



MID-ATLANTIC
STRATEGIC PLAN

TO REDUCE EQUINE FATALITIES



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CORE OPERATING VALUES:

Risk is a part of our everyday lives and there is attendant risk associated with Thoroughbred racing. In recent years the number of racing fatalities in North America has declined. The conscientious use of risk management techniques, including the introduction of protective factors, have been proven to be successful in reducing the risk of injury to racehorses. However, the use of risk management programs is not uniformly practiced across all racing jurisdictions. The development of a strategic plan to reduce equine fatalities in the Mid-Atlantic region is an effort to develop and share regional best practices and communication tools that can be used to minimize equine fatalities on a broad scale.

- We acknowledge that the horse is at the very core of our business model and we will dedicate our best efforts to minimize risk of injury.
- Our commitment to stewardship of the horse is central to our mission.
- These efforts will not only serve the horse, but will also minimize risk of injury of jockeys, exercise riders and backstretch workers.
- We will use evidence-based decision making to assure the integrity of this process at every level.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES:

- Equine and human safety is our “North Star.”
- It is possible to reduce equine fatalities with risk management
- Informed decisions are made with the best interests of the horse in mind.
- Best practices can be developed and we must be willing to embrace change.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Mid-Atlantic Strategic Plan to Reduce Equine Fatalities is to reduce exercise-based injuries and equine fatalities using evidence-based best practices applied in a collaborative multi-jurisdiction program. The Program will work with Mid-Atlantic industry stakeholders and Thoroughbred racing and equine experts to develop and continually improve best practices and to implement them at every racetrack in the region. The Program will also work to educate all stakeholders and the general public about these initiatives and the positive results achieved. The paramount goal is protection of the horses and, by extension, the jockeys, exercise riders and backstretch workers. Publicizing the efforts of racing stakeholders on behalf of the horses will also strengthen the confidence of the general public in Thoroughbred racing. New owners will be encouraged to invest in the sport and will contribute to sustainable growth of the racing industry in the Mid-Atlantic region. The advancement of the Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred racing industry will increase the economic impact in our communities and provide expanded opportunities for employment and preservation of open space.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

Mid-Atlantic Jurisdictions will:

- Assume a leadership role in developing regional best practices for safety.
- Enlist and leverage support of industry stakeholders and regulators and the world-wide scientific community.
- Establish uniform best practices.
- Educate racing stakeholders.
- Communicate our efforts to the general public.



Goal I:

Develop regional safety best practices

- Perform postmortem examinations in all jurisdictions.
- Create mortality review boards in all jurisdictions.
- Hire an Equine Medical Director or designate a Chief Regulatory Veterinarian in each jurisdiction to administer the Mid-Atlantic Strategic Plan.
- Perform an annual regional racing fatality analysis to track the incidence of equine fatalities in all Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions.
- Require all racetracks in the Mid-Atlantic Region to report to the EID.
- Upgrade the functionality of the EID.
- Identify regional risk factors for Thoroughbred racehorses racing in the Mid-Atlantic region.
- Develop regulatory practices to promote safety (Develop an Internal Control Program).
- Inter-jurisdictional maintenance and use of Veterinarian's Lists to prevent horses from entering without meeting uniform criteria for establishing fitness to race (Adopt ARCI model rule for this).
- Establish and expand existing racehorse aftercare programs.
- Develop a metric to accurately document the incidence of training fatalities in all Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions.

Goal II:

Increase awareness and understanding of conditions associated with injury

- Partner with educators to create a curriculum for all stakeholders, starting with trainers.
- Develop live and on-line delivery systems to make information accessible to stakeholders (Partner with The Jockey Club, NTRA, AAEP, Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania faculty).
- Provide regular research updates.

Goal III:

Develop improved methods to identify horses at increased risk of injury

- Identify exercise history patterns, clinical examination findings and digital radiographic findings that are associated with fatal musculoskeletal injury.
- Develop inexpensive, accurate and readily-available screening tools.
- Train horsemen and veterinarians to perform risk assessment on all horses in their care (Example: See "Introduction to Risk and Protective Factors" in The Jockey Club Advanced Horsemanship on-line CE program).

Goal IV:

Identify and implement protective factors that will reduce the risk of injury

- Create a list of best practices that can be used by horsemen to reduce the risk of injury and communicate these best practices to decision-makers.
- Develop standardized SOPs for out-of-competition screening of horses that are at increased risk for injury (NY and CA collaborate with The Jockey Club InCompass Solutions programmers to do this).
- Contract with knowledgeable experts to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the racing surfaces, using best practices established by the Racing Surface Testing Laboratory, well in advance of the opening of race meets and review during a race meet in order to ensure a consistent and safe racing surface.
- Promote adoption of these best practices in all jurisdictions.

Goal V:

Improve general horse health

- Employ biosecurity best practices in individual stables (AAEP consult).
- Employ racetrack-level biosecurity best practices (AAEP consult).
- Create accurate individual medical records for all horses (AAEP consult).
- Ensure that medical records accompany horses when they change hands.

THE CREATION OF THIS PLAN IS AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP AND SHARE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS THAT CAN BE USED TO MINIMIZE EQUINE FATALITIES ON A BROAD SCALE.



PARTNERS:



The Mid-Atlantic stakeholders and regulators who have committed to the Mid-Atlantic Strategic Plan To Reduce Equine Fatalities include:

Delaware Park, Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Delaware Racing Commission, Stronach Group, Maryland Jockey Club, Maryland State Fair (Timonium), Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Maryland Racing Commission, Maryland Horse Breeders Association, Monmouth Park, New Jersey Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, New Jersey Racing Commission, New Jersey Thoroughbred Breeders Association, Finger Lakes Racetrack, Finger Lakes Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, New York State Gaming Commission, New York Thoroughbred Breeders Inc., Penn National Gaming, Parx Racing, Presque Isle Downs, Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Pennsylvania HBPA, Pennsylvania Racing Commission, Pennsylvania Horse Breeders Association, Colonial Downs, Virginia Thoroughbred Association, Virginia Racing Commission, Mountaineer Park, Charles Town HBPA, Mountaineer HBPA, West Virginia Racing Commission, and National Steeplechase Association.



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