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## **NTRA working on implementation plan for reforms**

by [Jeff Lowe](#)

The National Thoroughbred Racing Association convened more than 60 people from various sectors of the industry on September 12 in Lexington to present an implementation strategy for safety and integrity reforms that have been enacted and continue to be developed in response to the fatal breakdown of Eight Belles in the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1).

The NTRA hopes to have a finalized plan in place by mid-October.

A few major horse players were among the invited attendees, along with influential owners and breeders, racetrack and sales company executives, regulators, veterinarians, and representatives of the Jockeys' Guild and horsemen's groups. The media was not invited to the session, and NTRA President Alex Waldrop said afterward that he could not yet give specific details of the potential reforms or implementation strategy.

Waldrop said the reforms would fall into five areas: medication and testing, injury reporting and prevention, safety research, a safer racing environment, and care for retired racehorses.

"The reforms are comprehensive," Waldrop said. "They are based upon ideas that have been promulgated by other groups. What we at NTRA are focusing most of our energy on is an implementation strategy so that what we don't just talk about the problems."

After Eight Belles's death on May 3, the Jockey Club formed a safety committee that has issued reform recommendations in several areas, including the use of anabolic steroids, toe grabs, and jockey whips. Many racetracks and state jurisdictions have adopted reforms, and Breeders' Cup Ltd. and the American Graded Stakes Committee have both added conditions that require adherence to recommendations.

Waldrop said the NTRA's initiative is not a response to the June 19 Congressional hearing on the state of Thoroughbred racing that included threats of federal legislation that would mandate a national horse racing commission.

*Jeff Lowe is a staff writer of Thoroughbred Times*

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