



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Racing Commission

10700 Horsemen's Road

New Kent, Virginia 23124

(804) 966-7400; FAX (804) 966-7418

Racing News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact

Dr. Rich Harden

Equine Medical Director

Virginia Racing Commission

804.966.7409

Rich.Harden@vrc.virginia.gov

Virginia Racing Commission Approves Stricter Controls on Use of Phenylbutazone

New Kent, Va. (March 25, 2009) - The Virginia Racing Commission at its monthly meeting today approved changes to the medication rule **11VAC10-180-70** pertaining to the use of phenylbutazone in racehorses. The changes, effective for the 2009 summer Thoroughbred meet, reduce the permissive level of phenylbutazone in post-race blood samples from 5 micrograms per milliliter of plasma to 2 micrograms.

Phenylbutazone is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug commonly used in horses to allow horses with minor musculoskeletal aches and pains to continue training and racing. Proper training and conditioning is considered a major factor for preventing racing injuries, and the judicious use of butazolidin is thought to allow horses to train more consistently. For the first eight years of racing in Virginia, the regulations allowed 2 micrograms, but the level was increased to 5 micrograms in 2006 to comply with the model rules being promoted nationally. After three years of experience in Virginia and several high profile injuries in other jurisdictions, Virginia's Commissioners now consider the 5 microgram level too high. Two micrograms is also the tolerance level accepted in Maryland.

The complete regulation will be posted on the commission website May 27. Horsemen racing in Virginia should consult their own veterinarian or veterinarians for the racing commission to determine the protocol for use of this medication in Virginia.