

FTC Approves HISA Racetrack Safety Program Rules and National Accreditation Standards

March 4, 2022 - The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) today approved the rules and accreditation standards that comprise the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority's (HISA) Racetrack Safety Program, marking a major milestone in HISA's mission to protect the wellbeing of equine and human athletes along with the integrity of the sport. With the FTC's approval, HISA will now move forward with robust industry education efforts ahead of the program's July 1, 2022 implementation date.

"The Racetrack Safety Program's multi-faceted approach will enable veterinarians, horsemen and all racing participants to optimize the safety of every horse before they set foot on the track while also increasing our understanding of the conditions that contribute to equine injuries," said HISA CEO Lisa Lazarus. "The importance of this program cannot be overstated as we build on advances the industry has already made by implementing national, uniform rules and regulations, increasing accountability, and using data- and research-driven solutions to enhance the safety of our horses and jockeys. We sincerely believe that this data will generate the information we need to help prolong equine and jockey careers."

In drafting the rules, the Racetrack Safety Committee examined existing rules and best practices in addition to seeking input from state racing commissions, racing participants and other experts and industry organizations in a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process. The interested public had further opportunities to provide input on the draft rules via the HISA website and during the FTC's public comment period. Highlights of the Racetrack Safety Program include:

- Expanded veterinary oversight;
- Surface maintenance and measurement standards;
- Enhanced reporting requirements;
- Collection and analysis of medication, treatment, injury, and fatality data;
- A voided claim rule;
- The transfer of claimed horses' medical information; and
- Jockey concussion and medical care reporting.

Starting on July 1, all tracks that are accredited with the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) will receive interim accreditation, while tracks that are not accredited with the NTRA will be granted a one-year provisional accreditation and be given a reasonable period to achieve compliance as long as they are demonstrating continuous progress. HISA intends to work with individual racetracks and state racing jurisdictions, recognizing that compliance with new legal requirements on day one is not realistic.

“We are gratified that after a rigorous process, the FTC has overwhelmingly approved the Racetrack Safety regulations and national accreditation standards. The next step in the process will be for HISA to share cost assessments with each of the states by April 1, 2022,” explained Dr. Susan Stover, Chair of the Racetrack Safety Committee. “These new rules will decrease fatalities by detecting horses with mild pre-existing conditions through expanded veterinary oversight and the review of medication and treatment records and training histories. They will also provide a window into understanding and preventing the development of mild injuries in the first place via uniform surface maintenance standards and ongoing data analysis.”

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