

HARNES



HORSEMEN

INTERNATIONAL

May 8, 2019

Mr. Dennis Drazin
25 Reckless Place
Red Bank, NJ 07701
Via: Email

Dear Dennis:

I am writing on behalf of Harness Horsemen International an industry trade association that represents harness horsemen's groups throughout the United States and Canada.

Recently the horse racing industry has been under intense scrutiny due to disproportionately high incidents of horses breaking down at Santa Anita Racetrack in California. Fortunately, this problem has been significantly reduced due to new protocols that were implemented to improve the racing surface and pre-exercise exams to detect horses who maybe at high risk. While these efforts are commendable, some are trying to use these events to reduce and eventually ban, the use of furosemide (Lasix) in race horses.

While there is no scientific proof that shows furosemide was or is a cause of breakdowns in horses, some are trying to seize upon the current environment to ban this effective therapeutic medication. These efforts are both misleading and misguided. The number of both thoroughbred and standardbred foals born annually has been in steady decline for several years. Most racetracks are experiencing some degree of a horse shortage, banning furosemide will only exacerbate that problem as otherwise useful racehorses who suffer from EIPH (exercise induced pulmonary hemorrhage), will have their racing careers cut short further reducing the population of available horses that are needed to fill races.

Furosemide is considered by the veterinary community to be the best available remedy to combat EIPH. To ban this will force horsemen to use other concoctions to prevent a horse from bleeding, none of which are as effective nor carefully monitored by State Racing Commissions.

The ARCI is already warning all State Racing Commissions to be aware that banning furosemide is expected to encourage practices deemed to be cruel and inhumane and dangerous, such as "Drawing and Muzzling," removing feed and water from a horse up to 36 hours before a race, or even using formaldehyde as a substitute for furosemide.

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from a horse up to 36 hours before a race, or even using formaldehyde as a substitute for furosemide.

Further banning furosemide will place horses at risk for a bleeding episode that may render the horse dangerous while competing, placing other horses and riders at risk. I do not think the public will embrace horses thundering down the stretch with blood flying everywhere as horses suffer EIPH episodes due to the lack of a therapeutic medication like furosemide which when available mitigates this from happening.

Fortunately, standard bred horses or harness horses, do not have a high incidence of breakdowns. This is due to a firmer racing surface and the mechanics of pacing and trotting. While we are fortunate in this regard, we are no less fortunate than our thoroughbred counter parts as standardbreds suffer from EIPH at proportionate levels to thoroughbreds. That is why H.H.I. opposes the banning of furosemide at any racetrack. The U.S.T.A. the breed registry for the standardbred has firmly rejected banning furosemide and sides with the A.A.E.P.'s position that until a better or more effective way is found to mitigate or prevent EIPH, furosemide should continue to be used.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Luchento". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "T" and "L".

Thomas Luchento
President HHI

TL: dh