

RCI to Modify NSAID Drug Rule

Del Mar, California - The Board of Directors of Racing Commissioners International (RCI) has begun a process that will result in a modification of current policy toward the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). RCI Model rules and most racing jurisdictions prohibit the use of NSAIDs within twenty four hours of a race.

Based upon a presentation by Dr. Tom David the Equine Medical Director of the Louisiana Racing Commission and Chair of the RCI Regulatory Veterinarian Committee, which also participates with and advises the AAEP, the regulators plan to address the issue later this year after seeking input from all segments of the industry.

"In furtherance of our concern for the health of our equine athletes, RCI strongly supports pre-race veterinary examinations and has received a recommendation indicating that the current policy toward NSAIDs may be too liberal and needs revision in order to ensure that the best possible pre-race exams can be performed," RCI President Ed Martin said.

"We do not seek to interfere in medical decisions by veterinarians as to what an appropriate medication regime should be for any horse, but we do need to safeguard the horse, its owners, and the fans from those instances where a medication is used to hide an infirmity that otherwise would exclude a horse from competition. There appears a consensus to modify the current rule and over the next few months we will seek comments on what that modification should be, whether the restriction should move to 48 hours, 72 hours, or longer," he said.

RCI is a member of the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium which strives to develop an industry consensus on medication issues based upon current and past scientific research. RCI member regulators are not bound by RMTTC recommendations, which are considered along with those from other industry organizations, experts and individuals.

RCI has notified the RMTTC that a modification of the NSAID rule will occur in December when the Model Rules Committee and RCI Board meet next in Tucson, Arizona. The RMTTC has been requested to provide input prior to that meeting.

"We are under no illusion that a change of this magnitude will be controversial for some, but there is a general belief that a reform of this rule is necessary and we would like this to be a priority going forward," Martin said.

