

## **Message to the Industry**

As many of you have noticed, there have been some changes to our racing dates. This is something we are not fond of doing mid season but has come about with thought and meetings with our partner tracks. It should not surprise anyone that we are dealing with a shortage of horses, as a matter of fact it is probably difficult to find a single track in North America who isn't! Cards like the past two Saturdays with 7 races are not the product that we are trying to move forward with. There were some extenuating circumstances in this instance, an outbreak of sickness similar in size to last December but thankfully with horses mostly not having temperatures. The backstretch seems to be coming out of it now, but the effects are still lingering somewhat.

As an industry in consultation with Century Downs and the Track on 2, we have decided to stay for a couple more weeks at 2 days racing per week. You will notice that a few race dates have been cancelled, and some moved to different days of the week. We will be making up the dates by racing extra races on the two cards per week to ensure that as many horses as possible get a start when they enter. These last two weeks of June had three racing days at Century Downs scheduled, but that is not possible to do without cards being 7-8 races and with very short fields. It is better for the entire industry to save everyone some costs and to race two cards a week until our horse population has grown a little more. Everyone is excited about the arrival of two-year-olds and the first two year old Stake at the end of July.

The draws have been posted for this weekend with races scheduled on Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday June 21<sup>st</sup>. We will also be racing on Saturday June 25<sup>th</sup>. After that we will be switching to a new format for the summer of racing on Fridays and Saturdays at Century Downs, and Sunday at Track on 2. We will not race the first two Fridays due to horse shortages so the race dates will be Saturday July 2<sup>nd</sup> at Century Downs, Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup> at Track on 2, Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup> at Century Downs and Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup> at Track on 2. We are very hopeful that we will start our three days a week schedule the following weekend with cards at Century Downs on Friday July 15 and Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup> plus Sunday July 17<sup>th</sup> at Track on 2. We will be closely monitoring the situation and will update the industry if we need to hold back this start of three days a week for any additional time.

Everyone should also be pleasantly surprised that we have been able to increase our purses across the board by an additional 10 percent with a little extra added to a couple classes. This has come about because of a couple less cards and some cards with less races the past few

weeks. We are confident that we will be able to maintain this purse level for the rest of our 2022 race dates along with another hopeful increase sometime in January of 2023 as our purse pool will grow based on the repayment of the industry loan to the Alberta Government. With these increases the purses in Alberta will be in a stronger position while also supporting a nice Stakes package. We are hopeful to make a few changes for 2023, stay tuned for more news in this regard.

If members have questions about these or any other topics, please give Fred Gillis a call at the ASHA office or on his cell phone. Best of luck to everyone for a strong summer meet and many trips to the winner's circle!

Yours Sincerely

Don McDougall

President Alberta Standardbred Horse Association