



---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Contact:

Stan Bowker, Executive Secretary  
Virginia Racing Commission  
804.966.7403  
Stan.bowker@vrc.virginia.gov

### Mid-Atlantic States Move to Eliminate Steroid Use in Horse Racing

**Richmond, Va. (January 25, 2008)** – Representatives of the state racing commissions in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York said today that they are moving forward on putting anabolic steroid regulations and testing in place in the Mid-Atlantic region by late spring to early fall. In addition, the West Virginia Racing Commission at its January meeting started the rule making-process needed to implement a ban on the use of anabolic steroids in racing horses.

“This is a very important issue facing our industry,” said Peter Burnett, chairman of the Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI) and the Virginia Racing Commission. “Industry leaders have had several meetings with Congressional members and staff members who have indicated they will be watching our efforts very closely on this issue. They are ready to step in if they are not satisfied that the states are appropriately dealing with the anabolic steroid issue.”

Racing Commission representatives, chemists, laboratory representatives and several horsemen’s organizations in the Mid-Atlantic region have been meeting for more than two years to study the issue of anabolic steroid use in race horses. In an effort to understand how these steroids are being used—or abused—racing commissions in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia have been testing horses for their presence. The commissions have discovered instances of “stacking” where two, three or four different anabolic steroids have been found in horses. Additionally, steroids were administered to racing horses as frequently as weekly.

“These practices are abusive and must be stopped now,” Burnett stated. “It’s time for regulators to take action. The Mid-Atlantic region is working together now in an effort to have the regulations and testing procedures in place for the summer race meets.”

Pennsylvania will begin testing Thoroughbreds on April 1. According to Acting Chairman Rick Abbott, horsemen will have four months notice of the enforcement date. Abbott said the new

## Page 2

regulations not only will stop the abuses but will help provide a more level playing field for all horsemen.

The effective date for Delaware's rules on the use of anabolic steroids is April 10, just prior to the opening of Delaware Park. "As regulators, we take our responsibilities very seriously," said Delaware Commission Chairman Bernard Daney. "Addressing the use and abuse of anabolic steroids is important to the integrity of the horse racing industry as well as the safety and welfare of the horses."

Although Virginia has been testing for anabolic steroids for two years, its racing commission is making several modifications to conform to the RCI Model Rules. The revised rules will be in place by the opening of the Colonial Downs meet on June 9.

New Jersey's rule-making process begins at its February 6 Commission meeting. Assuming the process goes as expected and sufficient money is available for testing, the rules should be implemented by June or July to coincide with the Monmouth Park meet, according to Executive Director Frank Zanzuccki.

In New York, proposed anabolic steroid rules are currently out for public comment. The New York State Racing and Wagering Board, working with its laboratory at Cornell University, is anticipating that its rules will be in place by late summer or early fall.

In Maryland, Executive Director Mike Hopkins expects its new rules will be in place by late summer. "No live racing is conducted during the summer in Maryland," Hopkins notes. "During this time, our horses will be running at other Mid-Atlantic meets that will have the steroid rules in place, so they should be pretty well acclimated to racing without the benefit of anabolic steroids when racing resumes in August."

The United States is the only country in the world that has not banned the use of anabolic steroids in horses that are racing. "We are serious about eliminating the use of anabolic steroids in our race horses," Burnett stated. "Horsemen and their veterinarians would be well served to voluntarily stop using these steroids now rather than waiting until regulations by racing commissions throughout the country are in place, since they will face severe penalties if they don't. The practice of using these dangerous drugs in racing horses must stop now."

### **About Virginia Racing Commission**

The Virginia Racing Commission was established by an Act of the Virginia General Assembly in 1989 to grow, sustain and control the native horse racing industry in Virginia, including control of all horse racing with pari-mutuel wagering that is conducted in the Commonwealth. For more information, please visit [www.vrc.virginia.gov](http://www.vrc.virginia.gov).

###