

STONE FARM

"We're trying to raise you a good horse."

May 4, 2011

While there are a number of problems facing the American Thoroughbred industry, many of us who are heavily invested in this industry believe that the most destructive and undermining influence today is the continued proliferation and use of drugs in racing. Our observation of racing both in the United States and abroad has made us painfully aware that American racing stands alone as a "rogue nation" with its permissive use of race day medications. England, Ireland, France and the other principal European countries, together with Australia, Hong Kong and Japan maintain a zero tolerance for drugs on race day.

Some argue that drugs are necessary to enable racetracks to fill their racing calendars with horses that might not otherwise be available to race. (In fact, the average number of annual starts per runner has fallen from 11.31 in 1960 to 6.11 today, an astounding drop of 46 percent, or nearly half; and even more sobering is the drop in the average number of lifetime starts per horse from 45.2 in 1950 to 12.97 for horses born between 2003 to 2007, 32 fewer starts in a lifetime.) Others argue that the financial health of racing is somehow enhanced by the use of drugs. In the last three years, however, the pari-mutuel handle has dropped by an alarming 24.42 percent. Finally, some claim that horses require these so called "therapeutic drugs" to race, and that it is inhumane to run a horse without them. The rest of the racing world strongly disagrees and instead believes that racing an unsound or lame animal with or without drugs is cruel and inhumane. While the health of the animal may be the real concern of some who mistakenly believe that race day drugs are necessary, others are only interested in gaining an unfair advantage and could care less about a level playing field.

With precipitous declines in both attendance and wagering at our tracks, compounded by plummeting bloodstock sales, it is apparent that Thoroughbred racing is at a crossroads. The industry has suffered a loss of confidence and respect with its fans and the general public. Countless reports of trainers being charged with doping their horses, coupled with the destruction of horses due to horrific injuries on the track, cast our sport as something other than beautiful and noble. Today, prominent families and businesspersons who have historically supported the industry are not interested in being associated with the abuse of animals and wide spread cheating by the use of performance-enhancing drugs.

In addition to losing our fan base we are witnessing a decline in interest in our bloodstock sales from the Europeans and the rest of the world. These foreign investors are not confident that horses purchased in America will be able to compete in international venues. With six or more generations of heavily medicated American horses racing on drugs, we are now often being referred to as breeders of the "chemical horse." In fact, one of the most prominent owners in Europe recently said, "We use the United States as a dumping ground for our weaklings."

There is a way to stop these drugs from being present in a horse's system on race day. By an amendment to The Interstate Horseracing Act of 1978, Congress can require simulcast races to be run drug free. This is appropriate given that the racing industry has already invited Congress to regulate horseracing with respect to interstate wagering through the IHA, which was enacted into law over three decades ago. At the very least, Congress should make sure that the betting public is not defrauded and that races are not fixed by reason of the doping of one or more of the participating horses.

In our opinion, this is the only way to end this terrible blight on American racing and to bring us in line with the rest of the world. We fear that racing is rapidly becoming a socially unacceptable sport because of performance-enhancing drugs. Many of our organizations are becoming increasingly concerned about this, but are utterly powerless to do anything about it. We have been disappointed time after time over the years by promises, platitudes, and good intentions. Now, here is a way to stop this madness once and for all.

Enclosed is a summary of The Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act which will ensure that no drug shall be present in a horse's system on race day. It is our hope that you share our concerns and that you will help to get it passed in the House and the Senate. We feel that a vote against this bill is a vote for drugs. We ask that you show your support and join us in this endeavor by affixing your signature to this page and e-mailing it to stonefarm@stonefarm.com or faxing it to Stone Farm at (859) 987-1474.

Sincerely,

Arthur and Staci Hancock,
Roy and Gretchen Jackson,
George Strawbridge

I, the undersigned, support The Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act.

Signature / Date

Print Name

Address
