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Notice to the Industry

Update on the Thoroughbred Use of the Whip Initiative ORC announces Pilot for new riding requirements

For a four week period starting Wednesday, June 3rd, all jockeys at Woodbine Racetrack will be using the Lite Touch whip in the first two races of every card. Interim rules were also created for the pilot to require jockeys to break up the use of the whip to allow the horse a chance to respond. This new pilot is an outcome of the work of the Thoroughbred Use of the Whip Working Group, which has been meeting over the spring to develop recommended changes to how the whip is used in Ontario horseracing.

The purpose of the pilot is to allow the jockeys an opportunity to provide input on how a new rule will be developed. Work will continue through the Pilot between the Jockeys, the Stewards and the working group on rule development. The Pilot is authorized under an interim change to the rules, through the issuance by the Director of Ruling TB ADMIN 08/2009.

Opportunity for Input

Fans, customers, industry participants and jockeys are all encouraged to compare the product on the racetrack during this pilot and provide their feedback directly to the Stewards and the Use of the Whip Working Group, as follows:

Contact the ORC Stewards at Woodbine directly at (416) 675-7223

Email: inquiry@ontarioracingcommission.ca

Fax: (416) 213-7827

Brought together by the Executive Director of the ORC to discuss industry changes required, the Thoroughbred Working Group represents many facets of the industry, including participants (owners, trainers and jockeys), associations, veterinarians, and racetracks.

The Working Group recognizes the importance of the issues related to the use of the whip in thoroughbred racing. It understands and has knowledge of the many varying opinions on its use, from an industry participant perspective and the public interest perspective. Many suggestions have been received and are being discussed, including changes in technology, presentation of product, safety of participants, welfare of the horse and communications.

The Use of the Whip Initiative started in Ontario last September with an all-breed meeting called by the Executive Director with over 50 industry representatives. Outcomes from that meeting were the development of breed specific working groups, which have been meeting over the winter to address the issues raised.

The following principles were developed at the original meeting, which have guided the many discussions:

- Ensure the welfare of the horse
- Promote safety for participants (including the horse)
- Create simple, clear and consistent rules (and enforcement)
- Address customer/public perception and education
- Support growth of the customer base

The ORC believes this close examination of the degree of acceptability of the practice is both appropriate and timely, within the framework of the racing product, social responsibility and concern for the welfare of the horse.

Contact: John L. Blakney, Executive Director