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NYS Gaming Commission Takes National Lead in Addressing Horse Racing Glaucine Positives

The New York State Gaming Commission today announced significant, nation-leading action in addressing the presence of the alkaloid glaucine in the urine and plasma of race horses, resulting in more than \$100,000 in purses returned and 11 disqualifications, plus additional fines and suspension for a single trainer whose horses had particularly high levels of the substance.

Glaucine, also known as Boldine Dimethyl Ether or 1,2,9,10-Tetramethoxyaporphine, is a potent drug with the potential to affect race performance by means of its anti-inflammatory, antitussive, bronchodilatory and hallucinogenic properties. Glaucine has not been approved as a drug for any use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) does not include glaucine in its Uniform Classification Guidelines for Foreign Substances.

“New York is once again leading the way when it comes to preserving integrity in horse racing,” said Commission Executive Director Robert Williams. “The Commission took deliberative action based upon solid research to hold trainers accountable for substances found in horses under their care. We call on other jurisdictions around the country to follow suit to send a clear message: we will tolerate nothing short of fair and safe horse racing.”

“The New York State Gaming Commission’s action on glaucine preserves the integrity of the internationally renowned horse racing we host in New York State,” said Peter Arrigenna, a prominent New York harness horse owner and Trustee for the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund (New York Sire Stakes). “Glaucine has been a hot topic in the harness racing world for the past year, and thanks to New York’s prudent action on this substance, the industry has a clear path forward in how to best handle future cases.”

Over the past year, the Commission found 55 instances of horses with glaucine in their systems at levels greater than 100 pg/ml. As is standard practice, all impacted horses were immediately put on the Stewards List, which prevents a horse from entering any future races until the horse is tested and found negative for the presence of any illegal substance.

Of the 55 instances found by the Commission, 11 were found to have levels higher than 500 pg/ml. For these cases, the Commission ordered that the horses be disqualified from the applicable races and any purses won by the owners of those horses be returned, totaling \$103,530.

Trainer Richard Johnson twice raced the horse “Rubber Duck” at Yonkers Raceway with glaucine levels far greater than 1 ng/ml. In addition to the disqualification and purse return totaling \$61,660, Johnson is facing a 45-day suspension and \$1,500 fine. A complete list of horses that had elevated levels of glaucine may be found [here](#).

The Commission began finding elevated glaucine levels in January 2016, but reserved issuing rulings pending further investigation. Over the past year, the Commission and the New York Drug Testing and Research Laboratory have collaborated with other jurisdictions and national racing organizations to conduct research on glaucine, which may be naturally found in wood shavings used to line horses' stalls.

New research conducted by New York and Pennsylvania officials substantiate that glaucine levels of 500 pg/ml or greater in a horse on raceday indicate that the horse was introduced to a potentially efficacious dose of the substance on race day. Therefore, the Commission's Rule 4120.2(n) applies, which states that no drugs or medications – other than those specifically exempted - may be administered by any means within one week of the scheduled post time of the race in which the horse is to compete and that it is the trainer's responsibility to prevent such ingestion within such one-week period.

Most recently, the Racing Medication & Testing Consortium's (RMTC) Glaucine Task Force and Science Advisory Committee – both of which include New York State Equine Medical Director Scott E. Palmer, VMD – recommended applying two thresholds for the presence of glaucine in a race horse. The Commission's actions today – and going forward – are based on these standards and disqualifying a horse that violates such thresholds:

- > 500 pg/ml = Disqualification, loss of purse and Stewards List
- > 1 ng/ml = Disqualification, loss of purse, Stewards List and additional penalties, including fines and suspension

The Commission will continue to place horses that test in excess of 100 pg/ml for glaucine on the Stewards List and require those horses to test below such concentration before being permitted to race again. Horses testing in excess of 500 pg/ml will incur penalties as described above.

Per Equine Medical Director Dr. Palmer, environmental contamination is avoidable by the adoption of simple stable management practices:

- Stalls should not be bedded with bulk wood shavings that may contain tulip poplar material on a chronic basis or during the week that a horse races.
- Do not administer any product or plant material, whether purchased online, compounded or otherwise, that may contain glaucine.

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