

On September 14th the *ARCI Regulatory Veterinarian Committee* met by conference call to discuss a number of equine health and welfare issues. The racing regulatory veterinarians reiterated their concern that the permissive non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) policies in the United States are compromising the examining veterinarian's ability to identify horses at risk for catastrophic injury. The examining veterinarians are concerned NSAID levels at the time of the pre-race inspections mask the clinical signs of inflammation and pain. Current NSAID policies in racing regulate blood levels of these drugs at race time, not at the time of the examination. Pre-race examinations are often performed many hours before post time. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are prohibited by International Federation of Horseracing Authorities; these drugs are not allowed at any level in most international racing jurisdictions. The *ARCI Racing Regulatory Veterinarian Committee* has called for a reevaluation of current NSAID policies in the US and a change in NSAID regulations changed to better protect the horse.

A similar issue involves the use of glucocorticosteroid (cortisone) drugs in race horses. The *ARCI Regulatory Veterinarian Committee* is calling for a prohibition of the practice of intra-articular (joint) injections of cortisone and similar drugs within 5-7 days of racing. Cortisones are very potent drugs used to reduce inflammation. When properly and judiciously used cortisones can be very useful in managing equine lameness. However, clinical experience has shown the examining veterinarians these drugs can be terribly misused in racehorses. While reducing inflammation can be beneficial in the short term, the underlying pathological condition is often left unchanged. If the true extent of the injury cannot be evaluated by the examining veterinarian at the time of the pre-race examination, horse and rider may be placed at undue risk. The *ARCI Racing Regulatory Veterinarian Committee* is calling for the racing industry to develop regulations and policies to restrict intra-articular cortisone injections prior to racing to better protect horse and rider.