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Notice to the Industry

ORC introduces all-encompassing Health, Safety and Regulatory Measures

At its meeting on January 22, 2008, the Board of the Ontario Racing Commission (ORC) approved a number of significant measures designed to protect the health of the horse, ensure the safety of the participant, and reinforce the integrity of the horse racing industry.

The measures range from new rules regarding medication and treatment regulations for the protection of the horse, safety equipment for participants, and owner and trainer responsibilities. Some of the measures will be put into place immediately, while others will be implemented in a staged process to allow the racing community to adjust.

Fact Sheets are available for more detailed information. Here is an overview of the new measures included in this announcement:

- In an effort to curb the over medication of horses due to lack of information, the ORC will be moving towards the establishment of a horse passport for any horse competing in Ontario. Under a phased-in approach the ORC will begin by requiring that the vaccination records for any horse are made available to any new owner within 72 hours of purchase. Effective April 1, 2008.
- For the health of the horse, only veterinarians should be treating our equine athletes. Under a new regulation, only ORC licensed vets will be authorized to treat racehorses. Exemptions: emergencies and areas under serviced by vets. Effective June 1, 2008.
- For the health of the horse, a new regulation has been established on the timing and use of shock wave – or pulse wave – therapy on a racehorse. Effective January 31, 2008.
- For the safety of participants, a new regulation requiring the use of safety reins for all racehorses has been established. Effective in phases, January 1, 2009 to July 1, 2009.
- For the safety of participants, a new regulation requiring the use of safety vests by standardbred participants has been established. Effective in phases, October 1, 2008 to June 1, 2009.

- In an aggressive move to improve the welfare of the horse and communicate that the ORC is serious about owner responsibility and eliminating the use of illegal medications, new rules are introduced that make a “positive test” horse immediately ineligible to race for 90 days. Effective January 31, 2008.
- New regulations established to enshrine trainer responsibility. Effective January 31, 2008.
- Revised Guidelines for Penalties for equine drug, TCO₂, and non-therapeutic drug offences. Effective January 31, 2008.
- The Guidelines used by Judges and Stewards regarding trainer transfers, including closeness of any relationship, family connection, past conduct, and so forth, to be published. Effective January 31, 2008.
- A series of new regulatory control measures, including rules on the terms of receiving and holding a license, search and seizure authority, as well as rules governing who may conduct “Out-of-Competition” activities. Effective January 31, 2008.
- To codify into the *Rules of Racing* the activities of the ORC ‘Out-of-Competition’ Program, including a new rule that will allow samples to be frozen. Effective: January 31, 2008.

The Board of the ORC is committed to continually looking for the ways and means to upgrade what is already a ‘best practice’ regulatory system.

The ORC has listened to the racing community’s concern through such dialogue as the Rules Amendment Process, the industry-supported Equine Medication Control and Drug Task Force and other working groups. The racing community has expressed a desire for regulation that is fair and which holds all to the highest standards that the public, horse racing participants and the horse deserve.

John L. Blakney
Executive Director