

Animal Wellness Groups Call Louisiana's 'Emergency Rule' to Loosen Drug Regulations in Horse Racing Tragic

Louisiana remains an outlier in refusing to join Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Authority program

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, May 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal wellness groups are condemning the Louisiana State Racing Commission for passing an "emergency rule" going into effect June 8 to reinforce lax regulations — while loosening others — on drugs that have proven dangerous and deadly to horses in the world of horse racing.



Horse racing is safer without dangerous medications used liberally, advocates say

It's no surprise, animal wellness groups say, since Louisiana has refused to join the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority's Anti-Doping and Medication Control program (HISA), which is a federal racing authority working to establish national medication rules that will eliminate race-day doping of horses and establish other reasonable horse-safety standards.

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Louisiana's Rep. Clay Higgins is the sponsor of legislation animal welfare advocates say is falsely labeled as the Racehorse Health and Safety Act [H.R. 5693](#), which is designed to erase HISA.

“Louisiana clearly believes that horses should race on more drugs and wants an open-door policy for cheating and racing without integrity,” said Fred Hudson, director of Equine Welfare for Animal Wellness Action. “If this racing commission were operating under HISA, it would be instead acting in the best interest of horses and preventing

future tragic deaths from this kind of liberal use of medications.”

Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy are calling on this commission to immediately reverse its approval for the new rule, and to join HISA.

Bill Finley broke this story for the Thoroughbred Daily News, reporting that these changes will allow more liberal use of the clenbuterol, a controlled medication and bronchodilator, which has long been a substance of concern because of its anabolic potential if abused.

HISA rules on this particular medication are very strict, and trainers can be suspended for up to two years for violating its use.

Another rule change is for doubling the allowable injection of Depo-Medrol or methylprednisolone, a steroid injected into joints to treat pain and swelling.

“Louisiana is an outlier for not participating in a sound national horse safety program, and now we understand why,” added Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and a key architect of the national law.

Stricter regulations on medications in horse racing have led to record years in terms of equine safety overall in 2022 and at HISA tracks in 2023 as evidence that the more-restrictive approach to corticosteroids, clenbuterol, and other controlled medications is working. In 2023 HISA tracks saw a 32.5% lower breakdown rate than non-HISA tracks.

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. X: @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. X: @TheHumaneCenter

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