

# Probe targets area farm

Humane Society says it found walking horse soring in Murfreesboro

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The Humane Society of the United States says its 2015 undercover investigation at a Murfreesboro farm found trainers using harsh chemicals on the feet of walking horses, an illegal practice known as soring that forces the animals to walk with a higher step.

ThorSport Farm is the focus of the national animal protection organization's hidden-camera investigation that ended this month. The Humane Society released an undercover video along with the results of its investigation Tuesday, which is the eve of the walking horse industry's premier show, the Tennessee

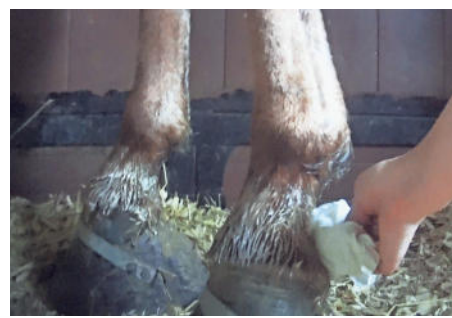
Walking Horse National Celebration in Shelbyville.

"We found rampant soring of horses, that trainers involved with this stable knew exactly what they were doing," said Wayne Pacelle, the Humane Society's president and chief executive.

ThorSport owner Duke Thorson disputed the Humane Society's allegations in a statement released Tuesday, calling them broadly misleading and false. Thorson said his farm has a reputation for operating ethically and legally.

"We emphatically reject the HSUS' charges of soring," said Thorson, who is a member of the Celebration's Horsemen's Leadership Council. "This farm operates within the rules. Our intolerance for unethical and illegal training is widely known to the point that people who want such an advantage no longer approach us."

The Tennessee walking horse has a naturally high gait, but trainers used



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES  
The Humane Society of the United States says an undercover investigation has found walking horse abuse on ThorSport Farm in Murfreesboro.

padded shoes and ankle chains to encourage a higher step, which is prized in competitions. Some figured out that abuse to the hooves and ankles, the practice known as soring, can make the process

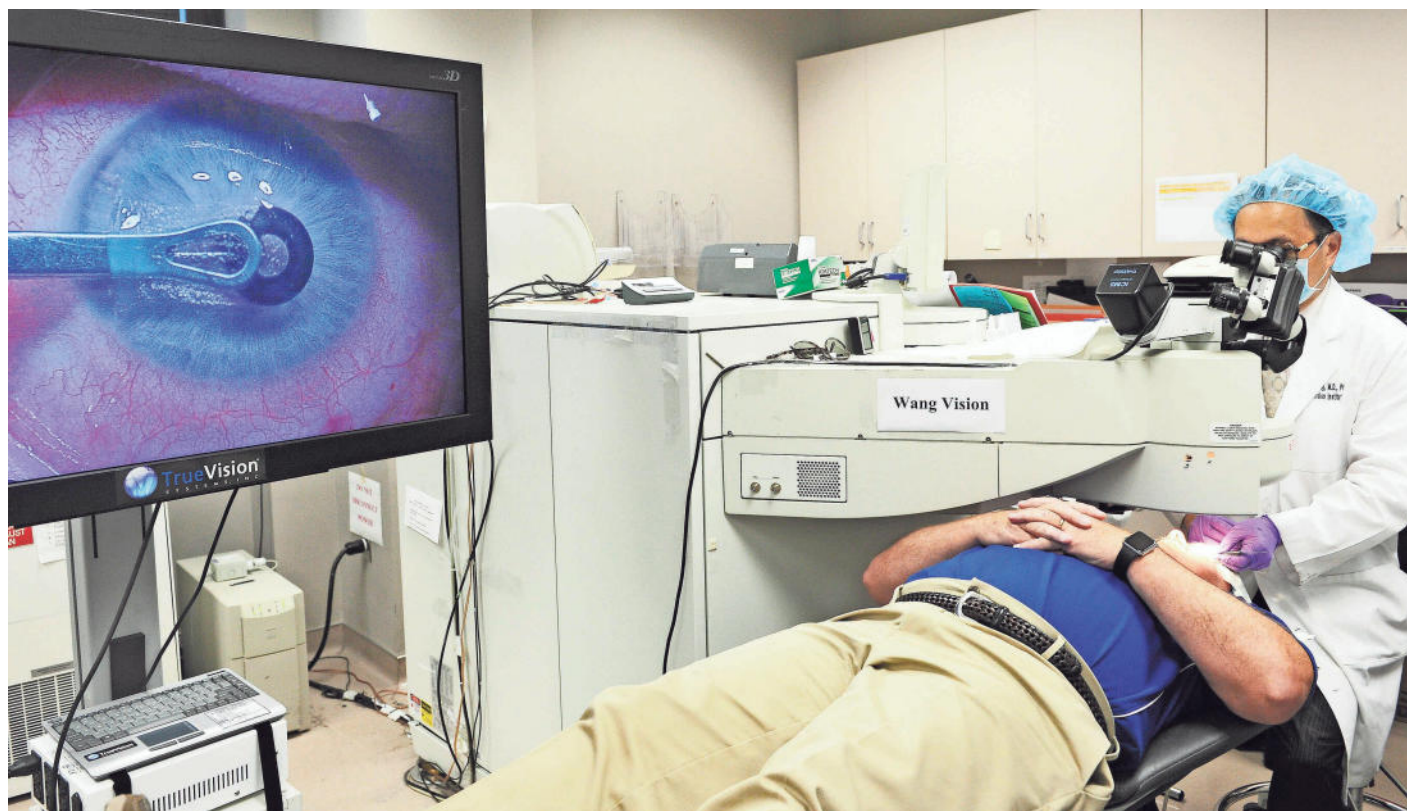
go faster. It is illegal in Tennessee.

The issue was thrust into the spotlight in 2012 after the Humane Society released undercover video of a West Tennessee trainer, Jackie McConnell, beating and overseeing the soring of horses. A federal court convicted McConnell, who was once a member of the Celebration's Hall of Fame, of violating the Horse Protection Act, which prohibits showing sored horses or transporting them to shows.

"Today of course we're exposing this abuse yet again, and I don't see how anyone can deny that this activity isn't rampant," Pacelle said.

Mike Inman, the Celebration's chief executive officer, disagrees that soring is rampant. He also said the Humane Society's findings would not have any bearing on how any horses, including those from ThorSport, are inspected during

» SORING, 11A



Dr. Ming Wang performs eye surgery to insert a pinhole lens into a patient's cornea.

SAMUEL M. SIMPKINS / THE TENNESSEAN

## IMPLANT CAN AVERT MIDLIFE EYE ISSUE

KAMRA inlay allows patients to get rid of reading glasses

Tom Wilemon

A new procedure lets people bypass the bifocal benchmark for middle age and stop having to search for reading glasses.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration this year approved a cornea implant that gives people with age-related nearsightedness the ability to focus on small print and smartphone content. It's a tiny pinhole that works similar to the aperture of a camera. This is the first time the FDA has approved a surgical fix for presbyopia, in which the lenses of the eyes become increasingly rigid with age, sending people returning to bins of reading glasses for ever stronger magnifications.

But freeing your face from frames comes with a price. It costs \$6,000 — more if a patient also gets a Lasik procedure as an option for ditching bifocals. People have been driving more than 100 miles to Nashville to get the implant since Dr. Ming Wang began offering the KAMRA inlay in April. The device is made by California-based AcuFocus Inc.

Danny Hughes drove up from Arab, Ala., one Friday morning and was able to drive back home after getting a KAMRA inlay. The implant is inserted into the cornea over the lens of just one eye. The dominant eye, the one

that people use for driving or sports activities, isn't involved. He said he was tired of dealing with multifocal contact lenses.

But it does take a period of adjustment to become accustomed to fully utilizing the inlay.

Robin Farrar, a physical education teacher from Lynnville, Tenn., said she's happy with the results.

"I was so sick of the eyeglasses," she said. "They were constantly falling off and I was having to pick them up. Now, I can look at my watch; I can read my phone."

A viable surgical solution for presbyopia had been elusive, Wang said.

"The FDA and researchers have been on this problem for the last few decades in tacking this holy grail of ophthalmology, this last frontier," Wang said.

The FDA reviewed the results of three clinical studies before approving the procedure. The results of the main study indicated that 83.5 percent of people who had the surgery scored 20/40 or better a year later on vision tests — an acuity enabling them to read most text in magazines and newspapers.

The procedure may cause unintended consequences, the FDA said, including glare, night vision problems and blurry vision. There is also the potential for surgical complications. It is not intended for people who have had cataract surgery or those with severe dry eye problems, uncontrolled diabetes and other vision-related diseases.



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## MTSU fraternity suspended over sign

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MURFREESBORO — A Middle Tennessee State University fraternity chapter was suspended pending a university investigation into a sign placed outside its off-campus house, according to a statement from the fraternity's national office.

The Theta-Omega chapter of Sigma Pi, which has a house on Middle Tennessee Boulevard near Murphy Center, had a banner that reportedly was taken down by fraternity leadership 30 minutes after it was put up, according to an MTSU statement.

The sign, which read "Freshman Girls Info Center," was "inconsistent with the values we promote as a university," according to the MTSU statement.

"We are aware that the fraternity's national headquarters has suspended the campus chapter pending outcome of an investigation," the statement read. "We will continue to gather information as we determine whether action by the university is warranted."

University officials will investigate whether the school's student code of conduct or fraternity and sorority guidelines were violated, said Jimmy Hart, the MTSU director of news and media relations.

The Sigma Pi national office released a statement Tuesday confirming the suspension of the fraternity during the investigation.

"Sigma Pi Fraternity condemns the use of sexist or demeaning banners anywhere in the community. It's completely against the values of Sigma Pi Fraternity, and it will not be tolerated," said Michael Ayalon, executive director. "We are working closely with the administration at MTSU as we investigate the matter, and the students that are found responsible will face disciplinary action."

A fraternity at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., was suspended over a banner that stated "Freshman Daughter Drop Off" was found in front of its house.

Reach Brian Wilson at 615-278-5165.



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