



Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit

Sponsored by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation

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Horsemen's Update

2009 is on its way with spring and Derby fever on everyone's mind. This edition of the Horsemen's Update will provide an inside look at an ongoing endeavor and a new project of the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summits. Dr. Mary Scollay will update us on the status of the Equine Injury Database and Dr. Mick Peterson will explain the new Racing Surfaces Testing Laboratory.

Online Injury Reporting System Q & A with Dr. Mary Scollay

Dr. Scollay, equine medical director for the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission, was instrumental in the development of the Equine Injury Database (EID).

When did the EID begin?

The EID was officially launched by The Jockey Club in July 2008. Thirty-eight racetracks participated in the 2007 pilot project that resulted in the development of the online reporting system now in use.

Currently, how many tracks are participating?

Seventy-nine racetracks have committed to participate in 2009. This represents more than 83 percent of flat racing conducted in North America. The industry has been enthusiastic in its support for the program and we are optimistic that ultimately 100 percent of racetracks will be enrolled.

Is this database only for Thoroughbreds?

No, it is being used by other breeds, including Quarter Horses, Mules, Arabians, Paints and Appaloosas. Other racing disciplines, including harness and steeplechase, are evaluating the program and developing modifications to ensure that data collected will be relevant to their sport.

What information is being collected?

Injury information is being submitted by veterinarians. This can include the clinical presentation, specific diagnosis, emergency treatment, and case outcome.

The system allows for a record to be updated as more information becomes available. The lifetime performances and workout data for the horse are also available when viewing an injury report. Our goal is to be as comprehensive as possible in collecting information related to each horse.

Can the EID track training injuries?

It is now possible to report training and non-race related conditions into the EID. We are working to earn the support and cooperation of owners, trainers, and practicing veterinarians in the reporting of this very important

information. Little data exists on the occurrence of training injuries, but we can start to remedy that.

Is this a public database?

The database will not be accessible to the public. No racetrack's data will be singled out, and there will be no public comparisons of injury rates at specific racetracks. Injury information will not be published in such a way that a given horse, trainer or racetrack could be identified.

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Dr. Mary Scollay

When we have collected a statistically significant amount of data, composite national statistics will be published. This is, by design, intended to be a standing program; there is no projected endpoint for data collection.

What types of reports are or will be available?

Each individual racetrack has access to its own data and is able to generate reports and perform analysis at whatever intervals they choose. Even though there are not yet national statistics for the purpose of comparison, racetracks already have the ability to review and analyze their own.

What is the long-term goal of the EID?

The EID has three goals: to identify the type, frequency, and outcome of injuries sustained by horses

racing in the United States and Canada; to establish a standing program to collect data that will serve as a resource for epidemiologic studies and research; and to use the data to develop strategies to minimize or mitigate the occurrence of injury to the racehorse.

As a horseman, how can I be involved?

You are critical to the success of this program. The utility of the database is directly related to the quality of information entered into it. We encourage owners and trainers to demonstrate support for the EID by authorizing their veterinarians to participate in the non-race-day reporting.

Horsemen with questions about the program are invited to contact Kristin Hix or Michelle Penna at (800) 444-8521 or equineinjury@incompass-solutions.com.

Racing Surfaces Committee

Q & A with Dr. Mick Peterson

Dr. Peterson, Libra Foundation professor in engineering, professor of mechanical engineering and cooperating professor of animal and veterinary sciences at the University of Maine, is also a member of the summit's Racing Surfaces Committee.

What is the Racing Surface Testing Laboratory?

The lab provides a single location that is able to do track surface testing for synthetic and dirt racing surfaces. The focus is on providing services based on the unique needs of the horse racing industry.

Are there other labs?

Many, if not most, racetracks already use materials testing labs. These labs do a range of tests that are also used for civil engineering or agricultural purposes. For example, agricultural labs routinely tests for organics and salts, civil engineering labs sometimes test the strength of the soil in shear. For horse racing, both of these matter since the salt and organic impact compaction and the shear strength relates to the ability of a horse to propel itself forward on the surface. These

labs generally do not do any of the dynamic tests we have developed for horse racing. These labs also do not have experience with the analysis of the synthetic track materials. We have adapted those tests to horse racing when appropriate and have added tests associated with the unique needs of horse racing. Horse racing surfaces have 1000-pound animals hitting the surface at 40 miles per hour, this is very high loading, which the surface must sustain repeatedly. That is why racing surfaces are so complex and difficult to maintain.

And what makes yours unique?

We hope that the information from this lab will provide superintendents with better and more consistent information for their decision-making process. The lab also provides a unique opportunity to begin to understand the epidemiology associated with the racing surface characteristics. By centralizing this data the opportunity exists to use the data obtained to perform research that can help us to understand what factors in the surface might correlate to injury risk in the horse.



Dr. Mick Peterson

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What surfaces can you test?

Currently we have experience with most of the major track types. Our testing includes the different types of dirt tracks, sand, clay and fiber reinforced sand, as well as most of the major synthetic racing and training surfaces. We have also worked with several of the manufacturers of the synthetic surfaces when they are contemplating changes in their surfaces. If we can help get the right surface on the track initially, then the maintenance of the surface becomes easier.

How do you perform your testing?

This depends on the material. We use ovens, solvent separations, mechanical tests, ultrasonic tests and some unique methods that we have developed that are tailored to the needs of horse racing. For example, triaxial testing, which is used for civil engineering applications, we have modified to allow us to measure materials at different temperatures. This test was developed when questions began to arise regarding the relative temperature sensitivity of the different synthetic surfaces. We do a similar test for dirt tracks, but in dirt moisture content is more important than temperature so we control temperature and test with a range of moisture content. For test methods that use particularly expensive equipment we make use of other labs with which we have developed a partnership. We also encourage tracks to make use of some of the simpler techniques on site to help to understand changes in the surface. The more the simple tests are done at the track the less variation will occur. We then can do follow-up tests periodically to help make sure the tests are consistent with our results and as a part of a more extensive evaluation of the surface. This is a key element of the non-profit aspect of the laboratory; we are focused on spreading the knowledge throughout the industry.

Where is the lab located?

Orono, Maine. For now we are focused on purchasing and modifying test equipment and on developing

procedures that are repeatable. We are keeping costs to a minimum so that the money is spent in the right places.

How large is your staff?

There is one part-time engineer, Ryan Beaumont, who has worked on developing the equipment and the procedures. Two other people working in the laboratory are Ph.D. students at the University of Maine. John Bridge has a master's degree in materials engineering and is doing his Ph.D. on the wax, oils and polymers used in synthetic racing surfaces. He is also helping develop tests that will allow us to provide feedback on changes we see in synthetic surfaces. When the funding provided by the industry partners is available we expect to have at least one full-time staff member by the middle of the summer.



What will be the average turn around for samples submitted?

For samples tested in the lab we understand the need for quick turnaround for decisions on the track. Most work will be done within two to three days of the sample arrival. Some of the time required is simply due

to drying and solvent evaporation time, but we are working to accelerate all of the testing procedures.

When will the lab officially open?

We have already begun to provide results for a number of tracks. Given that it appears that funding is now in place, we should be fully operational by the first week in June. One of the mechanical test machines has not yet been ordered, so that test may not be available until the end of summer.

For additional information about the Racing Surfaces Testing Laboratory, contact Dr. Mick Peterson at (207) 409-6872 or michael.peterson@maine.edu.

Upcoming Events

Coming in May, *The Hoof Inside and Out*, a free, full-length educational DVD presented in cooperation with the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation and the Welfare and Safety Summit's Shoeing and Hoof Care Committee.

GROOM ELITE PROGRAM:

www.groomelite.com

Churchill Downs
Groom Elite Class 101
May 11-12
May 18-19
May 26-27
June 1-2
June 8-9
June 15-16

Delaware Park
Groom Elite Class 101
May 21-22
May 28-29
June 4-5
June 11-12
June 18-19
June 25-26

Canterbury Park
Groom Elite Class 201
June 1-3
June 8-10

AMERICAN HORSE COUNCIL:

www.horsecouncil.org

National Issue's Forum to Highlight
the Welfare of the Horse
June 14-17 in Washington, DC

AAEP:

www.aaep.org

Seminar: Focus on the Foot
June 19-21 in Columbus, OH

HBPA:

www.hbpa.org

National HBPA Summer Convention
Hosted by Charles Town HBPA
June 30 to July 3 in Shepherdstown, WV

WINNERS FEDERATION:

www.winnersfederation.org

Professional Conference immediately preceding
the HBPA Convention
June 29-30 in Shepherdstown, WV

NARA:

www.nara.kctcs.edu
www.highhopesteeplechase.com

"Catch a Rising Star"
North American Racing Academy
Graduation Race in conjunction
with the High Hope Steeplechase
May 17 in Lexington, KY

TOBA:

www.toba.org

Breeding Clinic
May 29-31 in Lexington, KY

New Owner Seminar
June 5 in Elmont, NY

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