



ASSOCIATION OF RACING COMMISSIONERS INTERNATIONAL

EQUINE WELFARE ADVISORY **Unsafe Alternatives to Furosemide Expected**

All racing regulatory commissions are put on notice that the banning of voluntary race day furosemide administrations by some US racetracks is expected to encourage a return to practices deemed cruel, inhumane, or potentially dangerous to the health and welfare of a horse.

Regulatory policy permitting race day furosemide was developed decades ago to end such practices and permit a treatment deemed helpful to the health of the horse.

Regulatory Commissions are advised to be on the lookout for horses being given intravenous formaldehyde to combat potential incidents of bleeding. Formaldehyde use is already being investigated in at least one US jurisdiction, and the RCI investigatory intelligence network is hearing that if furosemide is banned in the US, illegal formaldehyde use as an alternative will may become common.

This poses an inherent danger to the horse and can be potentially fatal. Racing Victoria, which does not permit race day furosemide, has been dealing with the formaldehyde alternative for several years.

Additionally it is anticipated that some horsemen will return to a practice known as "Drawing and Muzzling". This practice, common in Europe where race day furosemide treatments are also not permitted, denies a horse food and water for twenty-four to thirty six hours prior to a race.

The denial of water or food to a horse for an extended period of time should be regarded as cruel and inhumane by regulatory authorities.

Commissions considering requests to suspend current regulatory policy permitting race day furosemide treatments at racetracks or during select races may wish to consider a corresponding prohibition on "Drawing and Muzzling".

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