

1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 263-6000
Fax (916) 263-6042

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

12235 Beach Blvd., Suite 7
Stanton, CA 90680
(714) 890-7001
Fax (714) 890-7006
Contact:
Mike Marten
(714) 890-7004
Cell: (714) 240-1870

CHRB NEWS RELEASE

JUNE 30, 2005

BOARD SUPPORTS MICROCHIP IDENTIFICATION OF RACEHORSES

PLEASANTON, CA –The California Horse Racing Board instructed staff Thursday to develop a detailed plan for a pilot program to add microchips to the methods used to identify racehorses in California.

Dan Fick, the Jockey Club representative who co-chairs the equine arm of the USDA National Animal Identification System, told racing commissioners during the CHRB monthly meeting that technology is available today for accurate microchip identification conforming to international standards.

Fick said the cost would be \$40 to \$50 per horse for the microchip and the services of a veterinarian to implant the rice-sized object into a neck ligament, a process that takes about five minutes. The chips contain a seven-digit facility location number and a 15-digit ID for each horse, and have the added capability of indicating a horse's body temperature. The reading devices cost between \$200 and \$400 each.

Microchips are used widely in 16 other countries and on a limited basis in some states, but if the CHRB successfully implements the program, Fick said California would become the first state to require microchip technology for the monitoring of racehorses.

The USDA's interest in the technology is to quickly locate horses that might have been exposed to contagious diseases, but the horse-racing industry has additional uses, including accurate stable area inventories and records of horses entering and leaving restricted areas. Fick said the microchips cannot be used to record the workout times of horses because the reader must be within an inch of the microchip, but the technology can be used to verify the identities of horses during workouts.

CHRB Chairman John Harris said the intent of the Board would be to require, "at a date certain, that any horse participating in races in California has a chip."

Dr. Ron Jensen, the Board's equine medical director, will be meeting with horse identifiers, stall superintendents, and others to develop the pilot program, which could be funded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

In other business, the Board approved a rule relating to TCO2 testing that adds a split-sample provision for the protection of horsemen.

The commissioners had approved a regulation earlier in the year authorizing the CHRB to test for alkalizing agents, or "milkshakes," that could affect the performance of horses. But companion, enabling legislation was later amended by the California Legislature to include a split-sample provision.

That bill amendment required the CHRB to amend its own rule. The amendment allows horse owners to have a second blood sample collected and tested at their own expense.

Darrel Haire of the Jockey's Guild gave a brief report indicating the Guild is working closely with racing executives to put together a health assessment study designed to provide an accurate understanding of jockey body types and health issues. The study relates to the minimum weights horses must carry in races. Haire thanked the Board for its cooperation and support in dealing with health and safety issues for jockeys.

The Board approved licenses for a harness meet at Cal Expo from August 6 through September 17 and fair meets at Bay Meadows (August 10 through August 25) and Ferndale (August 11 through August 21).

Xpressbet, Inc. received authorization to move its wagering hub from Northern California to Oregon. This totalizator service is totally automated and will not result in the loss of any jobs for workers in California, according to Xpressbet representatives.

The Board voted to require Capital Racing, LLC, to repay horsemen approximately \$1.4 million in purses that was used to promote harness racing over a number of years without the required written authorization to do so. The matter is in litigation. The CHRB staff will recommend the best way to reallocate the money. The staff also will be reviewing and reporting to the commissioners on another matter relating to the overpayment of purses.

In order to reduce the numbers of claimed horses leaving California, the Board approved a rule amendment making such horses ineligible to race in another jurisdiction until 60 days after the close of the meeting at which it was claimed.

The Board approved a rule amendment providing that if the condition of the racing surface changes from turf to dirt or dirt to turf, and the public was not informed of the change prior to the closure of pools for any multiple-race wagers involving four to 10 races, all wagers on that race shall be considered winning wagers for the purposes of that pool. Additionally, the amendment permits the totalizator company to provide information regarding possible payouts for each of the runners going into the final leg of the wager.

The Board approved the distribution of \$64,395 by the Oak Tree Charitable Foundation to 10 beneficiaries, all of which are racing industry-related charities.

Acting on a report from the deputy attorney general that such wagers are "unlawful," the Board instructed Executive Director Ingrid Fermin to order racing associations to stop sending their race signals to outlets that allow partnership interests in wagers, known as player pools.

Chairman Harris said he will be meeting with a Daily Racing Form executive to discuss further improvements to the publication's coverage of fair racing, and he said he is convinced that fair marketing departments are doing an excellent job of getting coverage of their meets in local media outlets.

The issue of prompt disclosure of recent geldings was discussed, and Chairman Harris said ultimately the industry needs a method to fully disclose first-time geldings in past performances. He said

both Daily Racing Form and Equibase are interested

“There is clearly a need for owners and trainers to promptly report the gelding of any horses,” said Harris.

#