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## RMTC Recommends New Phenylbutazone Threshold Level, Announces Launch of Recent Rulings Database



**B**ased on the recommendation of its Scientific Advisory Committee, the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC)

board of directors has revised its recommended threshold for the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) phenylbutazone from 5 micrograms per milliliter to 2 micrograms per milliliter of plasma or serum. Under the current model rule, one of three approved NSAIDs is permitted at least 24 hours prior to racing. The permitted NSAIDs are phenylbutazone, flunixin and ketoprofen.

"This action was taken in response to concerns expressed by the regulatory veterinary community regarding the effects of NSAID administration on pre-race examinations," said Dr. Rick Arthur, chair of the RMTC Scientific Advisory Committee and equine medical director for the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB). "The committee felt that the regulatory veterinarians' concerns that NSAID levels may compromise pre-race examinations were justified. This adjustment in permitted phenylbutazone level is measured and appropriate." The Scientific Advisory Committee will continue to research whether further restrictions on NSAID use are warranted.

The board made this recommendation at its meeting in Lexington, Ky., on April 12, 2010, held in conjunction with the Association of Racing Commissioners International 2010 Annual Conference.

Dr. Tom David, equine medical director for the Louisiana State Racing Commission, applauded the RMTC board's action.

"We are very pleased with this step and appreciate the RMTC's willingness to address the concerns of the regulatory veterinarians," said Dr. David. "We look forward to a continuing dialogue on the subject."

Also during the board meeting, RMTC Director of Communications Hallie Lewis announced the creation of a Recent Rulings Database to go live immediately on [rmcnet.com](http://rmcnet.com).

"I am excited about this project because I believe it fulfills a need in the industry," said RMTC Executive Director Dr. Scot Waterman. "Members of HANA (Horseplayers Association of North America), racing fans and participants have voiced their desire for transparency and easy-to-access data on drug-related rulings. To our knowledge, this is the only database in existence that allows viewers to see not only the infractions but also a description of the possible uses and effects of the drug in the horse. We hope that this will begin the process of better clarifying the difference between medication management mistakes and more serious drug violations."

***"The committee felt that the regulatory veterinarians' concerns that NSAID levels may compromise pre-race examinations were justified."***

***-Dr. Rick Arthur***

Dr. Rick Sams of the University of Florida Racing Laboratory presented an update on RMTC-funded research to determine thresholds and withdrawal times for 13 medications often used by practicing veterinarians to treat horses in race training. This research is being conducted at the University of Florida, University of Pennsylvania New Bolton Center, Pennsylvania Equine Toxicology and Research Laboratory, Iowa State University and the University of California-Davis.

"My colleagues and I expect to publish withdrawal time recommendations on acepromazine, boldenone, butorphanol, detomidine, firocoxib, fluphenazine, testosterone, nandrolone, stanozolol and glycopyrrolate in the next 90 to 120 days," Dr. Sams told RMTC board members.

**Meeting business is continued on page 2.**

*“This is the first step in implementing the RMTC Drug Testing Initiative. We expect to have a full external quality assurance program up and running in 2011.”*

*-Dr. Scot Waterman*



## In Other Business

Dr. Waterman announced that negotiations are close to completion to begin the External Quality Assurance Program through an independent third-party provider. Once initiated, the program will provide proficiency, masked and double-masked urine and blood samples for participating testing laboratories to analyze for the presence and quantity of prohibited and regulated drugs.

According to Dr. Waterman, “This is the first step in implementing the RMTC Drug Testing Initiative. We expect to have a full external quality assurance program up and running in 2011.”

In the interim, the Testing Integrity Program Inc. and the Interstate Drug Testing Alliance will continue their single- and double-masked sample programs with RMTC subsidization.



Dr. Scott Stanley, director of the University of California-Davis Kenneth L. Maddy Laboratory, presented a report on the CHRB frozen sample and retrospective testing program for growth hormone. This program, based on methods published by LCH, the French racing laboratory, retrospectively tested 2,000 samples that have been frozen over the past two years under the CHRB’s drug testing program. The growth hormone analysis of the CHRB’s frozen sample program was made possible by funds provided by The Jockey Club.

Additional updates:

- ◆ A strategic plan was adopted that outlines research, reorganization and regulatory communications as key areas of focus in the organization’s future.
- ◆ An update was given on the current research strategies involving the intra-articular administration of corticosteroids.
- ◆ An update on the efforts toward international harmonization of racing medications was given, including the steps undertaken to exchange research data.
- ◆ RMTC will create a committee to confront regulation issues and encourage uniformity across racing jurisdictions regarding policy language on out-of-competition testing.
- ◆ Current RMTC officers Dr. Robert Lewis, Alan Foreman, Chris Scherf, Dr. Rick Arthur and Tom Charters were re-elected to serve another term.
- ◆ It was announced that RMTC CEO Dan Fick has stepped down to focus on his new position as a steward for the Indiana Horse Racing Commission.



**Check out our database of medication-related rulings by visiting [rmtcnet.com](http://rmtcnet.com) and clicking on Recent Rulings.**

## Recent Rulings Database Provides Service to Industry

Have you ever read about a drug ruling and wondered, “Is this drug potentially harmful to the horse?” or “Does this drug have any purpose in the racehorse and, if so, what is it?” Until now, many have depended on the few rulings that make it into the industry or mainstream media for their information, and these reports typically do little to demystify drug positives. The racing public wants to be aware of testing results and are curious about the roles that various medications have in treating our equine athletes. The quandary is that they do not know how to access that information or, if they do, find it to be loaded with scientific jargon. This predicament can result in fans and even industry participants misinterpreting the available information and developing false perceptions based on rumors and backstretch anecdotes rather than science.

RMTC’s first step in addressing this problem was to produce drug descriptions in layman’s terms and create a location accessible by the public where these descriptions, all available drug rulings over the last year, and drug and penalty classification definitions could be examined. The resulting database can be sorted by trainer, date, state or violation and also includes the track, suspension, fine, horse’s name and breed, when that information is made available in the official rulings.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this database is that it provides information on the possible uses and effects of a particular drug in the horse. These drug descriptions will help clarify the difference between medication management mistakes and more serious drug violations. Although this project is only a first step in helping to broaden the information that is available, it will hopefully spur ongoing collaborations with commissions and pave the way for other educational initiatives.

## RMTC Funds Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships

The RMTC board of directors approved the funding of Dr. Heather DiMaio Knych and Dr. Mary Robinson for its post-doctoral research fellowship program. This commitment fulfills one of the main goals of the RMTC Drug Testing Initiatives Task Force, established in 2008 as a wide-ranging effort to improve drug testing and racing integrity.

The RMTC board committed \$450,000 over three years toward the fellowship program. The University of California-Davis (UC-Davis) and the University of Pennsylvania have agreed to match the grant.

"This is another major step by the RMTC to implement the recommendations that I made at The Jockey Club Round Table Conference in August 2008 toward an improved drug testing program for U.S. racing," said RMTC Vice Chairman Alan Foreman. "We are beginning the process of developing our next generation of scientific experts in the equine industry who will be working with us on emerging medication problems. We hope the research of Drs. DiMaio Knych and Robinson will help us better regulate corticosteroids and shock wave therapy, which will be a major step in protecting the health and welfare of our equine athletes and the interests of the wagering public."

Corticosteroids and shock wave therapy can have significant analgesic effects, and their misuse can put horses and riders at risk during training and racing.

DiMaio Knych, DVM, Ph.D. in Pharmacology and Toxicology, has gained recognition nationally and internationally in the field of equine

pharmacology over the past year. She oversees the laboratory at UC-Davis and has published several research papers on pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of drugs in the horse. During the fellowship period, she will research the pharmacokinetics, clinical effects and biomarkers of corticosteroids in horses.

"Dr. DiMaio Knych's research will provide fundamental information that will become textbook material in equine pharmacology," said Dr. Scott Stanley, director of the UC-Davis Kenneth L. Maddy Laboratory.

Dr. Robinson will receive her V.M.D. and Ph.D. in Pharmacological Sciences from the University of Pennsylvania this month. She is graduating from the university's Veterinary Medical Scientist Training Program, which is a seven-year National Institute of Health-sponsored program conducted for outstanding students to acquire a Ph.D. in a basic science discipline and a veterinary degree. Dr. Robinson will be researching the detection of extracorporeal shock wave therapy usage in the racehorse using biomarkers at the University of Pennsylvania during her fellowship period. The Association of Racing Commissioners International's Model Rules currently prohibit the use of shock wave therapy within 10 days of racing; however, there is no recognized method of detecting its use at this time.

"The purpose of the program at the University of Pennsylvania is to encourage young, well-trained veterinarians to become involved in the racing industry's research and forensic program," said University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine professor Dr. Larry Soma.

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**Alan Foreman**

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## 2010 Donors to Date

AQHA  
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Sunland Park Racetrack & Casino  
Tampa Bay Downs  
The Hambletonian Society  
The Jockey Club  
Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association  
Thoroughbred Owners of California  
TOBA  
United States Trotting Association

## Industry Presentations

### Recent:

- ◆ North American Racing Academy
- ◆ ROAP Stewards Continuing Education— Sacramento and Dallas
- ◆ Vision 20/20
- ◆ University of Kentucky Law School
- ◆ University of Louisville Equine Industry Program

### Upcoming:

- ◆ European Horserace Scientific Liaison meeting
- ◆ The Jockey Club Round Table Conference
- ◆ ROAP Stewards Continuing Education— Delaware



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**ATTENTION  
BOARD MEMBERS:  
The next RMTC  
board meeting is  
tentatively  
scheduled for  
October 12 in  
Davis, CA.**

**Our Mission**

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



**Industry News**

**Pennsylvania Adopts TCO2 Testing Rule**

At its meeting on June 17, the Pennsylvania Horse Racing Commission approved a policy to conduct testing of total carbon dioxide (TCO2) in Thoroughbred racehorses. The commission voted to implement the TCO2 testing rule in March and has been working on developing it since that time. The effective date of the rule is July 15, 2010.

The new rule bans the use of agents or substances that raise the TCO2 level beyond the horse's natural levels. This prohibited practice, known as "milkshaking," is believed to have a performance-enhancing quality by limiting muscle fatigue and increasing endurance.

Testing will be performed by the Pennsylvania Equine Toxicology and Research Lab at West Chester University. Horses may be tested at random, with probable cause, or at the discretion of race track stewards or the commission. Penalties for positive tests may include a \$1,500 fine, a 30- to 60-day suspension, and loss of purse for a first offense.



**Commission Approves Sunland Park Rule Changes**

As part of its application for accreditation by the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance, Sunland Park advocated several significant policy changes that were approved by the New Mexico Racing Commission in May.

These reforms bring New Mexico into compliance with the Association of Racing Commissioners International Model Rules for the regulation of therapeutic medications and the banning of certain practices, such as the administration of alkalizing substances. Several rules related to the safety of riders and assistant starters were also enacted.

Pending the successful completion of an independent security assessment later in the year, Sunland Park will be eligible for full alliance accreditation. The organization was granted provisional accreditation by the alliance after the track was found to be in compliance with the majority of standards set forth in the alliance code.

**Dr. Rick Sams to Direct New Laboratory in Kentucky**

The English-based HFL Sports Science laboratory has hired Dr. Rick Sams, former University of Florida Racing Laboratory program director, as its director. Starting in 2011, HFL will be conducting drug testing on samples for the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission, a contract previously awarded to the University of Florida Racing Laboratory from 2009 through 2010.

Dr. Sams has over 30 years of experience in developing and validating new testing methods as well as studying pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of drugs and other substances in racehorses. Prior to his work at the University of Florida, Dr. Sams was a professor and director of the Analytical Toxicology Laboratory of the College of Veterinary Medicine at the Ohio State University.

A subsidiary of Quotient Bioresearch Ltd., HFL conducts drug testing for tracks in Great Britain out of its Newmarket, England, laboratory, and is in the process of opening a new facility in Lexington, Ky, where Dr. Sams will be based.