

Sunland Park receives provisional accreditation

Eric Wing NTRA Posted: Thursday, May 13, 2010

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The National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) announced today that Sunland Park in Sunland Park, N.M., has received provisional accreditation by the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance following a complete review of all racing operations at the facility.

Following a lengthy certification process including a 48-page written application and an in-depth, on-site review, Sunland Park was found to be in compliance with the majority of standards set forth in the Alliance code. The Alliance withheld full accreditation of the New Mexico racetrack, however, pending further upgrades in the specific areas of pre-race veterinary inspections; uniform medication regulations; safety equipment and cushioned riding crops; testing for alkalinizing substances; and independent security assessment and training.

Provisional racetrack accreditation is granted when a facility substantially meets the majority of provisions contained in the Alliance code of standards, and when the Alliance has reason to believe that the track will be in compliance with the remaining standards within a reasonable period of time. Once all standards have been satisfied, a racetrack may be awarded full Alliance accreditation.

"We anticipate that several areas in question will be addressed very quickly by Sunland Park, while others will take longer due to necessary regulatory changes," said Mike Ziegler, Executive Director of the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance, who was part of the Sunland Park inspection team along with Jennifer Durenberger, DVM, and racing official Richard J. Lewis. "We trust that the state of New Mexico will work closely with Sunland Park so that it may achieve a higher degree of uniformity with other tracks that have received full accreditation."

Sunland Park now becomes the second racing facility to receive provisional accreditation by the Alliance and the 18th to receive either full or provisional accreditation. Churchill Downs and Keeneland were accredited in April 2009; Belmont Park received accreditation in May 2009; Delaware Park and Hollywood Park were accredited last June; Monmouth Park was accredited in July; Arlington Park and Saratoga Race Course received accreditation in August; Calder Race Course, Turfway Park and the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club were accredited in September; Oak Tree at Santa Anita/Santa Anita Park received accreditation in October; Fair Grounds and Aqueduct Racetrack were accredited in December; Golden Gate Fields was accredited last February; Woodbine received accreditation in March; and Pimlico was granted full accreditation earlier this month after receiving provisional accreditation in May 2009.

The Alliance, formed in October 2008 with the goal of establishing national uniform standards in the areas of safety and integrity, includes 55 racetracks in North America and every major national horsemen's organization. Alliance certification standards cover six broad areas: injury reporting and prevention; creating a safer racing environment; aftercare and transition of retired racehorses; uniform medication, testing and penalties; safety research; and wagering security. Within those six categories, specific standards focus on areas including:

- Systematic reporting of equine injuries
- Aftercare of racehorses
- Pre- and post-race veterinary examinations
- Post-mortem examinations
- Health and safety of jockeys
- Riding crops and their use
- Horse shoes and hoof care
- Safety research
- Safety equipment for jockeys and horse handlers
- Exogenous Anabolic Steroids
- Alkalinizing agents (TCO2)
- On-track emergency medical care for humans and equines
- Out-of-competition testing
- Freezing and retrospective testing of post race samples
- Continuing education
- Security assessment and training
- Totalizer technology and "stop wagering" protocols
- Wagering incident investigation

The NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance is a standing organization whose purpose is to establish standards and practices to promote safety and integrity in horseracing and to secure their implementation. Information on the Alliance, including the Alliance Code of Standards, can be found at www.NTRAalliance.com.

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson, former four-term Governor of Wisconsin and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, serves as independent monitor of the Alliance and will provide public reports on Alliance progress in instituting safety and integrity standards.