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Notice to the Industry

Safety Reins Pilot Program announced

In order to facilitate a smooth transition to the introduction of safety reins in Ontario horse racing, a six month pilot program has been announced by the Ontario Racing Commission (ORC). As a result, the effective dates identified in the Rules of Racing requiring the use of reins (January 1, 2009 for racing and July 1, 2009 for training) have been deferred and new effective dates will be announced upon completion of the pilot.

The pilot program to identify safety reins acceptable for use in Ontario will commence January 1, 2009.

A multi-breed working group representing the interests of industry will be established to plan and implement the specific details of the pilot program. By developing an environment where manufacturers and end users can work together, the intended result will be a product or products suitable for general application in racing.

A number of rein manufacturers have been contacted and have agreed to supply sets of their product so that they may be tested and evaluated in the field in training and/or racing situations. Any other manufacturers interested in participating in the pilot are encouraged to contact the ORC.

Testing and evaluation will be done by selected industry participants who have agreed to take part in the pilot. The reviews and results of these evaluations will be made available to all licensees upon completion of the pilot.

Throughout the pilot program, the working group will monitor the results. At its conclusion, the group will be asked to provide a summary of the pilot and recommendations to the ORC Board, which will make a determination for the next steps in the safety rein initiative.

The ORC remains committed to improving the safety of participants and ensuring the welfare of the horse. In the past, the failure of reins has resulted in serious injury and has the potential to cause catastrophic injuries. Safety reins are viewed as a positive step forward in the prevention of serious injury to licensees and the horses.

Through this phased-in approach for all breeds of racing, the ORC is encouraging the development of a product that assists in securing the safety of Ontario participants.

Any questions or comments should be addressed to Wendy Hoogeveen, Director of Industry Development and Support at (416) 213-0520.

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Executive Director