



# Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit

Sponsored by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation

## Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit Recap

The third Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit, held in Lexington, Ky., on June 28 and 29, concluded with the development of objectives in four areas and a discussion of implementation strategies to improve conditions in various facets of the Thoroughbred industry.

The four areas were Racing Equipment and Safety; Racetrack Environment and Training Practices; Education, Licensing and Continuing Education; and Transitioning Thoroughbreds to Second Careers. Among the primary objectives identified were:

- Establishment of a rider injury database to collect data and develop practices that will reduce injuries
- Formalizing reciprocity of veterinarians', stewards' and starters' lists on a national basis
- Research and creation of industry standards for equipment that affects the safety of the horse and rider
- Development of a comprehensive database of track maintenance, training and veterinary records that could be integrated with existing databases pertaining to human and equine safety
- Establishment of a mechanism to encourage continuing education for people working with Thoroughbreds, including trainers, grooms, farriers, and jockeys, to improve horsemanship and as a means to accreditation
- Creation of veterinary guidelines, in conjunction with the American Association of Equine Practitioners, to determine potential and appropriate second careers for racehorses based on physical condition
- Establishment of a track liaison at each race-track to coordinate aftercare of retired racehorses

"Safety is a process," said Nick Nicholson, president and CEO of Keeneland Association. "There is never a final victory. We must always be fighting for improvements and innovations that will make our sport safer for all concerned. Our fans expect nothing less. This summit – and the action plans we are drafting this year – has been a catalyst for positive changes and innovation that are making our sport better. It's our job to continue this momentum."

"Like its predecessors, this summit produced a number of safety and soundness objectives that should augment the meaningful changes and reforms that have occurred within the Thoroughbred industry in

Visit the Resources section of the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit website for information including recommendations and presentations  
[grayson-jockeyclub.org/summit](http://grayson-jockeyclub.org/summit)

recent years when they are implemented," said Edward L. Bowen, president of Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation.

The summit was held all day June 28 and on the morning of June 29 and, for the first time, was streamed live on *keeneland.com*. The video stream received approximately 900 hits from the United States, Canada, Australia, Austria, Germany, Hungary and the United Kingdom. The full video replay and presentation slides are available on [grayson-jockeyclub.org/summit](http://grayson-jockeyclub.org/summit).

On June 28, the morning session included a panel on Racing Surfaces as well as updates from the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium, NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance, and Thoroughbred Safety Committee. An update was also provided on the Equine Injury Database (see next page). The afternoon was composed of three panel discussions concerning Racing Equipment and Safety, Racetrack Environment and Safe Training Practices, and Transitioning Thoroughbreds to Second Careers.

On June 29, participants assembled into fourwork groups to focus on specific issues in closed discussions and to develop objectives to improve welfare and safety. There were 68 participants at the summit, representing a prominent cross section from the Thoroughbred breeding and racing industry.

“Summit participants have provided a road map for the future by identifying important areas for further analysis by the industry’s stakeholders,” said Matt Iuliano, executive director and executive vice president of The Jockey Club. “The Jockey Club and our Thoroughbred Safety Committee will once again strive to collaborate with like-minded organizations to implement the recommendations emanating from the summit in a prompt and comprehensive manner.”

The summit concluded with a panel discussion concerning implementation of safety and soundness recommendations, moderated by Jim Gagliano, president and chief operating officer of The Jockey Club.

The implementation panel included representatives of the National HBPA, Keeneland, Association of Racing Commissioners International, the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission and the National Thoroughbred Racing Association. All expressed support for the concept and institution of an interstate racing regulatory compact, which has been discussed within the industry in recent months.

“We have demonstrated to those who watch our sport closely that we can make reforms as an industry,” said Gagliano. “We should be proud of the steady progress we’ve made but we need to keep at it. We need to use any mechanism we can, whether it’s model rules, a regulatory compact, the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance or rules put in place by organizations such as Breeders’ Cup or the Graded Stakes Committee of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association, to effect change.”

## Equine Injury Database: Year of Review

Dr. Tim Parkin, noted epidemiologist from the University of Glasgow’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, presented a preliminary analysis of racing fatalities in North America from data compiled in the Equine Injury Database™.

A fatality statistic of 2.04 fatal injuries per 1,000 starts was based upon a year’s worth of data beginning November 1, 2008, from 378,864 total starts in Thoroughbred flat races at 73 racetracks then participating in the Equine Injury Database.

The conclusions presented by Dr. Parkin included:

- The incidence of fatality in 2-year-olds for the one-year period was significantly lower than that of older horses, 3 years of age and up

- The incidence of fatality in fillies, mares and geldings for the one-year period was significantly lower than that of intact males
- The incidence of fatality for the one-year period was not significantly different for horses racing at different distances or carrying different weights
- The incidence of fatality for the one-year period was not significantly different for dirt, synthetic and turf racing surfaces, or condition of the dirt and turf racing surfaces

“This preliminary analysis just scratches the surface,” said Parkin, who serves as a consultant on the Equine Injury Database. “As the number of starts recorded in the database continues to grow, more

complex statistical analyses can focus upon multiple variables studied in concert to better understand the myriad of factors which may contribute to fatal and non-fatal injuries. In addition, differences that may not have achieved statistical significance after one year of data collection may do so with additional observations recorded in the database.”

“The work presented represents a starting point, not a destination,” said Dr. Mary Scollay, equine medical director for the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission and a consultant on the Equine Injury Database. “This begins to answer the question of what is happening. The ‘how’ and ‘why’ remain to be determined.”

“The creation and existence of the Equine Injury Database serves as a shining example of what can be achieved when industry stakeholders work together under a shared goal to improve the health and safety of our equine athletes,” said Matt Iuliano, the executive vice president and executive director of The Jockey Club. “Dr. Parkin’s work illustrates the importance of a database such as the Equine Injury Database,

supplemented with other information to support our decision makers with good science for analyzing and solving problems facing our industry. We look forward to the continued development and integration of additional information resources to assist our industry leaders.”

The Jockey Club, through two of its for-profit subsidiary companies, InCompass and The Jockey Club Technology Services Inc., has underwritten the cost to develop and operate the Equine Injury Database as a service to the industry. By agreement with the participating racetracks, from time to time The Jockey Club may publish certain summary statistics from the Equine Injury Database, but will not provide statistics that identify specific participants, including racetracks, horses or people. The Equine Injury Database contains a suite of reports for racetracks to analyze data collected at their respective facilities.

A regularly updated list of racetracks participating in the Equine Injury Database can be found at [jockeyclub.com/initiatives.asp](http://jockeyclub.com/initiatives.asp).

***We would like to thank the following for their participation in the Equine Injury Database. The racetracks and associations below participate in the EID and represent 88% of flat and steeplechase racing days in the U.S. and Canada.***

Albuquerque Downs	Fair Grounds	Kentucky Downs	Sacramento
Aqueduct	Fair Meadows @ Tulsa	Laurel	Sam Houston
Arapahoe Park	Fairmount Park	Lone Star Park	Santa Anita
Arlington Park	Fairplex	Louisiana Downs	Santa Rosa
Assiniboia Downs	Ferndale	Manor Downs	Saratoga
Atlantic City	Finger Lakes	Meadowlands	Solano
Bay Meadows	Fonner Park	Monmouth Park	Stockton
Belmont Park	Fort Erie	Montana Downs, Great Falls	Suffolk Downs
Beulah Park	Fresno	Montana Downs, Western	Sunland Park
Calder	Gillespie County Fair	Montana Fair	SunRay Park
Canterbury Park	Golden Gate Fields	Mountaineer Park	Tampa Bay Downs
Charles Town	Grants Pass	National Steeplechase Assn.	Thistledown
Churchill Downs	Gulfstream Park	Northlands Park	Tillamook
Colonial Downs	Harney County	Oak Tree	Timonium
Crooked River Roundup	Hastings Park	Penn National	Turf Paradise
Del Mar	Hawthorne	Philadelphia Park	Turfway Park
Delaware Park	Hialeah Park	Pimlico	Will Rogers Downs
Delta Downs	Hollywood Park	Pleasanton	Woodbine
Eastern Oregon	Hoosier Park	Portland Meadows	Wyoming Downs
Ellis Park	Idaho Downs	Prairie Meadows	Yavapai Downs
Emerald Downs	Indiana Downs	Presque Isle Downs	Zia Park
Evangeline Downs	Keeneland	Remington Park	

## Upcoming Events

### Racing Officials Accreditation Program

[horseracingofficials.com](http://horseracingofficials.com)

Board Meeting – August 31

#### Continuing Education Courses

Sept 16 – NSA Steward Seminar, Fair Hill, MD

Oct 11-12 – USTA, Columbus, OH

Nov 8-9 – Delaware Park

Nov 15-16 – University of Louisville

#### Accreditation Schools

Oct 11-19 – USTA, Columbus, OH

Jan 24-30 – Flat Racing School, Los Alamitos

### Groom Elite

[groomelite.com](http://groomelite.com)

#### Groom Elite 101

Penn National – Sept 13-16, 20-23, 27-28

Calder – Sept 27-29, Oct 4-6, 12-14, 18-20

#### Groom Elite 201

Hoosier Park – Sept 7-8, 13-14, 20-21

### Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association

[toba.org](http://toba.org)

Sept 10 – National Awards Dinner at Keeneland Race Course, Lexington, KY

### Thoroughbred Racing Associations

[tra-online.com](http://tra-online.com)

Sept 20-22 – International Simulcast Conference, Clearwater Beach, FL

### National Thoroughbred Racing Association

[ntra.com](http://ntra.com)

Oct 19 – Professional Education Seminar, Keeneland Sales Pavilion, Lexington, KY

(For Trainers, Track Medical Directors, Regulatory and Association Veterinarians, Farriers,

Racing Officials, Aftercare Organizations; contact [chamilton@ntra.com](mailto:chamilton@ntra.com))

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