



INDUSTRY VOICES

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Investing in Research Keeps Industry up to Speed

It is often said of the Thoroughbred industry that we are “behind the times,” but there are many notions to dispel that, as evidenced by the continuous and relevant research being funded by the Grayson-Jockey Club Foundation. While we all have a duty and responsibility to care for the horses that provide us with so much, the Grayson-Jockey Club Foundation each year funds equine research to continually improve and make advancements for horses to lead healthier lives.

Research is not exactly a sexy topic to discuss. It involves a vocabulary that requires a dictionary, and does not lead to the immediate gratification that society generally craves. However, over time it carefully creates improvements, not only for equine athletes but also for the safety of jockeys. Research also inspires the confidence necessary for breeders, sellers, owners, and bloodstock agents to promote the industry worldwide.

Insight and knowledge are power, and the more we educate ourselves, the more relevant we become. So, in my own words, here is why we all need to embrace research and support the undertaking of these projects. In a nutshell, the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation works by funding research at different universities nationally and internationally rather than carrying out research internally. The information produced from this research is then publically distributed.

While the initial idea of the foundation came from leaders in Thoroughbred racing, it stemmed with all breeds in mind for World War I & II military defense. Since 1983, its Research Advisory Committee annually discusses what relevant

research is needed and then decides how to disperse raised funds to support these important projects.

In 2018 the Grayson-Jockey Club's board of directors announced 18 research projects the foundation will fund for a total of \$1,239,083. Involved are 11 new proposals and seven continuing projects. This allotment brings the total impact since 1983 to over \$26.3 million, funding 358 projects at 43 universities.

While the Foundation covers all equines, I want to highlight—in my own layman words—a few projects that will influence all individuals in the Thoroughbred industry directly or indirectly in 2018 and beyond.

FOALS: There is a bacterium called *Rhodococcus equi* that causes pneumonia in 20%-40% of a given foal crop. Often, this infection leads to death. With no vaccine and many foals unable to fight this infection, treatment is currently done with a class of antimicrobials on a mission to fight the bacterium; however, over time this bacterium can become resistant and treatment ceases to be effective.

One of the Grayson-funded projects has a two-year goal of developing an inhaled product transported directly into the lungs to protect these foals from the bacterium, reducing the occurrence of *R. equi* pneumonia and decreasing antimicrobial resistance. Ideally, this would be used at all breeding farms to give foals a higher survival rate.

SALES: The majority of horses that go through the sales ring as yearlings or 2-year olds will undergo some sort of radiology or ultrasound examination. Information relating to sesamoiditis, stifle lucencies, and findings of suspensory branch ultrasonography is still seen as insufficient.

Another project benefiting from Grayson funding has a plan for an unprecedented scale of research on sales yearlings and 2-year olds, following them through their racing careers to have a better understanding of all of the above. This knowledge will allow for more informed decisions and industry-wide confidence in the sales repository system and the vet's role in trade, management, and care.

Ultimately, it will enhance decision-making which will help maintain soundness through understanding of what training regimens are called for in individual cases.

RACEHORSES: There are a couple of very exciting projects on the Grayson slate when it comes to racehorses. While Equine Injury Database numbers have shown that breakdown rates were slightly higher, though by a statistically insignificant factor, in 2017, the overall trend reflects a continuous improvement. There will never be a time, however, when simply reducing the rate of injury is sufficient. These racehorses are our livelihood and they ultimately deserve the safest track and training conditions and best possible health care for their racing careers.

1. Development of Limited View 3D Imaging: Millions have been spent by the Grayson-Jockey Club and other entities to better understand and prevent catastrophic injuries and it has been proven that catastrophic injuries are the end result of a chronic process. Currently there is not an easy-to-use imaging machine that can detect subtle lesions that lead to injury and subsequently this chronic process.

One project's goal is to create a reasonably inexpensive, easy-to-use 3D imaging technique that will detect subtle changes in the equine legs to aid in the prevention of injury. It will be seen as a screening tool more than imaging technology, and the unique benefit is that it should be able to be performed with limited radiographic views, making it practical for regular veterinarian use.

2. Predicting the risk of equine fatal injury during racing: the Equine Injury Database (EID) was created by The Jockey Club in 2008 following introduction of the concept at the first Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit jointly presented with Grayson. It has enabled recording of the frequency of fatal equine injury during racing from the majority of racetracks in North America, divided into categories of different racehorses and racing conditions. As the years progress risk factors have been identified for fatal injuries.

The project goal is to use the eight years

of research and continue to identify and predict high-risk horses and more importantly use this predictive ability to enable recommendations. Ultimately this will facilitate potential intervention before fatal injury occurs.

LAMINITIS: The Grayson-Jockey Club's contributions to laminitis research has probably been the most visible with a role in helping amazing equine athletes such as Lady Eli, Paynter, and Lord Nelson be able to overcome this horrendous disease. In 2018 the fight against laminitis continues. With three major forms of laminitis, this complex disease will continually be researched for the most effective preventative care and treatment for each one.

This is merely a tiny snippet of the amazing work the Grayson-Jockey Club will be funding in 2018 (all projects can be found in detail at www.grayson-jockeyclub.org) to enhance the lives of our equine partners. In a time where social media and information is easily transmitted to a greater audience, it is up to us to educate ourselves and others on positive advancements in this industry, and more importantly we need to take care of the Thoroughbred that continually gives to us.

As is stated on the Grayson-Jockey Club website: Horses strive to be our champions—we can always be theirs. **BH**

Jodie Vella-Gregory, of Breeders' Cup, is chairman of Young Adult Donors at Grayson-Jockey Club.

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| MAY 2018 | | | | | | |
|----------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | ♈ | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | ♎ |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

THE "SIGN" IN MAY

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|----|---|--------|----|---|--------|----|---|---------|
| 2 | ♈ | Thighs | 14 | ♉ | Neck | 25 | ♊ | Kidneys |
| 4 | ♈ | Knees | 16 | ♊ | Arms | 27 | ♋ | Loins |
| 7 | ♋ | Legs | 18 | ♋ | Breast | 29 | ♈ | Thighs |
| 9 | ♈ | Feet | 20 | ♎ | Heart | | | |
| 12 | ♎ | Head | 22 | ♏ | Bowels | | | |

The sign is a zodiacal tracking, by which some horsemen traditionally have determined the best time for weaning and certain other husbandry decisions. Foals are weaned after the sign moves "down" past the knees but before the sign moves back to the head.

CORRECTION

A photo credit in the #BHPics feature of the April 28, 2018, issue was inaccurate. The photo of The Ginja Ninja should have been credited to @thequineathle.

TAPIZAR

MONOMOY GIRL CAPTURES THE KENTUCKY OAKS (G1)

Tapizar gets an Oaks winner to match his sire, Tapit, who sired 2014 Oaks winner Untapable

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