

Animal Wellness Groups Encouraged by HISA Report, Note Gaps in Key Risk Factors, Including Breeding

No Healthy Young Horses Should Die on the Racetrack, HISA has the Power to make that Happen, Groups say

LOUISVILLE, KY, USA, September 12, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy applauded the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority today for its report on the rash of horse deaths at Churchill Downs earlier this year. At the same time, the groups called for more investigation to occur of the industry itself, saying "Orthodoxies in racing must be challenged."

"It is encouraging that we now have a professional body, HISA, that can do a post-mortem analysis of clusters of horses deaths at Thoroughbred tracks," said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and one of the drivers of the enactment of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act. "We've never had this kind of professional resource in racing, and it's a new day and a very good thing."

Pacelle testified before Congress on the anti-doping legislation introduced in 2013 and worked on the issue through 2019, when HISA was enacted.

The new HISA report concludes it "did not identify any singular explanation for the fatalities at Churchill Downs." Details of the [new HISA report can be found here](#).

"While the analysis was exhaustive, the reports sidestep some key risk factors in American racing — notably breeding practices that make the horse more vulnerable to breakdowns and early-age racing," added Pacelle. "We concur that there is no single explanation for such a rash of deaths, but we suspect that there is something structural at work in terms of soundness of the horses when so many of them are dying at major tracks throughout the United States. These questions, as difficult as they are to probe, must be examined. Orthodoxies within racing must be



Shutterstock Photo ID: 79610536 | LOUISVILLE, KY - JUNE 18: Stephen Foster Day at Churchill Downs horse race track June 18, 2011 in Louisville, KY. Finish of The Chuck Evans Memorial Race

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*Wayne Pacelle, president of
Animal Wellness Action*

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Last spring, Animal Wellness Action called on leaders in the racing industry and the new Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA) to embrace the goal of “no healthy young horses dying on tracks in training or competition” following the deaths of 12 race horses between April 27 to May 27, 2023, at Churchill Downs. That rate of loss was higher than the rash of deaths at Santa Anita Park in 2019, when 42 horses died on the track throughout the racing season, observed Animal Wellness Action.

The spate of deaths drew national attention, and Animal Wellness Action was at the center of the discussion, including a national [Associated Press column from Paul Newberry](#), stories [in the Wall Street Journal](#), and other major national and international outlets.

Congress has provided a mandate for protecting horses in American racing in enacting the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, so horse safety at the tracks should become the top priority for everyone involved in the business, the groups say.

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. Twitter: @AWAction_News

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. Twitter: @TheHumaneCenter

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