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KHRC collecting blood samples of injured horses

by [Frank Angst](#)

Since the Keeneland Race Course fall meeting, Kentucky Horse Racing Commission veterinarians have collected blood from any Thoroughbred that suffers a catastrophic injury or an injury severe enough to require ambulatory transport.

Mary Scollay, D.V.M., equine medical director for Kentucky Horse Racing Commission, oversees the blood sample collection. She currently is shopping a potential research project in which the blood samples of injured Thoroughbreds would be compared with the blood samples of horses that finished the race in good health.

For instance, the state collects blood samples of every winner. Those samples could be compared with samples from injured horses.

Scollay said there is some public perception that injured horses are racing with illegal drugs or excessive legal drugs. She does not believe those perceptions but would like to research the facts.

"Maybe the actual numbers will support my belief," Scollay said. "Or maybe the numbers will change my belief."

In developing what is now the Equine Injury Database, a national reporting of injuries conducted with the Jockey Club, Scollay has been a leader in compiling information on injured horses.

Currently, blood samples of injured horses in Kentucky are frozen while a research partner is pursued. Scollay said the frozen samples would be of use for about six months.

Kentucky law favors keeping research in state, which could make things difficult for the project because the state's drug testing is conducted in Iowa. Scollay said ideally the research would be conducted at the same site as drug testing.

On Monday, the Governor's Task Force on the Future of Horse Racing recommended the state build a testing facility, a move that could benefit such research projects.

Frank Angst is senior writer for Thoroughbred Times

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