

RMTC BOARD APPROVES MAJOR DRUG TESTING INITIATIVE

At its September 24 board of directors meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) announced a five-part drug testing initiative aimed at developing laboratory and drug testing standards comparable to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) model. This initiative is the result of The Jockey Club Thoroughbred Safety Committee-sponsored drug testing meeting in Chicago on September 22-23.

The RMTC's drug testing initiative will include:

- *Development of laboratory standards and accreditation criteria to ISO standards;*
- *Expansion of current quality assurance and laboratory proficiency programs;*
- *Development of a business plan for the U.S. drug testing infrastructure including industry-sponsored research and reference equine drug testing laboratories;*
- *Establishment of a post doctoral and grad student recruitment program for drug testing research and laboratory staff development; and*
- *Review of current sample collection strategies including long-term storage of frozen samples.*

Specific tasks with definitive timelines and responsible sub-committees were reviewed and authorized by the RMTC board, with preliminary work beginning immediately. All of the recommendations closely follow the Thoroughbred Safety Committee's recommendations on drug testing released at The Jockey Club Round Table.

Dr. Rick Arthur, equine medical director of the California Horse Racing Board, said, "This is an opportunity to move equine drug testing in this country to a new level. Dr. Don Catlin, founder and former director of the UCLA Olympic Analytical Laboratory, recommended the WADA model for equine drug testing at the Grayson-Jockey Club Welfare and Safety Summit this spring, and he was absolutely correct. We shouldn't settle for less."

Additionally, the RMTC has been working with the University of Florida, where research is currently being conducted on anabolic steroids. From this research, the RMTC expects to recommend plasma threshold levels and withdrawal times for stanozolol, testosterone, boldenone, and nandrolone. There are 16 pari-mutuel racing states that have adopted the RMTC-recommended model rule on anabolic steroids, with 16 more states in the adoption process. A map of the model rule adoption progress is located on the RMTC website at www.rmtcnet.com.

Following a presentation on the anti-inflammatory effects of glucocorticosteroids by RMTC research consultant Dr. Bill Muir, the RMTC board has also committed more than \$300,000 to support comprehensive research on glucocorticosteroids over the next two years. This will allow the development of model rules, best practices and proper procedures related to the administration of these medications, which are utilized in the treatment of inflammation and are not related to anabolic steroids.

The RMTC consists of 25 racing industry stakeholders and organizations that represent Thoroughbred, Standardbred, American Quarter Horse and Arabian racing. The organization works to develop, promote and coordinate, at the national level, policies, research, and educational programs that seek to ensure the fairness and integrity of racing, the health and welfare of racehorses and participants, and protect the interests of the betting public.

For additional information, visit the RMTC website at www.rmtcnet.com.

