

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

www.chrb.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD



Los Alamitos Race Course
4961 E. Katella Avenue
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

Contact: Mike Marten
(714) 820-2748
Cell: (714) 240-1870
Fax (714) 821-6232

CHRB NEWS RELEASE

MAY 26, 2010

CHRB MOVING FORWARD ON TRACK SAFETY & MEDICATION ISSUES

SACRAMENTO, CA – The CHRB Medication and Track Safety Committee convened a public meeting May 19 at Golden Gate Fields to discuss seven agenda items primarily concerned with ensuring the health of the horse. Commissioner Bo Derek chaired the nearly three-hour meeting. Commissioner John Harris also serves on the Committee and attended. During the meeting:

- CHRB Executive Director Kirk Breed outlined the efforts of the Board and the horse-racing industry to adopt track safety standards and take other steps to protect racing participants, as required by various sections of the Horse Racing Law. A key element of the program is a recently launched project to collect data on dirt, synthetic, and turf racing surfaces. Two project managers will be working with CHRB safety stewards in the collection of information on track composition, design, temperature, moisture content, maintenance, compaction, and other variables, including air quality. The CHRB has purchased a sophisticated piece of equipment – a mechanical hoof – that will measure what is happening to the hoof when it strikes the surface (compaction, shear, and slide). There is an ongoing study of how various types of horseshoes interact with racing surfaces. The Board already has installed weather stations at Hollywood Park, Santa Anita, Del Mar, Los Alamitos, and Golden Gate Fields to measure current climate conditions as well as the temperature and moisture content of the track surface material. This information can be viewed on the CHRB Website (www.chrb.ca.gov) through the CHRB Track Weather link. One goal is to provide additional preliminary information from the project on the CHRB Website possibly during the Del Mar meet. The CHRB has initial funding for this program and will seek additional budget appropriations for the ongoing study.

Dr. Rick Arthur, the CHRB equine medical director, has been working with other experts in the collection of data on equine injuries. He gave a full report on current monitoring programs. With the exception of Los Alamitos, all California racetracks featuring running breeds are participating in the national Equine Injury Database. This program collects data on those injuries identified by racing regulatory veterinarians. California already has in place a very comprehensive necropsy program, which is being further refined. In addition, a number of private racetrack practitioners are participating in the Grayson/Jockey Club Research project to develop procedures for monitoring training and other injuries by providing information that would not otherwise be available through the regulatory veterinarians. The plan is to correlate the injury data with the information being collected on track surfaces, weather conditions, horseshoeing practices, and the other elements of the total program in order to determine the safest possible conditions for racing participants.

“Once we have all of this information available to us, we will invite everyone – the public, the racing community, the scientists – to help us interpret the data and to develop track safety standards that are in everyone’s best interests,” said Breed. “This will only work if everyone has confidence in

the data, confidence in the underlying science, and confidence in the impartiality of the Board and those involved in the project. We will work with those with an interest in these matters to gain their trust and support.”

- Dr. Arthur reported on the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) laboratory accreditation program, withdrawal time research, and proposed changes to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug substance (NSAID) levels. The NSAID matter prompted considerable discussion at the meeting. Dr. Arthur explained the NSAID level issue is a national issue brought forward by the racing regulatory veterinary committee of the Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI). Veterinarians are concerned that current permitted NSAID levels are compromising pre-race examinations by masking unsoundness at the time of examination. Dr. Larry Soma of the University of Pennsylvania conducted an analysis of the issue for the RMTC with input from RMTC scientific advisory committee. The conclusion was that the concern of the examining veterinarians was well founded. NSAIDs can have an analgesic (pain masking) effect at currently permitted levels. Dr. Soma’s review and other information are available on the RMTC Website and the CHRB Website through the links: Board Meeting/Package/Committee/[May 2010 Medication and Track Safety Committee](#)/Item 2. The proposal approved by RMTC and before the ARCI is to lower the allowable administration of NSAID levels to 2 micrograms/ml – a level where the medication still provides the desired anti-inflammatory protection but should not significantly interfere with the pre-race examination.

Alan Balch, executive director of the California Thoroughbred Trainers, and other CTT representatives questioned some of the underlying assumptions and scientific data. Balch said the CTT wants to do what is best for the horse, “but we have to be cautious.” This debate went back and forth for about 45 minutes. Dr. Arthur brought the discussion to a conclusion with the remark, “This proposal is going forward nationally. It has the unanimous endorsement of the ARCI drug testing standards and practices committee. We anticipate the ARCI adopting this as a model rule this summer. Once it moves forward nationally, California will have to determine how to respond.” Commissioner Derek said she would prefer to move forward with the suggested NSAID changes as soon as possible.

- Two agenda items dealt with the availability, transparency, and transferability of veterinary medical records. CHRB rules currently do not require the release of this information by a veterinarian, owner, or trainer. The committee is proposing an amendment to CHRB Rule 1846.5 to require training and veterinary medical records on all horses dying within a CHRB inclosure. By law, all such horses undergo a postmortem examination. This amendment will provide the Postmortem Program with needed information on the horses to better understand fatalities at California racetracks. The Committee will ask the full Board at the June 24 meeting to approve this amendment for public notice and consideration.

The other agenda item went further than the necropsy program and prompted a discussion on whether medical records should be transferred under other circumstances, such as when a horse is claimed. All agreed that it would be beneficial to the horse if the new veterinarian, trainer, and owner had access to certain medical information, such as vaccination records. Trainers and practicing veterinarians cautioned, however, that there could be “liability issues” if all medical records were provided. Commissioner Harris said that he would be willing to provide the medical records for any of his horses that are sold or claimed, and he encouraged other owners to do the

same. It was decided that a smaller working group should meet to continue discussions of this matter.

- Dr. Arthur proposed an amendment to CHRB Rule 1844 to modify the permitted levels for procaine from procaine penicillin. Dr Arthur reminded everyone that procaine penicillin remains one of the most effective antibiotics for the treatment of equine infections, but its use creates an ongoing problem for those treating the horse and regulatory agencies because the procaine in the penicillin sometimes shows up as a positive in post-racing drug testing – and there is no way for the tests to distinguish between procaine residue from penicillin and procaine illegally administered as a pain blocker. Procaine as a local anesthetic is better known as Novacain. To comply with current regulations, the administration of procaine penicillin must be stopped far enough in advance of a race to allow time for the procaine to clear the horse’s system to a permitted level. Under a regulatory amendment proposed at the meeting, the administrative level of procaine permitted in the post-race sample would be increased and would not result in a penalty if the treated horse were to meet certain conditions, including surveillance for six hours prior to a race. Studies show the local anesthetic effect of procaine is no longer present beyond three hours after administration even in combination with epinephrine. Six-hour surveillance would eliminate any chance of improper use of procaine. This amendment would allow for the horse to receive the best medical treatment without compromising the integrity of racing. Dr. Arthur explained the real benefit of the amendment would be to return procaine penicillin to a first-choice option as an antibiotic for racetrack veterinarians. The Committee will present this proposal to the Board at the June 24 meeting for approval for public notice.
- Dr. Scott Stanley, chief chemist for the Maddy Laboratory at UC Davis, which performs all equine drug testing for the CHRB, reported on efforts to improve the drug testing program and on continuing research. He said more out-of-competition samples are being tested this year for more compounds on the prohibited substance list, including growth hormone. In addition, the Maddy Laboratory is expanding routine testing to include more prohibited drug substances with the goal of improved testing turn-around time. Dr. Heather DiMaio Knych, equine pharmacologist at the Maddy Laboratory, reported on her pharmacology research program and efforts to determine clearance and withdrawal guidelines for therapeutic drugs. Dr. Arthur reported that the RMTTC’s post-doctoral fellowship in equine drug testing was awarded to Dr. Knych.

#