

Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit

Sponsored by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation

How the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance Affects You!

You may be asking yourself, what's the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance all about? How does it affect you? And why should you be interested? We recently sat down with Mike Ziegler, the executive director of the safety alliance, who answered a few questions to bring everyone up to speed about the alliance.

1. Why did the NTRA decide to form the alliance?

The 2008 Triple Crown season presented horseracing with some of its greatest challenges to date. Some have described the aftermath of the 2008 Derby as horseracing's "Dale Earnhardt moment." Similarly, the knowledge that some of our biggest equine stars were competing for the Triple Crown with the benefit of anabolic steroids sent shock waves through the fan base. These events compelled the industry to change. With Congress threatening to intervene in racing's affairs, and industry groups like The Jockey Club Safety Committee recommending specific, scientifically based reforms, the industry desperately needed a reform implementation plan. The NTRA built unprecedented consensus around a comprehensive set of minimum standards for safety and integrity in horseracing known as the Alliance Code of Standards. When the alliance began accrediting tracks found to be in compliance with the Alliance Code of Standards in early 2009, the implementation strategy was complete. 15 tracks have been accredited by the alliance to date and 20 more tracks are expected to seek accreditation in 2010.

2. How did the 2006 and 2008 Welfare and Safety Summits aid in the formation of the alliance?

The 2006 and 2008 Welfare and Safety Summits issued numerous recommendations for change that

became the basis for the Alliance Code of Standards.

- 1) Tracks must actively participate in the Equine Injury Database;
- 2) Pre-race examinations must be performed on every horse running in every race;
- 3) Post-mortem evaluations must be performed on all horses that die on track;
- 4) Participate in research studies aimed at horse health and safety, including studies that promote safe and consistent racing surfaces;
- 5) Tracks must provide continuing education for horse handlers;
- 6) Adoption of uniform medication and testing requirements in their respective jurisdictions is a goal for all accredited tracks; and
- 7) Aftercare of retired racehorses is partly a responsibility of accredited tracks.

The advantages of alliance accreditation are real and substantial.

3. What are the advantages of tracks undergoing accreditation?

The advantages of alliance accreditation are real and substantial. First, the process helps tracks build a comprehensive program for assuring the safety and the integrity of their racing programs. By starting with a self examination followed by independent examination of track operations, tracks are guided through the process in a way that leads to safer, more trustworthy practices on a daily basis and ultimately to a compliance program that insures ongoing attention to code standards. Accreditation also promotes the sharing of best practices among accredited tracks nationwide. In

the final analysis, accreditation demonstrates to the racing public that the facility operator is committed to the health and safety of the human and equine athletes on track and to the integrity of its racing product – commitments which are paramount to a large majority of our patrons nationwide.

4. Are there any penalties for not being accredited?

The alliance does not have the power to assess penalties other than the denial or revocation of accreditation; however, it is undeniable that tracks

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who fail to meet the Alliance Code of Standards suffer in the court of public opinion. In the long-term, the goal of the alliance is to identify specific benefits or advantages that may be provided only to accredited facilities.

5. How does the alliance affect the horsemen?

Right now, the primary responsibility for attaining alliance accreditation falls on the racetracks, but that does not mean horsemen are not affected. Virtually every code standard impacts the way in which horsemen conduct their racing operations. From injury reporting to compliance with uniform rules and penalties for drug and medication infractions, horsemen's lives are changing for the better from a safety and integrity standpoint. Change is never easy or simple and certainly there are challenges to full implementation of the Alliance Code of Standards at every track and in every jurisdiction, but on the whole, horsemen are fully embracing the reforms championed by the alliance. Horsemen's organizations around the country were some of the earliest supporters of the alliance. The ongoing support from these groups has helped strengthen the efforts.

6. Why should the horseman want to race at an accredited racetrack?

Tracks are committing the time and resources necessary to benefit the horse racing industry as a whole. They are doing so by implementing operational changes that will assure the long-term health and viability not only of our human and equine athletes but our very business as a whole. Unless horsemen reward these proactive track operators by supporting their race meets, industry reform efforts will suffer and the industry as a whole will experience declines.



Horsephotos/NTRA Media Service

Mike Ziegler

7. What differences should the horsemen expect to see once their track is accredited?

The specific changes vary from track to track but in some specific cases, significant operational changes have been made to meet the minimum standards, from medication and testing protocols to forging relationships with aftercare facilities so retired racehorses have a place to go.

8. Why have all the tracks passed so far?

A track application for accreditation is voluntary and everything required by the Alliance Code of Standards is publicly available information. This means that track management essentially knows the answers to the test before taking it. A track most likely will not apply for accreditation before it knows it is in full compliance with the code of standards and will, therefore, be fully accredited.

9. How will someone know if a track is being reviewed?

A two- to three-day track inspection takes place. Meetings are held with representatives of the local horsemen's groups to discuss the process and specific sections of the application. Similarly, individual horsemen are sought out for track-specific input. In 2010 and beyond, a more structured process for soliciting input from horsemen will be adopted as part of the accreditation process.

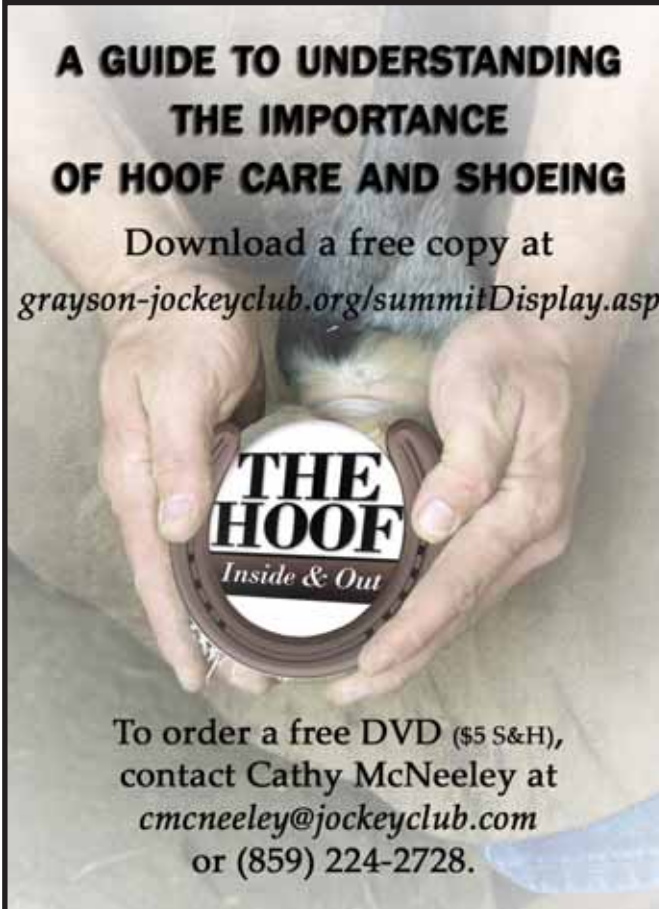
10. When reviewing a track, is the public allowed to be present?

Public input is currently sought on a one-on-one basis at each track. In the future, general patron input will also be gathered by e-mail. In addition, prior to adoption of the 2010 Alliance Code of Standards, it will be posted on ntraalliance.com for public comment.

11. How can the horsemen become more involved with the alliance?

Horsemen should become familiar with the Alliance Code of Standards, which can be found at ntraalliance.com. If horsemen are racing at an accredited track, they should help make sure the track is in full compliance with the code of standards and contact either track management or the NTRA if there are questions or concerns. Horsemen should also urge non-accredited tracks to seek accreditation and make it clear that in the future they will enter their horses only at accredited tracks. Finally, horsemen should keep in mind that, while the overall focus of the alliance is that "the health and safety of our human and equine athletes and the integrity of our sport are horseracing's top priorities," much of this responsibility starts and ends with the actions of horsemen.

For more information, contact:
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Upcoming Events

ROAP Continuing Education

horseracingofficials.com

NSA, March 4 in Fair Hill, MD
Flat/Harness, March 16-17 in Tampa, FL

TRA/HTA Joint Annual Meeting

tra-online.com

March 8-11 in Indian Wells, CA

TOBA Seminars and Clinics

toba.org

New Owner Seminar
March 12 in Tampa, FL
April 29 in Louisville, KY
June 11 in Arlington Heights, IL

Breeding Seminar
May 21-23 in Lexington, KY

Groom Elite Program

groomelite.com

Groom Elite 101
March 15-19 & 21-24 at Santa Rosa (Trinidad-Tobago)
April 22-23 at Indiana Downs
May 10-11 at Churchill Downs
May 13 or 20 at Delaware Park
May 12 or 19 at Prairie Meadows
June 1-2 at Canterbury Park
June 3 or 10 at Colonial Downs

Groom Elite Program (continued)

Groom Elite 201
April 22-23 at Penn National
Trainer Elite 301
March 31-April 2 at Lone Star Park

Equine Affair

equineaffair.com

April 8-11 in Columbus, OH

Asian Racing Conference

arcsydney2010.com.au

April 9-15 in Sydney, Australia

RCI Annual Convention

arci.com

April 12-15 in Lexington, KY

NHBPA Executive Committee Meeting

hbpa.org

April 13-14 in Lexington, KY

American Horse Council

horsecouncil.org

Annual Meeting and National Issues Forum
June 20-22 in Washington, DC

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