



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Urges Race Horse Protection in New York State

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR July 30, 2012

| ISSUE: **RACING**

Queens, NY, July 30, 2012 – With summer racing season now underway in Saratoga, **NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens), a member of the Senate’s Racing, Gaming & Wagering Committee and who closely follows developments in the state’s thoroughbred race horse industry, has joined committee colleagues Senators Jack M. Martins (R-Mineola) and Roy J. McDonald (R-Saratoga) in their call last month for the NY State Racing and Wagering Board to protect the health and well-being of race horses competing statewide by renewing its commitment to the rules governing the race day use of Lasix. A ban on the race day use of Lasix is under consideration.

Last month, the State Racing and Wagering Board announced they were considering a rule change regarding the medication Lasix, which alleviates pulmonary hemorrhaging in horses during exercise. Banning Lasix on race day contradicts the fact that the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), comprising 10,000 veterinarians in 57 countries, and every other state regulatory board in the nation, all recognize the need for the medication.

In a letter to the State Racing and Wagering Board, AAEP President Dr. John Mitchell stated, “Because our mission is to protect the health and welfare of the horse, the American Association of Equine Practitioners and its members have a unique understanding of exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH), the evolution of EIPH treatment and its impact on the race horse and the sport. In the absence of a more effective treatment or preventative medication for EIPH, the AAEP supports the use of Lasix as the only medication that should be allowed on race day.”

Recent tragic occurrences at racetracks and training barns have been thought to have been caused by keeping horses consumed with dangerous drugs by trainers in the days before a race in violation of drug rules or from creating a dangerous incentive for trainers to run sore or unfit horses when increased purses at racetracks where casinos had opened are offered. Governor Cuomo had appointed a task force to investigate pre-race inspections, track conditions and what role drugs had played in the deaths and injuries of the horses. Earlier this year in April, the NYS Racing and Wagering Board limited the size of the purses offered in claiming races involving cheaper horses to not be greater than twice the assigned value of the horses. The AAEP is on record saying purses should be curtailed even more sharply to protect the welfare of the great number of horses racing each week across the country.

Senator Addabbo stated, “A number of experts in New York’s racing industry I’ve talked to say that Lasix is good for horses. We all want this important industry showcasing such magnificent animals to continue to thrive in our state – it’s a big part of New York’s agri-business. That means if thoroughbred race horses and jockeys are kept healthy and safe, then the success of the whole industry will follow. Currently, I believe that if the Lasix medication is banned on race day, not only the horse’s health, but the safety of the whole sport will be jeopardized. I support meaningful industry drug-use reforms being studied now at the Congressional level, in New York and in other horse-racing states, but we have to be careful that we don’t ban a helpful medication like Lasix, which I understand is a proven safety measure on race days for thoroughbreds.”

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