

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

MAKING THE VISION & MISSION COME TO LIFE

DEDICATION

Events like the Queens Plate and the Sun Met usually illustrates the excitement of the Sport of Horseracing and it's connection. However what was more evident to me was the passion, the tireless dedication and the work that is undertaken by the various teams of people involved in the sport of horseracing. It must not be overlooked.

There are so many unsung heroes of the horse racing community who need to be recognised and acknowledged for the role that they play in making the sport exciting and extraordinary.

I meet so many people who love what they do, especially within the NHA. Many of the staff literally grew up in the sport. They have an indelible link, a strong passion, a deep commitment and unparalleled dedication to the horses and horseracing.

It is not only limited to the NHA staff but we see the dedication evident in Owners, Trainers etc. especially within the Life Colour Holders (those who have renewed their colours for 30 consecutive years).

Behind every great horse is a passionate and dedicated group of people, like the Owners, Trainers, Jockeys, animal welfare personnel, the NHA, etc.

The price of success is hardwork, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether you win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand. I'm of the humble opinion that if you believe in yourself and have dedication and pride - and never quit, you'll be a winner!!

Article by: Lyndon Barends



NEWS FROM THE NHA LABORATORY - COBALT

The National Horseracing Authority confirms that it has completed its Internal Inquiry into the presence of cobalt in specimens which were taken from certain racehorses. The background and findings can be found below:

Background:

The National Horseracing Authority confirmed that three urine specimens had been found to be in excess of the international threshold for cobalt in urine specimens. The NHA has conducted a thorough investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding each of these matters. The NHA has considered the evidence presented by the relevant trainers, senior veterinary surgeons and other relevant parties and has established that:

- Vitamin B12 supplements, which can be obtained without veterinary prescription, have in all probability inadvertently led to these specimens exceeding the threshold for cobalt;
- the notices and information regarding cobalt and vitamin B12 were inconsistently disseminated and cobalt related documentation had not been correctly reflected; and
- there was still uncertainty amongst both trainers and veterinarians as to when to administer B12 vitamin supplements without it leading to a specimen taken from a horse exceeding the threshold for cobalt.

After consideration of all relevant factors including prior to these findings, the NHA decided in the interests of fairness and justice, not to prosecute these as "prohibited substance" matters and therefore accordingly did not charge any of the persons concerned.

However, the NHA decided to conduct a full internal Inquiry which involved all parties relevant to the proceedings.

The NHA further decided that the findings, in so far as it may be of relevance to the racing public, will be published.

During that period, the NHA had already embarked on a roadshow involving nationwide workshops which fully appraised trainers and veterinarians of the implications of raceday medications, detection times and the use of B12 vitamins, the cobalt related repercussions and other supplements, as well as the NHA Rules pertaining hereto.

Findings:

Pursuant to the above, the findings of the Internal Inquiry are as follows:

- Trials were conducted where racehorses were fed feeds with a 1mg/kg cobalt content (compared to a normal horse feed content of 0.1mg/kg). The impact of these high cobalt feeds on basal cobalt urine level were investigated.

- While horses which are not fed a cobalt fortified feed have a typical urine cobalt concentration of 4 ng/ml, these trials showed that with fortified feeds (1 mg/kg) the horses presented urine cobalt levels of about 20 ng/ml. Other cobalt fortified feeds with a lower dose of about 0.4 mg/kg cobalt content resulted in urine cobalt level in horses of about 10 ng/ml. It must be noted that these basal levels are significantly below the 100 ng/ml urine international threshold for cobalt prosecution.
- It is clear that these abovementioned fortified feeds present the horse with more cobalt (6 mg) than is required (1 mg daily), when fed 6kg of such feed a day. With the use of such feed there is no need to further supplement cobalt in the horse.
- These trials also showed that the treatment of a horse with the recommended dose of the preparation "Red Cell" does not elevate urinary cobalt markedly and also not for a significant period of time.
- Where the Trainer wishes to administer Vitamin B12 (including high dose forte preparation) or other products containing cobalt, the NHA guidance is available on its website remains as before, that is:
"It is recommended that supplemental cobalt from any source, including registered cobalt containing supplements and vitamin B12 (cobalamin), not be administered to

the horse within at least two full days prior to race day."

This is to ensure that the horse presents a urine cobalt level significantly less than the international threshold of 100 ng/ml.

As a result of the above findings, the NHA will recommence with its testing for and prosecution of Trainers who present horses to race with levels of urinary cobalt which exceeds the international threshold of 100 ng/ml.

The NHA is mindful of its mission to maintain the integrity of the sport of horseracing and will continue to police substance abuse with its usual vigour and determination to ensure a level playing field for all.



FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

RETIREMENT AND REHOMING OF RACEHORSES

What should you do as a Trainer or Owner when retiring and rehoming a horse?:

- Complete and submit the retirement form with relevant addresses and contact details.
- Have your veterinarian do a Second Career Assessment and submit the forms (form available on our website).
- Should an owner not feel comfortable making a decision, the Horse Care Units can evaluate the horse further and make whatever decision is in the best interests of the horse.

The take-home message is this:

- It is essential that owners do not see racehorses as commodities, but as an animal vital to the horseracing industry and a responsibility no different to having pets.

- This rule is to ensure a professional opinion is heard before making decisions on a horse's future.
- A Horse Care Unit can assist you in making a decision.
- Owners should make every effort to ensure that their horses are treated sympathetically and humanely when they leave racing.
- The owner is under no obligation to sell or dispose of a horse. They are entitled to retain ownership and responsibility for the horse's care.
- All horses are identified permanently by means of microchip and so are easily and permanently identifiable.
- Please note that a horse's passport must stay with it for the rest of its natural life. It is only necessary to return the passport to the NHA in the event of the death of the horse.

There are numerous Horse Care Units that are willing to assist with the rehoming of retired racehorses. There will usually be a fee involved, which can be discussed with each of the Units. The contact details are as follows:

- Highveld Horse Care Unit - info@horsecare.org.za (081 573 4098)
- Coastal Horse Care Unit - info@coastal.org.za (031 782 1434)
- Eastern Cape Horse Care Unit - Megan Hope - mrhope@mweb.co.za (072 357 2505)

As recently as October 2016, we have assisted horse care units in dealing with cases where retired racehorses' care was wanting.

This serves as a reminder that work needs to be done in this regard and highlights the need for such a rule.

Please contact one of the NHA veterinarians should there be any other queries in this regard and they shall advise you on how best to proceed. There is also information available on our website at www.nhra.co.za.

Article by: Dr Dale Wheeler



MEDOCA - A STORY OF HOPE

The below story is an example of the welfare system of the Thoroughbred industry at work, and an indication of the willingness and urgency with which cases brought to the NHA's attention are dealt with and resolved - no matter the final outcome. The industry can be seen to be addressing what society deems - and rightly so - important.

Early Feb 2016 the NHA Western Cape received a verbal complaint of Thoroughbred horses being neglected on a property in the Darling Area, Western Cape. A grey mare in particular was in a very bad way.

The NHA Western Cape Investigating Officer, Mr Steve Naude, acted on this complaint and contacted the Darling SPCA who informed him that they were aware of the situation and in fact accompanied Mr Naude to the holding where the horses were kept. Upon arrival at the property, they saw 4 Thoroughbred horses (2 Chestnuts, 1 Bay and 1 Grey) with minimal grazing, no shelter and no sign of feed

visible in the camp. Mr Naude managed to positively identify the horses and the grey mare, which as stated above, was in particularly poor condition, was identified as "Medoca".

The horses were found to belong to a former jockey and one-time colour holder, although he is not registered with the NHA.

The horses were "supposedly" being taken care of by a tenant of the property on behalf of the owner. The tenant advised the inspecting group that the grey was being bullied, especially at feeding times. The SPCA advised the caretaker to immediately separate the bullied mare from the other horses, which was duly done. Inspection was conducted a month later and the condition of the grey had improved.

Sadly however, the NHA received a further notification on 24 May 2016 that the grey mare was once again in the same paddock as the other horses and that her condition had deteriorated.

The NHA immediately contacted the CEO of Cape of Good Hope SPCA, Mr Allan Perrins, as well as the local Darling SPCA and instructed that Medoca be removed immediately from the property and placed in specialist care with proper feeding and veterinary intervention.

Mr Perrins advised that should the owner not willingly surrender the horse, a court order would be obtained from the local Magistrate, which is the normal procedure in this case. Fortunately, Mr de Vries, the owner, willingly surrendered the horse into the care of the SPCA.

Medoca was collected by the Darling SPCA that very day and transported to Cape of Good Hope SPCA in Grassy Park, Cape Town, and placed in their care.

The breeder of Medoca became aware of the horse's plight and although the horse had been sold on auction, raced and then "sold on" he had no obligation to the horse but he nevertheless assisted with feed and the

process of rehabilitation. A great example of the compassion in the industry. After rehabilitation at the Cape of Good Hope SPCA, Medoca was re-homed to a loving and more importantly, knowledgeable owner in Hout Bay, where her adoptive family takes wonderful care of her including taking her for regular "beach visits".

Below is a picture of the now healthy and loved Medoca nine months later!!

As with any system, the Thoroughbred industry is only as strong as its weakest link and with the help of these "initial" reports, vigilance and notifications of Thoroughbreds in possible distress, these cases can be dealt with in the proper manner by the NHA.

The NHA would like to say thank you to the person who first brought the situation to light and in doing so, we can all make a difference in ensuring the sustainability of the Thoroughbred Horse and horse racing!!

Article by: Dr Eugene Reynders
NHA Western Cape

MEDOCA "BEFORE"



"Society will dictate the sustainability of racing"

Dr Iris Bergman

MEDOCA "AFTER"

