

Illinois Thoroughbred Horsemen & Racetracks Create Program to Provide Care for Retired Racehorses

by Mike Campbell, Jim Miller & David Zenner | June 07, 2010

The Illinois Thoroughbred Horseman's Association (ITHA), Arlington Park and Hawthorne Race Course have agreed to cooperate in a program to provide for the care of retired Thoroughbred race horses. The program, which will be operated under the auspices of the ITHA and administered by a designated committee of ITHA board members, began with the start of the Arlington Park meet on April 29.

The long term well being of every Thoroughbred race horse is of paramount importance to everyone involved in the sport of Thoroughbred racing," said ITHA president Mike Campbell. "This program goes a long way to help ensure that every horse that regularly races in Chicago has the opportunity to live out its post-racing years under the best possible circumstances."

"What happens to the racehorse at the conclusion of its racing career should be of concern to all industry participants," said Arlington Park president Roy Arnold. "I am pleased that all the stakeholders in Chicago Thoroughbred racing have stepped up to take part in this important program which gives retired racehorses a chance at a second career."

"I am pleased to see the horsemen and tracks come together regarding horse retirement," added Hawthorne assistant general manager Jim Miller. "Without these magnificent animals, we wouldn't have the great history behind this sport that we do. Now we are able to provide opportunities for these athletes once they leave the racetrack and that is a very gratifying feeling."

The program will be funded by the ITHA as well as both of Chicagoland's Thoroughbred race courses. The ITHA has designated that 0.3% of purses earned at both Arlington and Hawthorne be directed to the fund.

Arlington Park will contribute \$25,000 as its 2010 contribution to the program and Hawthorne Race Course will contribute \$12,500 for its upcoming fall meet and \$12,500 per race meet in 2011.

The ITHA committee will determine the processes under which the program will operate including the determination of eligible horses, selection of retirement facilities and the amount of funding to be provided to each facility while each racetrack will be responsible for the administration and disbursement of the funds collected.