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Press Release
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ORC Selects Laboratory for EPO Antibodies Testing Program

The Ontario Racing Commission is pleased to announce that VITA-TECH has been selected as the laboratory to manage and conduct the new EPO antibodies testing program.

In August 2003, the Commission announced it would begin testing for erythropoietin (commonly known as EPO) and darbepoetin (DAR) beginning November 1st, 2003. EPO/DAR triggers the horse's body to produce more red blood cells, and is thought to improve performance by increasing the blood's oxygen carrying capacity.

The Commission is currently working on new rules for this program. Although not yet finalized, it is anticipated that the rules will cover the following:

- Any horse entered to race in Ontario may be tested for the antibodies of erythropoietin or darbepoetin.
- All claimed horses will be tested. If the antibodies are detected in the blood sample, the Judges/Stewards may reverse the claim and the monies paid by the claiming owner.
- Horses that have died and are required to be reported under the Death Registry will be tested.
- Blood samples taken for the purposes of the TCO₂ testing program, which did not result in a TCO₂ positive, will be used for this test. A new procedure will be introduced to obtain samples for claimed horses.
- If antibodies are detected in the blood sample, the horse in question will be placed on the Veterinarian's List and would not be eligible for racing until a blood sample negative for the antibodies is produced. The Commission will establish policies and procedures with respect to the re-testing of the horse.

The Commission is working with the New York State Gaming and Wagering Board to develop common protocols for the test. The Commission anticipates having the new rules ratified and announced in October 2003. Testing is scheduled to begin on November 1st, 2003 as announced.

For further information, please contact:

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