

Courier-Journal Report on Champion Thoroughbred's Death Sparks Outrage

Animal Groups Call on Kentucky State Vet and Board of Veterinary Examiners to Investigate Incident After News of Expired Medication Administered to Laoban

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, USA, April 15, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Animal Wellness Action, the Washington, D.C.-based non-profit that led the charge to enact the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act signed into law in December 2020, [in a letter today](#) called on the Kentucky State Veterinarian's Office and the Kentucky State Board of Veterinary Medical

Examiners to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of champion Thoroughbred breeding stallion Laoban at WinStar Farms in Versailles in 2021. The Louisville Courier-Journal brought the matter to light in a [news article on Thursday](#).



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“

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Joseph Grove, Kentucky state director at Animal Wellness Action

Laoban, the winner of Saratoga's 2016 Jim Dandy Stakes, was allegedly given 9-year-old, expired medication to boost the stallion's libido to breed more mares just prior to his death. The Courier-Journal's report also raised the North America Specialty Insurance Company's decision to deny an insurance claim on the stallion's life.

“With the ongoing controversy in American horse racing due to equine deaths both on and off the track and the

rampant overuse of medication in the sport, and now this unfortunate incident in the breeding shed, we believe it imperative for the Kentucky Board of Veterinary Examiners and Office of the Kentucky State Veterinarian to investigate this matter, and report to the public its findings,” wrote Animal Wellness Action executive director Marty Irby and Kentucky state director Joseph Grove in a letter to the Kentucky State Veterinarian's Office and the Kentucky State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

“The steady stream of drug-related scandals in American horse racing is piling up,” added Irby. “If the industry is serious about cleaning up its act and bringing integrity back to the sport, then it must embrace full transparency and take action to put the welfare of the horses first, including in the breeding shed.”

“Growing up just minutes from Churchill Downs, accustomed to the false grandeur and romance of the Kentucky Derby, I’m ever more disheartened to see how poorly Thoroughbreds are regarded,” added Grove, a resident and native of Louisville. “This horror shows that’s what really at stake is profits, not the well-being of these exquisite horses.”

The news of Laoban’s case follows a series of embarrassing circumstances for Thoroughbred racing: the [Texas Racing Commission](#)’s decision Wednesday to blatantly defy the new federal law; the recent suspension of infamous trainer Bob Baffert in Kentucky, California, New York, and Maryland, along with the removal of the 2021 Kentucky Derby title from Baffert’s Medina Spirit, who collapsed and died at Santa Anita Park in California last December; and the New Jersey Racing Commission’s two-year suspension of trainer Cody Axmaker, issued this week in a case similar to Laoban’s.

Animal Wellness Action (AWA) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we



Joseph Grove



AWA executive director Marty Irby testifying at a House hearing on H.R. 1754 in January 2020

must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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AWA executive director Marty Irby at Saratoga Racetrack on 8/14/21 | Photo: Animal Wellness Action

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