

# AGCO Drops 90-Day Suspension Rule For Horses

The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) is pleased to release a Summary Report of the work delivered by the Equine Drug Program Working Group over the last seven months.

As part of the ‘Moving Ahead: Horse Racing Regulation in Ontario’ project, in May 2017 the AGCO established an Equine Drug Program Working Group in collaboration with the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency (CPMA), to discuss aspects of the AGCO’s equine drug program and to provide the AGCO with advice on potential reforms.

The mandate of the working group focused on aspects of the program’s processes. Legislative and/or regulatory changes, as well as changes to the CPMA’s prohibited list of drugs and drug testing processes were outside the scope of the working group. Also, out of scope were any changes to the procedures for the Horse Racing Appeal Panel (HRAP), as HRAP is an adjudicative body independent of the AGCO, with authority to set its own rules and procedures. The core objectives of the working group were to provide advice on:

- The 90-day automatic suspension of the horse rule(s);
- The designated decision-maker in the positive test process;
- Education, training and awareness initiatives pertaining to equine drug use; and
- Suspensions and monetary penalties.

The report released today presents a summary of the working group recommendations and follow-up actions that the AGCO will be taking. The AGCO reforms are anticipated to be implemented in April 2018, in time for the spring race season.

The intent of the reforms is to streamline the positive test process and allow for Rulings to be issued in a fair, more efficient and timely manner. To achieve this objective, a key pillar of the reforms will be the introduction of settlement offers.

With this process, when a licensee accepts a settlement from the AGCO they will need to admit to the violation and agree to not appeal the Ruling. To ensure that the integrity of the Penalty Guidelines are maintained, in addition to the reforms contained in the report, the AGCO is considering revising the Rules of Racing so that the quantum of a monetary penalty is not appealable. This is consistent with the process in place for the AGCO’s other lines of business. The report and some accompanying frequently answered questions may be viewed at the links at the bottom of the article as attachments or as embedded PDFs below.

The AGCO is committed to enhancing the fairness, integrity and safety of horse racing in Ontario, enhancing public confidence, reducing administrative burdens, and modernizing horse racing regulation.