

Horse injury data to be collected at 30 tracks

By Gregory A. Hall

ghall@courier-journal.com

The Courier-Journal

LEXINGTON, Ky. – Thirty tracks across the country – including Kentucky's four biggest – will take part in a pilot program to keep standardized records of racing injuries.

The goals of the project are to determine the frequency of racetrack injuries, create a database that could identify horses that are at increased risk and provide a basis for other injury prevention research.

The pilot program is an outgrowth of last year's Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit at Keeneland Race Course sponsored by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation.

Officials organizing the pilot program, which will start June 1, said its development took on greater urgency in the aftermath of Barbaro's Preakness Stakes breakdown last year. Racing officials were unable to provide reliable statistics on the frequency of injuries nationally.

Many racing jurisdictions – including Kentucky – or racetracks keep records on injuries, but didn't use a standardized approach.

Mary Scollay, a racetrack veterinarian at Calder Race Course and Gulfstream Park in South Florida who is overseeing the project, said it will use standardized forms and definitions.

Overall data will be made public, but information regarding specific tracks would only be reported to the veterinarian employed by the racetrack or regulatory body providing the data, Scollay said.

That veterinarian could then determine what information would be provided to individual tracks, she said. Although not mandated, Scollay said she couldn't imagine that the information wouldn't be provided to an individual track if a problem were seen in the data.

Lisa Underwood, the Kentucky Horse Racing Authority's executive director, said information for each Kentucky track would be reported back to that track.