



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **RMTC BOARD APPROVES MAJOR DRUG TESTING INITIATIVE**

At their 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. These recommendations are the result of The Jockey Club Thoroughbred Safety Committee-sponsored drug testing meeting in Chicago on September 22-23 and are a direct response to Thoroughbred Horsemen's Associations President Alan Foreman's call for a major reorganization of drug testing in U.S. racing at The Jockey Club Round Table.

The RMTC's drug testing initiative will include the following action points:

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

Specific tasks with definitive timelines and responsible subcommittees were reviewed and authorized by the RMTC board with preliminary work beginning immediately. All of these 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 after the meeting, "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."

Dr. Rick Sams, RMTC chemist advisor, gave an update on the anabolic steroid research currently being conducted at the University of Florida. From this research, the RMTC

expects to recommend plasma threshold levels and withdrawal times for stanozolol, testosterone, boldenone and nandrolone. A timeline was established for final recommendations to be approved as a model rule by RMTC and the Association of Racing Commissioners International by early December. The project has taken longer to complete than originally expected because boldenone was detectable in plasma after a single injection for beyond 140 days in some of the administration Thoroughbreds at Florida.

Executive Director Dr. Scot Waterman provided the RMTC board with an update on the racing industry's push to eliminate anabolic steroids, highlighting that 16 pari-mutuel racing states have now 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](http://www.rmtcnet.com).

"RMTC officers have been encouraged by the recent adoptions of the model rule by Maryland, Louisiana and Ohio," said Waterman. "The states now on board with this rule represent more than 90% of the pari-mutuel handle, and we are optimistic that the industry is on its way to banning steroids from virtually all horse racing competition in 2009."

RMTC Research Consultant Dr. Bill Muir presented information on the anti-inflammatory effects of glucocorticosteroids. The RMTC board subsequently committed more than \$300,000 to support comprehensive research over the next two years, which 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 board also voted to endorse the National Thoroughbred Racing Association's safety and integrity initiatives to move Thoroughbred racing forward on welfare issues, including RMTC recommendations on drug testing, the regulation of therapeutic medication and stricter enforcement of uniform penalties for prohibited practices and drug rule violations.

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](http://www.rmtcnet.com) or contact Hallie Roach, RMTC communications coordinator, at (859) 224-2848.