

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am a fourth generation horseman and I am here today because I love this industry and I feel that we're in danger of losing it. Sadly, statistics bear this out. The recent McKinsey Report on Thoroughbred Racing points out that a vast majority of the population, over 75%, regards racing as a sport in which drug use runs rampant. The report also says that this majority of the population has a very negative perception of the sport...I think that is worth repeating...*the vast majority of the population has a very negative perception of our sport*. How in the world can we expect to thrive and be popular when a vast majority of the population views us in such a negative light?

Another fact the McKinsey Report points out is that racing is losing 4% of its fan base a year. At this rate, the time will come when the business of horse racing will not be sustainable..... and we'll be out of business. Remember, at one time we were the number one spectator sport in America. This is indeed a very sad state of affairs.

But let me go back in time for a moment. In 1966, I went to work for Eddie Neloy who was the leading trainer in the United States. No race day medication was allowed. No Lasix, no Butazolidin, NO NOTHING. Fans loved racing and Belmont Park was at capacity for the big race days. The only time the veterinarians came to our barn was when a horse had colic, a temperature, or an injury. Things have certainly changed in the last 40 years. Nowadays if you go to the backside at four in the afternoon you are likely to see a veterinarian's van parked at almost every barn.

At most race tracks in this country on most race days, 100% of the horses are racing on butazolidin and 85-90% are racing on Lasix. If that is an indication of the true level of soundness of our horses, we are in deep, deep trouble.

Drugs are not free of charge. The only person who pays these bills is the owner, and these bills can run a thousand dollars or more a month, which can be up to 12 thousand dollars a year. If the training bill is eighty dollars a day, which comes to thirty thousand dollars a year, then these vet

charges of twelve thousand dollars add 40% a year to the expenses paid by the owner for owning a racehorse. Race day lasix alone costs owners 100 million dollars a year. A lot of owners are leaving the game because of these expenses, and a whole lot more are very unhappy about them.

But that's not the only concern about the drug issue. The public doesn't want it.... Period. That's all that really matters because they are the fans, and our fans keep us in business. Again, the McKinsey Report bears this out. We have experienced a 37% drop in handle and a 30% drop in attendance in the last decade alone. Only 22% of the general public has a positive impression of our sport and only 46% of racing fans would recommend our sport to others. What the McKinsey Report is saying in a nutshell is that you cannot market a flawed product. You sell the sizzle and not the steak. The fans have spoken. We must listen to our customers or continue to lose them.

Many say the drugs these horses get are "therapeutic". But, therapeutic drugs are given to horses who are in therapy and who are recovering from an illness or injury. Is every horse in every race ill or injured? Therapeutic drugs, by definition, are used for healing and curing. Drugs that mask pain and enhance performance are not "therapeutic", they are what they are....performance enhancing drugs.

I was speaking to English trainer John Gosden the other day and he said the Europeans have a new name for The Breeders Cup...The Bleeders Cup. What a sad commentary on our championship races. Don't tell me that if you give a horse lasix and it loses as much as 25 pounds that this is not performance enhancing. If that's the case, why even weigh the jockey?

Ladies and Gentlemen, fifty years ago horses averaged 45 lifetime starts and now they average 13 lifetime starts. Proponents will say that these so called "therapeutic drugs" are needed to fill races, when the opposite is obviously the case. Statistics prove it. Since 1960, the number of annual starts has dropped from 11.3 per year to 6.23 in 2009..... a drop of nearly 50%. What in the world are we doing to ourselves? Imagine the economic impact on owners and trainers alike, as well as the fans, whose heroes have short lived careers.

On another note, our horse sales were once driven by an international market. This September, all the million dollar yearlings were bought by

Americans and this November only five of eighteen million-dollar mares went abroad, notwithstanding the fact that dollars are very , very cheap. The November sale has been good so far because the life's work of some of our top breeders and the pedigrees they've created have been on the block, but watch and see what happens toward the end of the sale. We will be giving horses away for nothing just as we did at the end of the September yearling sales. It is difficult to attract investors when the vast majority of the population has such a negative perception of our business.

In the words of a top Australian bloodstock agent, "You are isolating yourselves, and while the international market will still buy broodmares and an occasional well-bred yearling, they won't purchase many horses in training." Why would they? American racehorses have been over-loaded with drugs and we have bred five generations of drug dependent horses.

A top English bloodstock agent, Hugo Lascelles said, "We no longer have the confidence in your stallions we used to have because we don't know if the horse's performance was enhanced chemically or was natural, so we are becoming more and more reluctant to purchase their offspring."

Or perhaps Louis Romanet, chairman of The International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities said it best, "How can we still recognize as world champions, horses who run with medication?"

And what about the horse himself? We love our horses....noblest of god's creatures. There is a current attitude: "*Drug 'em, Break 'em down and slaughter 'em*" And to those who do this to these noble creatures, I say: So dies the victim, so dies the vampire. And by the vampire, I mean the industry that allows this to happen.

Now then, let's take a look at just one of our competitors, NASCAR. I personally remember when Kentucky horsemen laughed and talked about those folks in North Carolina who were racing cars and trying to make it into a business. Now look where they are and where we are.

Traffic is backed up for miles as thousands arrive at NASCAR events. Major Companies and CEO's sponsor and attend these events. Even more telling is the ongoing planning for a private airport to support Kentucky Speedway, the NASCAR track just a few miles down the road from Turfway Park, the weak sister thoroughbred track that is struggling to survive.

NASCAR needs this airport because there are so many planes coming into greater Cincinnati that they get backed up both landing and departing.

NASCAR allows NO CHEATING and if you're caught for even a minor infraction, penalties are severe. NASCAR fans have confidence in their sport. When the integrity of an industry is called into question time and time again, the support for that industry will decline, and NASCAR knows that. People who cheat repeatedly deserve no quarter. We need the squeaky clean, milk mustache image that NASCAR has.

If you want our Kentucky Horse industry to survive and thrive, we must do away with performance enhancing race day medications. Follow the model set by Europe, Asia, Australia and the rest of the racing world.

Ladies and gentlemen, As "The Horse Capitol of the World" let's lead the way by becoming the first state and the first racing jurisdiction to do the right thing. Let's ban race day medication. Let's rejoin the international thoroughbred market with clean, medication-free rules of racing and horses raced on their performance, and not on some drug they may have been given. Let's create a level playing field for everyone – horses, jockeys, trainers, veterinarians, owners and fans alike.... And restore our reputation around the world and with our fans here at home.

Thank you,  
Good afternoon.