

Ontario Racing Program

February 8, 2012



News Release

Racetrack facilities required to be open for training 4 weeks out

Working to ensure a healthy horse supply for the start of the racing season

Toronto ON – As a new condition of their 2012 license, racetrack operators are required to make their racing facility available for training a minimum of four weeks ahead of the start of their racing season. The purpose of the requirement is to provide training opportunities to help ensure a supply of horses is available for the start of racing. This condition was approved by the Director as part of the terms and conditions attached to the licence of each racetrack operator, and was approved based on a recommendation of the Implementation and Monitoring (IM) Group under the Ontario Racing Program.

The condition contemplates that the racetrack and the horsepeople will work together to develop a schedule for training and qualifying days that meets needs of the local horse population. While many racetrack operators currently provide this service to their horsepeople, the new condition creates consistency across the province.

The following is the relevant condition contained in the terms and conditions of each racetrack operator's licence:

The Association shall make the racing facility available for training and qualifying days at least four weeks prior to start of any racing season, and, in cooperation with the horsepeople, shall develop a schedule of training and qualifying days for that period that reflects the needs and demands of the local racing population. The purpose of this requirement is to provide training opportunities that ensure a supply of horses is available for the start of the racing season, pursuant to the Framework for the Ontario Racing Program.

“There will be some places where this requirement cannot be fully met but each of those instances will be dealt with on a case by case basis,” said Wendy Hoogeveen, speaking on behalf of the IM Group. “For example, Western Fair has already advised the ORC that it will not be able to meet this requirement due to the scheduling of their annual fair, but track management have assured us that they will have the track available as soon as is possible.”

Late spring weather, track thaws, and local horse population numbers will all have an impact on what schedule will develop for each track. It is expected that track management and the local horsepeople will come together to discuss their local needs. The IM Group may intervene if agreement cannot be reached, or when a complaint is received from the local Track Committee.

The mandate of the IM Group is to implement and monitor the elements of the Ontario Racing Program and to ensure the Program is flexible enough to change, where the need for change is demonstrated and determined to be warranted.

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