

Pete Kyle

The first ever international reining competition to be held at the American Quarter Horse Association's World Show in Oklahoma City in November 2009 yielded a highly appropriate winner – Pete Kyle of Whitesboro, Texas, chairman of the FEI's reining committee.

A tremendous ambassador for the sport, and a member of the gold medal winning USA team at the 2008 FEI World Championships in Manerbio, Italy, Pete spends much of his time encouraging shows to organise international competitions and raising funds through corporate and individual sponsorship. But the win means that he is also a contender for a place on the team for the World Equestrian Games in Lexington in 2010.

"This was a qualifier for our selection trials which will take place in Oklahoma City in July 2010, and it is exciting to see how much the standard of competition has improved," says Pete. "But that is true worldwide, and competitions such as the one at the World Show, in a good arena with ample warm up facilities, can only help. It is to become an annual fixture and I expect it to grow in the future."

With expanding national and international circuits, keeping a horse fresh for the big events can be a challenge, even for USA-based riders who tend to have large strings of possible contenders.

"The World Equestrian Games has become a major goal for reiners so we rest and prepare our best horses specifically for that event, for as much as a year or more," Pete explains.

He will undoubtedly be a busy man in the run up to WEG, but admits to a real frisson of excitement when he thinks about the event.

"I'm so looking forward to it, it is crucial that the USA does a good job in organising the games. It should be highly beneficial for equestrian sport in our country and will hopefully encourage visitors to have a go at the different disciplines."

Like most of the successful trainers, Pete is a John Deere devotee. "We have used John Deere equipment for 30 years. I have tried other brands but always return to Deere," he explains. "It is a high quality tractor with the reliability that is essential for an equestrian business. We've got four arenas that need regular dragging to maintain the quality of the surface, and we have to move big square and round bales of alfalfa out to the pastures to feed the horses. Our two John Deere tractors are busy all day long, and they are never any trouble."

And in his capacity as an ambassador for reining, he also has a warm respect for John Deere. "It is good to have such a well regarded brand involved with our sport, and I think that we are an excellent representative of each other and our values."