it starts with the lower level riders.

"Be easily approachable, warm and inviting," he suggested. "Cow horse can and is intimidating to many new comers. Achieving affiliate status is important to allow local riders an opportunity to get involved at a lower level and grow into the premier shows/events. It allows them to get their feet wet without the expense of traveling and higher entry fees."



Awards, whether they are a simple ribbon or a piece of tack, help give competitors a positive feeling about the show, which keeps them coming back.

TAKE IT FROM THEM

An affiliate doesn't have to have top trainers in the area competing to have success. Having 20 members or more spread over multiple divisions works just as well.

It is the experience provided to riders of all levels—including prizes and a positive atmosphere—that keeps entries up.

"When starting an affiliate it is so important to have a group of board members that work well together and are dedicated to putting in the long hours both at meetings planning the shows and running them," said Joe Decker, NYRCHA president. "Focus on your entire membership from Green Riders to the Non Pro and Open levels. Give everyone a place to come show. Give back to your membership. The more successful your shows become the more you should give back in payouts and awards. Having affiliate status gives all your members a place to grow."

Though two or three or four people may kick start the group that becomes an affiliate, they can grow to the size of the CRCA at 421 members in a short time. Jim and Jill Cook, members of the CRCA, recognize the importance of working with all members.

"We think that as an affiliate you must provide as many opportunities to the membership as possible," the Cooks said. "That can include, clinics, shows and social opportunities, with an emphasis of self improvement. The membership also has to feel like they are a part of the leadership. The membership has to work together to create success. An affiliate must also be willing to change and grow to fill the needs of the majority of the membership."

Sometimes, the needs of the membership include having more fun. For the NYRCHA, a daily drawing for door prizes is one way to keep attendees energized.



Fun events like the Chuck-A-Duck allows all affiliate members, regardless of age, to participate at the NYRCHA shows.

"Despite the pandemic our club grew by 25 percent this year," said Sykes. "We continued with [giving members a] weekend highpoint, roll of the dice [game], daily draws and high scoring fence and box run [award] for the weekend."

From ensuring there is a concession stand on site to offering enough time in the arena for warm-ups, it is the little



Whether a professional trainer on standby to assist in the herd work or youth members tasked with delivering shavings, all affiliate members want to feel they are a big part of the group's success.

AFFILIATE QUESTIONS?

Contact Emily Konkel
at Emily@nrcha.com.

things that make a big impact on members. Amenities and cattle are the most commonly discussed elements of any horse show!

"Make sure you have good cattle. Cattle are key to having a good successful show and getting people to come back," emphasized Partridge.

An enthusiastic membership committed to the local events is key to an affiliate's success. According to MJ Anderson, CRCA executive director, local shows do more than only support that area of the industry.

"Having a place to ride, show and be around other enthusiasts is very special," she said. "Non Pros want their trainers to stay in business, and want a place locally to ready for the big shows, which is a goal to attend. Once the affiliate is established it is so worth it to call them your cow horse family!"

With a focus on member involvement and opportunities to show, an affiliate that sticks to budget while providing top-notch experiences is sure to thrive in the NRCHA. 