



# op/ed

by Alex Waldrop

I was honored to be elected as chairman of the RMTC—the industry’s scientific advisory organization consisting of 23 major racing industry stakeholder organizations – in September of 2013. I chose to accept this expanded role after participating as a board member since the RMTC’s inception over a decade ago. I am passionate about RMTC’s education and advocacy initiatives, particularly the RMTC’s efforts to reform horse racing’s national medication policy through the development and advancement of uniform medication rules, a multiple violator penalty system, laboratory accreditation / external quality assurance, and a tactical research program. These initiatives are evidence that this consortium is the industry’s best means to ensure horse racing safety and integrity.

Executive Director Dr. Dionne Benson and her staff are having a very positive impact on drug and medication policy across the United States. In fact, it is my observation that the RMTC is more relevant to racing and in greater demand by racing regulators than at any time in its history.

Our industry’s management of medication policy reached a critical juncture in 2013. The RMTC board took action by recommending uniform medication rules, penalties and testing guidelines that are now being adopted by commissions across the country. These reforms are in the best interest of the health and welfare of the horse and the safety of all participants. They enhance the integrity of the sport, ensure a level playing field for our competitors, assist horsemen who race in multiple jurisdictions, and accomplish uniform regulation of racing in the United States.

All horses in the *TDN* are bred in North America, unless otherwise indicated

The research that provided much of the scientific foundation enabling the progress of these new policies was costly and would not have been possible without significant donations from organizations across the racing breeds. With the continued support of the racing community, we will soon see the advancement of these reforms on a uniform basis nationwide.

Also in 2013, under the RMTC Laboratory Accreditation program, we implemented a comprehensive laboratory code of standards and the only U.S. racing laboratory External Quality Assurance Program (EQAP). Full Accreditation has been granted to two laboratories, Interim Accreditation has been granted to one, and the review of several other applications is underway.

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One round of EQAP sampling has been completed for all eight applicants, and two rounds (which are a requirement for full accreditation in addition to a site inspection) have been completed for three applicants. The drug testing consistency and proficiency that the laboratory accreditation and EQAP programs provide will not only increase the integrity of the sport and the safety of its human and equine athletes, but will also provide uniformity as horsemen travel across jurisdictions. To date, the high cost of laboratory accreditation has been borne by the RMTC in order to encourage as many laboratories to participate as possible. **Cont. p14**



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**Our Tactical Research Program’s rapid test development & deployment supports regulatory efforts to eradicate persistent cheaters from our sport. Please ensure the continuation & advancement of this program with a donation to the RMTC.**

**Help us strengthen the integrity of racing!**



**Alex Waldrop Op/Ed cont.**

The previous year also saw the initiation of administration studies for ranitidine, cimetidine, cetirizine, guaifenesin and omeprazole utilizing the KHRC Equine Drug Research Council herd. We hope that this important research can progress in 2014, enabling us to determine proper guidelines for those medications in racing.

The continuation and advancement of the RMTC Tactical Research program in 2014 is also of paramount importance. The objective of this program is rapid test development and deployment to support regulatory efforts to eradicate persistent cheaters. This effort recently enabled the identification of the unknown substances dichloroacetic acid and tadalafil in a case for the Delaware Racing Commission. The RMTC also oversaw the testing of compounded drugs confiscated in New Mexico and other jurisdictions. Acquiring unknown substances and conducting the necessary testing to determine their contents and effects is an expensive endeavor that would not be possible without a grant received from one of our stakeholder organizations.

We rely solely on funding from organizations and individuals within our industry who share our commitment to identifying and properly addressing horse racing's drug and medication safety and integrity issues.

Now, more than ever, it is important that the RMTC receives significant financial support from across the racing community. I ask that you please make a donation, and that you urge your local tracks and horsemen's groups to do the same.

We understand that budgets across the industry are tight, but the funding of the RMTC is vital to the integrity and future of our sport.

*Alex Waldrop is the Chairman of the RMTC and the President & CEO of the NTRA*

The Suburban will be run at 1 1/4 miles for the first time since 2009. The Belmont Derby, Belmont Oaks, and Belmont Sprint Championship were formerly known as the Jamaica Handicap, Garden City and James Marvin, respectively.

Big Apple Showcase Day, held May 31, will feature six stakes races restricted to New-York bred and worth a total of \$900,000.

The GI Man O' War S., contested in July since 2008, has been moved to the Mother's Day card May 11. The card also includes the GII Ruffian S., GIII Westchester S. and the License Fee S. The Man O' War will be televised on FOX Sports 1 as part of the The Jockey Club Tour series.

The May 26 Memorial Day card will be highlighted by the GIII Poker S. going a mile over the Belmont lawn. It also includes the Pennine Ridge S., a prep race for the Belmont Derby that guarantees the winner an invitation to that Grade I event. The fillies prep race for the Belmont Oaks, the Wonder Again S., will be held the day before on May 25.

"We are hopeful that, given the lack of big money opportunities at a mile on the grass, the Poker could attract two-time defending Horse of the Year Champion Wise Dan," said Martin Panza, Senior Vice President of Racing Operations for NYRA. "The Pennine Ridge and Wonder Again are new races that should be especially popular with their guaranteed invitations to the Belmont Derby and Oaks attached. We anticipate that interest among horsemen in the Derby and Oaks could result in oversubscribed fields for those two seven-figure-purse races on July 5."

Returning to the schedule for the first time since 2008 are the Astoria S. for 2-year-old fillies and Tremont S. for 2-year-old colts, which will be held June 14 and 15, respectively.

To view the full stakes schedule for Belmont's spring/summer meet click [here](#).

# NEWS TODAY

## BELMONT RELEASES STAKES SCHEDULE

The spring/summer meet at Belmont Park beginning May 1 will be made up of 62 stakes races worth \$17.95 million. This will be highlight by six races with purses of \$1 million or more, as well as three new events, which are the Belmont Stakes Festival June 6-8, Stars and Stripes Day July 5, and Mother's Day May 11.

The richest day will be GI Belmont S. Day June 7, which is worth \$8 million and include four Grade I races. For full details on this day click [here](#).

The inaugural Stars and Stripes Day July 5 will include the GI Belmont Derby Invitational, worth \$1.25 million, and the GI Belmont Oaks Invitational, worth \$1 million. Both races are 1 1/4-mile turf races for 3-year-olds. Also on that card are the GII Suburban H., GII Dwyer S and GIII Belmont Sprint Championship.

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