



Office of Veterinary Affairs

One Broadway Center, P.O. Box 7500, Schenectady, NY 12301-7500

Office: (518) 388-3400 Cell: (518) 441-7916 Fax: (518) 388-3403

Scott.Palmer@gaming.ny.gov

Welcome to the 2014 Saratoga Summer Meet! Saratoga provides a unique racing experience. Saratoga is the arguably the finest Summer racing meet in America. Talented young horses make their debut here. Champions make their statements at Saratoga as well. The purses are fantastic, the meet is historic and the competition is intense.

Safety is a very high priority at NYRA racetracks. We work hard to prevent injuries. We had a very good meet at Aqueduct and another safe meet at Belmont. We will be doing our very best at Saratoga to continue this effort. The key to our success is an emphasis on risk management. We need your help to prevent injuries and racing fatalities.

- (1) Set the tone by making safety a priority for your stable.
- (2) Make sure everyone in your stable puts safety first.
- (3) Learn to identify risk factors in your horses.*
- (4) Create protocols and internal controls to minimize risk.

Promote good horsemanship in your stable and encourage open & safe communication from your employees who have their eyes and hands on your horses. Encourage jockeys and exercise riders to let you or the NYRA veterinarians know of any concerns as they warm up to breeze or race. Together lets make the 2014 Saratoga meet a safe and memorable one. No one wins when a horse is lost on the racetrack. Set a goal of no injuries while you are here at Saratoga. We are all here to help. If you have any questions or safety concerns while you are racing at Saratoga, please call my cell number at (518)441-7916.

Thank you for making a commitment to safety!

Scott

Scott E. Palmer, V.M.D.

New York State Equine Medical Director

*Did you know that horses that train 4.3 high speed furlongs per week are 4 times more likely to experience a fatal musculoskeletal injury than horses that train 3.1 high speed furlongs per week? See reverse side for more safety tips.

Risk Factors are conditions that, when present, increase the risk of injury or fatality for your horses. Some risk factors are unique to the horse (age and sex), while others involve the environment (racing surface, weather, traffic), the most important area from the trainer's standpoint are risk factors that pertain to training and racing protocols.

Risk factors are easy to track and change from race to race throughout a horse's career. The risk factors in the chart below, compiled from the Equine Injury Database, have been shown to predispose Thoroughbred racehorses to fatal musculoskeletal injury. How many of these risk factors apply to the individual horses in your stable? Make a chart for each horse (just as you chart your works) and discuss the findings with your veterinarian.

Risk Factors in the Thoroughbred Racehorse:

| Risk Factor | Applicable to this horse? |
|--|----------------------------------|
| No start within 15 days | |
| No start within 30 days | |
| 1 st start within the past 9 months | |
| Intact male | |
| 3 years-old and up | |
| Not raced as a 2-year-old | |
| Multiple starts in 1-6 months | |
| Distance of race 7 furlongs or less | |
| Claiming race \$25,000 or less | |
| Pre-existing Injury | |

Although not as well documented, the following additional risk factors may also contribute to injury:

1. A change in owner/trainer in last 6 months
2. Higher exercise intensity in the 12 months leading up to the incident race
3. A significant drop in class within the past two races
4. Vet's list, trainer scratched or returned lame in the past 6 months
5. Intra-articular corticosteroid treatment(s) in the past 30 days
6. More time in active training & racing (long term continuous training)

While none of these risk factors can be used alone to predict injury in an upcoming race, multiple risk factors in play for a given race greatly increase the chances of injury. One size does not fit all. Your training program and race schedule for horses at a relative increased risk of injury should not be the same as that for horses with minimal risk.