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Equine Injury Reporting System Set to Begin June 1 at 30 Tracks

A uniform, on-track equine injury reporting system developed by Dr. Mary Scollay, association veterinarian at Calder Race Course and Gulfstream Park, will be implemented as a pilot project at 30 racetracks beginning Friday, June 1, it was announced today by representatives of the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit.

The goal of the injury reporting pilot project is threefold: to identify the frequency, type and outcome of racing injuries using a standardized format that will generate valid composite statistics; to develop a centralized epidemiologic database that could be used to identify markers for horses at increased risk of injury; and to serve as a data source for research directed at improving safety and preventing injuries.

The centerpiece of the system is a standardized form that will be used by racetrack veterinarians to identify what happened to an injured horse. The injured horses will not be identified at any time, and tracks will be able to compare their individual statistics to the aggregate statistics.

"Most tracks have been keeping much, if not all, of this information already," Dr. Scollay said. "The difference with this program is that by using standardized terminology, definitions, and reporting criteria we can all be on the same page. And that will permit constructive interactions."

Another benefit is that the data could be linked to other studies emanating from the summit.

One is an ongoing study headed by Dr. Mick Peterson, professor of mechanical engineering, University of Maine, that records racing surface data.

"There is no such thing as 'an acceptable rate of injury,' but until we are able to document injury rates, trends, and outcomes — and figure out where we are — it is hard to figure out how to get to where we want to be," Dr. Scollay said.

In addition to the tracks starting the study on June 1, several other tracks are anticipating being participants if they can arrange personnel by that time.

The Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit, which was conceived by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation board of directors in 2005 and held in October 2006, addressed this issue and many others concerning the safety and soundness of the Thoroughbred racehorse.

Six committees are conducting research and making recommendations on the action plans that evolved from the summit's strategic planning session:

- Injury Reporting, Dr. Mary Scollay
- Stallions' Progeny Racing Durability, Ed Bowen
- Racing Surfaces, Dr. Wayne McIlwraith
- Race Condition and Race Office, Eual Wyatt
- Shoeing and Hoofcare, Bill Casner
- Education and Licensing, Paul Bowlinger

At the Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI) Convention in April 2007, Dan Fick, executive vice president and executive director, The Jockey Club; Bill Casner, chairman and co-owner, WinStar Farm; Dr. Peterson; and Dr. Scollay presented updates on the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit and the focus and progress of their respective committees.

One of the model rules passed by the RCI included a ban on toe grabs longer than 4 millimeters.

“The injury reporting system and toe grab ban are just two examples of progress from the summit,” said Fick. “Committee members are working hard to improve the safety and soundness of racehorses, and we will continue to provide updates from each of them in the months ahead.”

To learn more about the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit and its committees, please visit the webpage through the links from the homepages of Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation (www.grayson-jockeyclub.org) and The Jockey Club (www.jockeyclub.com).

The Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit was coordinated and underwritten by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation and The Jockey Club, and was hosted by the Keeneland Association on October 16 and 17, 2006. Since 1983, the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation has underwritten 230 projects at 32 universities for more than \$14 million.

Racetracks participating in the on-track injury reporting system as of May 29, 2007:

Albuquerque Downs	Hastings Park
Aqueduct	Hawthorne Racecourse
Arlington Park	Hollywood Park
Belmont Park	Hoosier Park
Beulah Park	Keeneland
Calder Race Course	Lone Star Park
Canterbury Park	Meadowlands
Charles Town Races	Monmouth Park
Churchill Downs	Penn National
Delaware Park	Philadelphia Park
Ellis Park	Prairie Meadows
Emerald Downs	Saratoga
Fonner Park	Suffolk Downs
Gulfstream Park	Turfway Park
Indiana Downs	Yavapai Downs