

## **Pennsylvania State Horse Racing Commission**

November 13, 2014

### **Minutes**

A meeting of the Pennsylvania State Horse Racing Commission was held on Thursday, November 13, 2014 at Penn National Race Course in Grantville, PA, at 11:30 A.M.

In attendance representing the Commission were Alan Novak, Chairman; Dr. Corinne Sweeney, Commissioner; Walt Remmert, Acting Executive Secretary of Horse Racing; Jorge Augusto, Legal Counsel.

Chairman Novak called the meeting to order and announced the meeting was duly advertised in accordance with the Sunshine Law.

Chairman Novak stated that the Commission held an executive session in which the Commission discussed personal matters. No other agency business was transacted.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Commissioner Sweeney, seconded by Chairman Novak, and unanimously passed, to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2014, commission meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS (STATISTICAL REPORTS)**

Chairman Novak requested the statistical highlights for the past month.

#### **Parx Racing**

Joe Wilson, Chief Operating Officer, reported the previous months and year to date statistics. The last two barns are almost finished for the year and a total of 29 have been built so far with only 8 more to go. The Breeders Cup was a great success and many wonderful horses that are winning in Pennsylvania are also winning other great races, which really goes to show what good quality racing we have here in the state.

#### **Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association**

Michael Ballezzi, Executive Director of PTHA, was not present and no oral report was given.

#### **Penn National Race Course**

Eric Johnston, Director of Racing, reported on the previous months and year to date statistic totals. The dormitory should be ready by January 1<sup>st</sup> and we look forward to having it completed.

### **Presque Isle Downs & Racetrack**

Debbie Howells, Director of Racing for Presque Isle Downs, reported on the previous month and year to date statistical totals. The track is closed for the end of the 2014 season and we look forward to starting again in 2015.

### **PA Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association**

Tim Shea, President of the PA HBPA, stated he was looking forward to the new dormitory being finished at Penn National and how the track is in such great shape. In the upcoming year the races will be changed from 9 to 8 races hoping to try and keep good field sizes.

### **Pennsylvania Horse Breeders Association**

Brian Sanfratello, Executive Director for the PHBA, introduced Mr. Rick Abbott, the new President of the PHBA. During the Fasig Tipton November Sale the Princess of Sylmar went for \$3.1 million. Some stakes races coming up include the Blue Mountain on November 26<sup>th</sup> and the Pennsylvania Nursery at Parx on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **RESEARCH**

Dr. Mary Robinson, Acting Director of the Pennsylvania Equine Toxicology and Research Lab, and of the University of Pennsylvania, was not present and no report was given.

**Procaine Penicillin:** Procaine-penicillin is an antibiotic that is commonly used to treat infections in the horse. Procaine is a nerve blocking agent and is included in the formulation to decrease pain associated with the intramuscular injection of this product. Procaine can also be used by itself to apply an illegal nerve block and must be regulated. The length of time it takes to eliminate procaine from the blood and urine is much longer than the length of time it takes the horse to eliminate penicillin, thus the presence or absence of penicillin cannot be used to determine if an illegal nerve block has been performed with procaine. Two research horses have been treated with a typical course of procaine-penicillin to estimate the length of time procaine can persist. It is expected to be approximately 4 weeks. A threshold was adopted for procaine as part of the RMTC medication recommendations, which will prevent a large dose of procaine from being administered locally to perform a nerve block. However, to enable appropriate use of procaine-penicillin, but ensure illegal use of procaine is not permitted, a surveillance period of 6 hours prior to the race is also recommended for all horses that have received procaine-penicillin 4 weeks prior to racing. This is due to the very small amount of procaine that can be administered locally to perform a nerve block. Implementation of this policy will require the cooperation of all parties and discussions are needed to establish the logistics.

**Cobalt:** The administration of cobalt-containing products has been performed to determine the effect of these products on plasma and urine cobalt concentrations, and on hematopoiesis. In high doses, cobalt was reported to cause an increase in red blood cell production and toxic side effects in humans. At the low doses administered as part of these

products, no effects on hematopoiesis and no signs of toxicity were observed, however the urine and/or the plasma concentrations were affected. Plasma samples from 250 thoroughbreds and 250 standardbreds are being analyzed to assess the range of cobalt concentrations found in the racing population. Following analysis of these data, a threshold will be recommended and values above the threshold will be penalized. Cobalt has a very long half-life (i.e. it takes 1 week for 50% to be eliminated by the horse); therefore, it is advisable to minimize or discontinue the use of cobalt-containing products to avoid a potential future positive test. Cobalt-containing products are not considered necessary for a healthy racehorse on a well-balanced diet.

The manuscript entitled "Pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of dermorphin in the horse" is now available online to subscribers of the Journal of Veterinary Pharmacology and Therapeutics.

Dr. Robinson and Walt Remmert will be available from 1 to 3pm in the Penn National Commission office for a Q and A session with local veterinarians. Veterinarians were informed of the Q and A session via a listserv for the Penn Vet Equine Pharmacology Laboratory. All veterinarians are invited to join the list serve by contacting Donna Meyrick at New Bolton Center.

There are currently 14 manuscripts being prepared, three manuscripts are being reviewed, and five manuscripts have been accepted for publication and are at various stages of the publication process since the beginning of this year (January 2014).

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER**

Deborah Tsang, Quality Assurance Officer, reported all internal blind samples sent to the screening sections of the laboratory this month have been correctly identified.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Sweeney, seconded by Chairman Novak and unanimously passed to approve item 5.a.(1); approval of the thoroughbred full race card simulcast schedules for the month of December 2014 at Penn National, Parx Racing, and Presque Isle Downs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sweeney and seconded by Chairman Novak and passed to approve item 5.a.(2)<sup>1</sup>; approval of the harness full race card simulcast schedules for the month of December 2014, at The Meadows, Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs, and Harrah's Philadelphia Casino and Racetrack.

---

<sup>1</sup>Concerning Item 5.a. (2); "Consideration for approval of the Harness full race card simulcast schedules for the month of December 2014, at The Meadows, Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs and Harrah's Philadelphia. Approval is pending submission of the fully executed simulcast agreements to the Commission Office." Chairman Alan Novak abstained from voting on this item due to a business relationship with The Meadows.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Novak announced the next commission meeting will be held December 15, 2014, at New Bolton Center, Kennett Square, PA.

Executive Session: 10:30 A.M. in Moelis Conference Room  
Public Meeting: 11:30 A.M. in Woerner Amphitheater

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Novak adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Walt Remmert  
Acting Executive Secretary