

**STRENGTHENING  
THE INTEGRITY  
OF RACING**



# QUARTERLY

Fall 2009

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## RMTC Board Forms Committee to Oversee Implementation of DTI Task Force Recommendations



**M**oving forward with its initiative to significantly change the structure of drug testing in U.S. horse racing, the Racing

Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) board of directors has approved the formation of a committee to oversee the implementation of the Drug Testing Initiative (DTI) Task Force recommendations on quality assurance and laboratory accreditation programs for U.S. horse racing drug testing laboratories.

The board took this action at its meeting in Louisville, Ky., on September 29, 2009.

Named to this committee, chaired by Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association CEO Alan Foreman, were RMTC board members:

- Gary Carpenter, American Quarter Horse Association executive director of racing
- Dr. Robert Lewis, past president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners
- Ed Martin, president of the Association of Racing Commissioners International
- Dan Metzger, president of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association
- Terry Meyocks, national manager of the Jockeys' Guild
- Dr. Gregg Scoggins, Magna Entertainment Corp.'s national director of regulatory affairs
- Dr. Scott Stanley, UC Davis associate professor
- Kent Stirling, Florida HBPA executive director
- Mike Tanner, executive vice president of the United States Trotting Association
- Mike Ziegler, executive director of the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance

At the board meeting, other integrity issues were also discussed in depth, including the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and how they may affect pre-race examinations by

regulatory veterinarians. Dr. Tom David of the Louisiana State Racing Commission and chairman of the ARCI Racing Regulatory Veterinarian Committee explained the examining veterinarian's concern over current NSAID and corticosteroid policies. The RMTC Scientific Advisory Committee was previously charged with the task of reviewing all existing research on NSAIDs, particularly phenylbutazone.

Dr. Larry Soma of the University of Pennsylvania recently prepared an extensive report and has concluded that "based on scientific reports and the impression of clinical veterinarians, residual effects of phenylbutazone remain at 24 hours."

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**-Dr. Larry Soma**

The RMTC Scientific Advisory Committee has identified several options for consideration in future recommendations on the administration times and threshold concentrations for NSAIDs. California Horse Racing Board Equine Medical Director Dr. Rick Arthur explained that several states are participating in a study to evaluate NSAID concentrations in blood at the time of pre-race examinations. The Scientific Advisory Committee will assess this data and make a final recommendation at the next RMTC board meeting.

The RMTC previously announced that it was conducting research on corticosteroids commonly used in racing and the board was updated on the status of that project. A copy of Dr. Soma's report and Dr. David's comments can be obtained at the RMTC website ([rmtcnet.com](http://rmtcnet.com)).

**Other business discussed at the September board meeting is continued on page 2.**

*“Most therapeutic medication infractions are simple management mistakes. Our hope is this information will help veterinarians and trainers avoid these common rule violations.”*

*-Dr. Robert Lewis*



**Applications for the graduate/post-doctoral research fellowship program are being mailed to university-affiliated laboratories.**

## In Other Business

Dr. Rick Sams of the University of Florida Racing Laboratory presented to the board a report on administration studies for a number of commonly used therapeutic medications that often result in medication infractions. Dr. Sams also announced that the administration studies on anabolic steroids are complete and a recommendation on a model rule for testing in plasma for these medications has been submitted to RCI. Administration studies that are nearing completion of sample analysis are acepromazine, butorphanol, detomidine, glycopyrrolate, lidocaine, mepivacaine, methocarbamol and pyrilamine.

“RMTC anticipates that by early next year, it will be in a position to make recommendations for threshold levels and/or withdrawal times on these medications,” said RMTC Chairman Dr. Robert Lewis. “Most therapeutic medication infractions are simple management mistakes. Our hope is this information will help veterinarians and trainers avoid these common rule violations.”

This announcement was met with appreciation by Florida HBPA Executive Director Kent Stirling. “Horsemen will be glad to see that we are finally going to have thresholds and withdrawal times for these medications,” said Stirling. “The withdrawal times database on the RMTC website is extremely helpful but shows the inconsistencies in withdrawal times recommended by state racing commissions and veterinarians. The recommendations out of these research studies will certainly help to bring about uniformity, which is a primary mission of RMTC and something that horsemen desperately want to see realized.”

The RMTC board also approved the formation of a Communications Subcommittee to make recommendations on a media campaign to better explain the significant efforts of the drug testing laboratories in detecting prohibited drugs, and differentiate those findings from the more prevalent positive laboratory reports for overages of approved therapeutic medication that are primarily mistakes in administration times and dosages.

“Judging from the media reports and comments on many blogs, it is clear that many reporters and particularly racing fans do not understand

that an overage of flunixin does not rise to the level of an attempt to illegally affect the outcome of a race, and there needs to be a better system to communicate and differentiate racing stable staff management errors from attempts to drug a horse in order to win a race,” said RCI President Ed Martin.

RMTC’s DTI Task Force, which is funded in large part by The Jockey Club, announced that applications for the graduate/post-doctoral research fellowship program are being mailed to university-affiliated laboratories in October. Funding from RMTC is available for one person, with the respective university matching costs. The RMTC board previously committed \$75,000 per year for three years for this program. Applications are due January 1, 2010, and an offer will be made April 1, following the review process. This program is intended to develop the



next generation of horse racing laboratory directors and researchers.

RMTC is also actively seeking applications for the new position of Director of Research and Accreditation. The job will involve coordinating administration studies designed for the

development of uniform threshold levels and withdrawal times for the regulation of therapeutic medication, analyzing data produced from those studies and producing a final written report for distribution to the Scientific Advisory Committee, assisting principal investigators with publication of administration studies in peer review journals, and coordinating the development of an RMTC/RCI laboratory accreditation and quality assurance program, among other duties. A complete job description can be found at [rmtcnet.com](http://rmtcnet.com). Applications are being sought immediately with the intention to fill the position before the end of the year.

Mike Tanner of the United States Trotting Association appreciated the progress that RMTC board members made at this crucial meeting.

“We covered a good amount of ground Tuesday and have targeted some very important issues, especially uniform medication and testing protocols,” he said. “Now it’s just a matter of getting to that point. There’s still a lot of work to be done, but I think we’re all on the same page and I’m encouraged by the steps that are being taken.”

## RMTC Report: 'Put the Horse First' (*Hoof Beats*, November 2009)

For the racing industry, the public perception of the sport is paramount to its economic health. It is safe to say that the perception of the industry could not be any lower than in the months following the breakdown of Eight Belles in the 2008 Kentucky Derby. In fact, the National Thoroughbred Racing Association has the customer survey data to prove it. In response to the negative feedback from the racing public, the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) formed the AAEP Racing Task Force in July of 2008. The task force consisted of 35 racetrack practitioners, regulatory veterinarians and veterinary specialists. Their intention was to offer a veterinary perspective based on the health and welfare of the equine athlete that provides strategies for strengthening the integrity of racing.

Now named the AAEP Racing Committee, a standing committee of the organization, the group is chaired by Dr. Scott Palmer with Dr. Foster Northrop serving as vice chair. In February, the task force released the white paper, "Putting the Horse First: Veterinary Recommendations for the Safety and Welfare of the Thoroughbred Racehorse." The paper guides and supports anyone working to change horse racing for the better. "Our premise is very simple: What is good for the horse is good for racing," said Dr. Palmer.

The white paper addresses four key subjects: medication, the veterinarian-owner-trainer relationship, the public perception of racing, and the racing business model. Key recommendations include an industry-wide adoption of uniform model rules for medication usage, testing, security and enforcement; standardization of pre-race and post-race veterinary examinations, with mandatory sharing of information; transparency for the veterinarian-owner-trainer relationship in all health care

decisions; and increased racetrack security to ensure compliance with medication rules. The committee also supports significant uniform penalties for violators of medication rules, including veterinarians.

Since the AAEP cannot enforce the white paper recommendations, it will rely heavily on racing industry organizations to bring about implementation. Although the recommendations focus on Thoroughbred racing, many apply to other racing breeds, including Standardbreds, and the intention is for guidelines to be modified for unique issues facing those breeds.

Since releasing the white paper in February, the AAEP Racing Committee has moved forward with medication reform. The committee is reviewing best-practice guidelines for racetrack practitioners that set practice standards at U.S. tracks. These guidelines will cover medication handling and administration protocols, medical records and billing procedures, and communication with owners and trainers. "In a unique climate of widespread industry commitment to fix what is wrong with racing, we have made every effort to put the horse first in that process," said Dr. Palmer. "There's an enormous opportunity for veterinarians to be helpful in this process of modifying and overhauling the racing industry. There'll be a lot of debate, and we want to bring a veterinary point of view to the table."

In order to solve an issue as complex as medication in racing, all industry stakeholders need to look in the mirror and ask what they can do to help. The AAEP and its Racing Committee deserve an enormous amount of credit for doing just that, and the public perception of our sport will certainly benefit from their hard work.

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-Dr. Scott Palmer*

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## RMTC Website Updated

Recent additions to the RMTC website ([rmtcnet.com](http://rmtcnet.com)) include a wealth of educational materials and research documents. The new Education section features an updated collection of frequently asked questions and useful videos, articles, presentations and documents such as AAEP White Paper and Dr. Larry Soma's presentation at RCI's 2009 Annual Conference. Also featured is the "Duties and Responsibilities of Racing Officials" video produced by the Racing Officials Accreditation Program, which covers several drug testing and track security issues.

In addition, the Research page has been expanded to include published research studies, dissertations and literature reviews. Here you will find Dr. Larry Soma's review on phenylbutazone and a study on the efficacy of furosemide in preventing exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhaging, among other stud-



Photo by Laura Plato

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**The New Jersey  
Racing Commission  
has proposed a rule  
to regulate the use  
of anabolic steroids.  
Public comments on  
the rule will be  
accepted through  
November 20.**

## Our Mission

**The RMTC strives to develop, promote and coordinate, at the national level, policies, research and educational programs that seek to ensure the fairness and integrity of racing and the health and welfare of racehorses and participants, and to protect the interests of the racing public.**



## Industry News

### **NYRA Bans Mullins for Six Months**

The New York Racing Association barred California-based Thoroughbred trainer Jeff Mullins from racing horses at any of the association's racetracks for six months. In addition, Mullins-trained horses cannot be transferred to the care of his employees, relatives or business associates in order to run in New York. The announcement came nearly seven months after an incident on April 4 in which Mullins was caught administering a substance to Gato Go Win in the Aqueduct security barn. Regulations prohibit any medications in test barns other than anti-bleeding agents, which can be administered by only a regulatory veterinarian. Mullins claimed he administered Air Power, an over-the-counter cough remedy, to Gato Go Win. He also stated that he was unaware that Air Power was not allowed on race day, despite being penalized in 2004 in California for that same infraction.

Gato Go Win was subsequently scratched and the New York State Racing and Wagering Board suspended Mullins for seven days and handed him a \$2,500 fine. NYRA decided to take further action in large part due to Mullins' conflicting remarks and testimony about the incident.



### **Officiating Horse Racing Conference to be Held in December**

The Racing Officials Accreditation Program (ROAP) will host its second annual Officiating Horse Racing Conference on December 7 in conjunction with the University of Arizona Race Track Industry Program's Symposium on Racing and Gaming. The seminar will be held at the Westin La Paloma Resort in Tucson, Ariz., from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Among the topics to be covered include determining penalties for rule violations, trainer responsibility and extenuating circumstance, Model Rule development and adoption, and coordinating uniform regulations.

Experts such as Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association CEO and RMTC Vice Chairman Alan Foreman, RMTC Executive Director Dr. Scot Waterman, attorney Ira Finkelstein, UC Davis associate professor Dr. Scott Stanley and Dr. George Maylin, director of the New York State Racing and Wagering Board Equine Drug Testing and Research program, will present useful and interesting information on these topics to participants. The conference will be geared especially for assistant attorneys general and presenters of evidence, racing commission counsel, investigators, stewards and racing commissioners, but is open to all who are interested.

To register, email [contactus@horseracingofficials.com](mailto:contactus@horseracingofficials.com) or call (859) 224-2702.

### **Contract Extension Given to LSU Equine Drug Testing Lab**

The Louisiana State Racing Commission extended its contract with the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine's Equine Medication Surveillance Laboratory (EMSL) to conduct drug testing on horses racing in that state. Due to the expansion of the national banned-substance standards for the racing industry, the commission increased its funding of the EMSL to ensure it could provide efficient and adequate testing.

"Our previous contract was for \$700,000 per year for three years," said EMSL director Dr. Steven Barker. "But this latest extension will bring in almost \$1.4 million per year for the three-year period. We will be acquiring nearly \$1 million of new, cutting-edge mass spectrometric equipment to conduct the testing, and hiring five or six additional employees to handle the increased workload."