



AGCO

Alcohol and Gaming
Commission of Ontario

Moving Ahead: Horse Racing Regulation in Ontario

Health and Safety Working Group

Summary Report | March 7, 2018

Overview

In the spring of 2016, the AGCO launched *Moving Ahead: Horse Racing Regulation in Ontario*, a project directed at identifying and moving forward on reforms to the regulatory rules that govern horse racing. As part of this initiative, in spring 2017 the AGCO launched the establishment of three working groups to provide further input on a number of regulatory reform ideas that will enhance the integrity, safety and protection of the public interest in horse racing.

The **Health and Safety Working Group** was announced in September 15, 2017. The objective of this working group was to provide advice to the AGCO regarding:

- Enhancing the health and safety of equine athletes;
- Enhancing workplace health and safety (human participants);
- How the industry as a whole can work to enhance the life cycle of a racehorse; and
- Opportunities for industry collaboration to develop health and safety resources for the sector.

The Working Group met four times over the course of five months, and has played a valuable role in advising the AGCO on ways to enhance how health and safety is addressed within Ontario's horse racing industry for both equine athletes and human participants, and in identifying opportunities for the industry at large to act collectively on a range of prominent issues. The AGCO is pleased to provide a summary of the Working Group's deliberations in the form of the attached chart, which sets out the Working Group's recommendations and follow-up actions the AGCO is taking or will be taking in the months ahead.

The AGCO would like to formally thank the participants of the **Health and Safety Working Group**. While the Working Group may have officially come to an end, the AGCO remains open to receiving feedback from the industry on regulatory matters and this can be done directly by emailing connect@agco.ca.

Health and Safety Working Group

Working Group Recommendations → Next Steps

Health and Safety – Human and Equine	
<i>Regulatory Requirements to Protect Equine Athletes</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The AGCO to explore the potential to establish an online drug registration system for joint injections administered to horses. 2. The AGCO to consider creating a standards-based rule requiring a biosecurity protocol at all licensed racetracks. 3. The AGCO to explore making biosecurity and emergency management training (via an online learning module) a licensing condition for grooms, trainers and owners. 4. The AGCO to review certain rules related to blood gas machines, shockwave machines and de-nerving of Thoroughbred horses and revise accordingly to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limit the operation and possession of shockwave machines and blood gas machines to veterinarians and veterinarian technologists; b. Align the Thoroughbred de-nerving rule to be the same as the Standardbred rule for this practice. 5. The Working Group agreed that the industry should come together under the leadership of Ontario Racing to develop an industry-sponsored approach to addressing horse welfare after racing, which could include an end-of-life subsidy program, for all three breeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Over the next year the AGCO will explore the concept of an online joint injection drug registration system and report back to the industry in late 2018 on the feasibility (cost and process) of adopting a system similar to the New York State Steroid Administration Log. → As part of its movement to standards, over the next year the AGCO will consult with racetracks and explore the development of a standards-based rule requiring biosecurity protocols at licensed racetracks in Ontario. → The AGCO will adopt the Working Group’s recommendation to amend the <i>Rules of Racing</i> on the subjects of blood gas machines, shockwave machines and de-nerving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To limit operation and possession to veterinarians and veterinarian technologists; • To align the Thoroughbred de-nerving rule with the Standardbred rule. → Ontario Racing to consider using its newly-formed Equine Health and Welfare Advisory Council to lead the work on behalf of the industry with respect to an approach to addressing horse welfare after racing, which could include an end-of-life subsidy program, for all three breeds.
<i>Concussion Safety for the Human Athlete</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The AGCO to develop a standards-based rule on concussion safety that would require racetracks to have a concussion safety protocol in place during racing. The protocol would set out the key players and processes to be followed at the racetracks should a concussion be suspected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The AGCO will include the feedback from the Working Group in its development of a standards-based rule for concussion safety and a racetrack concussion safety protocol which racetracks would have to comply with once implemented.
<i>Extreme Temperature Standards-based Rule</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The AGCO to finalize its Extreme Temperature Standard-based Rule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The AGCO announced the Extreme Temperature Standard-based Rule on January 5, 2018. Both the Standardbred rule and the Thoroughbred rule can be found on the AGCO website.

<i>Regulatory Requirements Stabling and Track Conditions</i>	
<p>8. The AGCO to explore how rules related to racetrack surfaces and stabling conditions can be better addressed across breeds and all racetracks.</p>	<p>→ As part of its movement to standards, over the next year the AGCO will consider the development of a standards-based rule to address racetrack surfaces minimum standards for all breeds and racetracks.</p> <p>→ The AGCO to consider whether additional biosecurity and stall maintenance measures and fire prevention policies are needed at racetrack stabling facilities.</p>
Education, Training and Resources	
<i>Biosecurity and Emergency Management</i>	
<p>9. The AGCO should work with the industry, including Equine Guelph, to support the development of biosecurity and emergency management training learning modules using various delivery approaches (i.e. online, in-person training etc.) for use by grooms and trainers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The AGCO to explore making basic biosecurity training and emergency management training a licensing condition for grooms, trainers and owners. <p>10. The Working Group endorsed the promotion by all industry associations to their respective memberships of the following resources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Biosecurity Risk Calculator hosted by Equine Guelph. b. The National Farm Animal Care Council <i>Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines.</i> c. The National Farm and Facility Level Biosecurity Standard for the Equine Sector 	<p>→ Over the next 3 – 6 months, the AGCO will work with Equine Guelph to assess the potential for the development of learning modules related to providing consistent and current education to horsepeople about the health and safety of the race horse, including training related to biosecurity.</p> <p>→ The AGCO will continue to highlight the biosecurity resources, and equine code of practice as resources industry associations can disseminate to their respective memberships.</p>

Health and Safety Working Group

Working Group Recommendations → Next Steps

<i>Health and Safety – Industry Sponsored Resource</i>	
<p>11. The Working Group recommends the development of a <i>Racing Industry Association-Sponsored Health and Safety Resource</i> that leverages and highlights many existing health and safety resources that are available and considered best practice within Ontario’s horse racing industry. The Resource would reflect a coordinated approach for Ontario’s horse racing industry on health and safety matters.</p> <p>a. In recognition of the scope of this initiative, an association such as Ontario Racing will need to be identified to lead and coordinate the requisite work and gain buy-in and consensus on the content. The AGCO should participate in the work and could be looked to for funding support, under its Education, Training and Awareness (ETA) Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ontario Racing to consider using its newly formed Equine Health and Welfare Advisory Council to lead this work on behalf of the industry. → AGCO would consider a project proposal from the industry for the development of a <i>Racing Industry Association-Sponsored Health and Safety Resource</i>. → The AGCO would review a proposal from the industry in the context of the funding requirements of its ETA Program to determine if funding is possible.
<i>Workplace Health and Safety</i>	
<p>12. The Working Group agreed further education is necessary within the industry on workplace health and safety requirements at racetracks and in the backstretch, consistent with provincial legislation. Racetracks, in collaboration with horsepeoples’ associations, should consider adopting a harassment reporting protocol for incidents on racetrack property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ontario Racing to work with the AGCO, racetracks and associations to develop a harassment reporting protocol template that could be posted at racetracks. → The AGCO will continue to explore additional health and safety educational materials related to its regulatory mandate that could be developed for use by the industry.
<i>Life Cycle of a Horse</i>	
<p>13. The Working Group agreed that the industry should come together, under the leadership of Ontario Racing, to develop a shared policy statement about the life cycle of the horse, including providing for the humane treatment of horses throughout their life. Note: this would be posted on all industry association websites and included in the health and safety resource mentioned above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ontario Racing to consider using its newly formed Equine Health and Welfare Advisory Council to lead this work on behalf of the industry. → Development of a joint policy statement from the industry against horse slaughter and promoting the humane treatment of horses throughout their life cycle will be considered as part of the work led by Ontario Racing.

For further information, please contact connect@agco.ca.