



News for Immediate Release

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PA Horse Racing Commission Announces New Total Carbon Dioxide Testing Procedure

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Horse Racing Commission will begin testing thoroughbred race horses for total carbon dioxide, or TCO₂, after approving a policy to conduct the testing at its meeting on June 17.

The commission first voted to implement TCO₂ testing during its March meeting. Since that time, commission staff worked to develop the policy, which strictly prohibits the use of agents or substances that elevate a horse's TCO₂ level beyond what is naturally present.

TCO₂ in horses is believed to have a performance-enhancing quality by limiting muscle fatigue and increasing endurance. Testing for elevated TCO₂ levels in horses will take place at the Pennsylvania Equine Toxicology and Research Lab at West Chester University.

Horses may be tested at random, with probable cause, or at the discretion of race track stewards or the Horse Racing Commission. Penalties for samples that test positive may include a \$1,500 fine, a 30- to 60-day suspension, and loss of purse for a first offense.

The racing commission partners with the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine's New Bolton Center on research matters, given its outstanding reputation for developing and executing tests to detect performance-enhancing substances in horses.

Recent breakthroughs include developing tests for the blood-doping agent Erythropoietin, or EPO, and anabolic steroids. Pennsylvania was also the first state to impose restrictions on the use of intra-articular corticosteroids, which are very potent anti-inflammatory agents.

For more information, visit www.agriculture.state.pa.us, click on "Bureaus Commissions and Councils" and select "Pennsylvania Racing Commission."

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