

[Print](#)**Scollay calls on regulators to use new injury statistics**by [Frank Angst](#)

When it comes to nationwide statistics on equine injuries, the veterinarian who helped shape the Jockey Club Equine Injury Database hopes state commissions rely on industry statistics.

In a panel on regulatory veterinarians at the Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI) conference on Wednesday in Lexington, Mary Scollay, D.V.M., equine medical director for the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission, said the consistency of the injury database should make it the preferred source for all national equine injury statistics.

RCI President Ed Martin said it is possible regulators could again be called upon by federal legislators to provide injury-rate statistics, as they were in June 2008 by a congressional subcommittee. Because each state collects injury statistics in a slightly different manner, Scollay said the Equine Injury Database should be the preferred source for national numbers.

Scollay does not question the accuracy of previous state studies presented to Congress but noted that states varied their processes in data collection. For instance, some states may have only counted breakdowns that led to euthanasia on the track while others may have followed up to count horses that may have been euthanized several days later.

Martin said the previous state numbers were lower than the overall rate of 2.04 fatal injuries per 1,000 starts released in March by the Equine Injury Database. Scollay said she suspects the increased rate has more to do with the way injury rates are compiled, as opposed to an actual increase in fatal breakdowns. The database counted any horse that died following an on-track racing breakdown, no matter how long after the incident.

The Jockey Club Equine Injury Database overall figure was based on breakdown statistics from its first 12 months of study, beginning in November 2008. Because of the consistency in data collection, Scollay said state racing commissions should rely on the numbers when looking at national rates.

While the database released the overall number, injury rates to be released at the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit on June 28-29 at Keeneland will offer some opportunity for comparison, although Scollay noted the numbers in some categories might not be statistically significant after just one year of study. Areas of most interest include: breakdown rates for various track surfaces, especially dirt compared with synthetic surfaces; rates for female horses racing against males compared with female horses racing within their division; rates for claiming races compared with non-claiming races; and an examination of rates in two-year-olds.

The overall rates will be made public by the injury database while the 84 participating tracks will receive information specific to their track to allow for further study.

*Frank Angst is senior writer for Thoroughbred Times*

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