

Animal Wellness Action Calls on HISA to Suspend Trainers Whose Horses Die in Competition

If horses cannot compete in races and walk off the track under their own power, their trainers should be suspended from entering horses into races.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, June 6, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, [Animal Wellness](#)

[Action](#) called on the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority to adopt rules to suspend trainers whose horses die in competition.

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Wayne Pacelle, Animal Wellness Action

“When young, healthy horses die in competition, that should trigger more than expressions of sadness. It should trigger mandatory suspensions,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action.

“Trainers must take responsibility for the care of their horses and accept responsibility when the animals die in

competition. It is not normal for a three-year-old or a six-year-old horse to die in a non-violent sport that involves a one-mile sprint,” he said.

Under a statute enacted by Congress, the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA) has the responsibility to impose a wide range of track safety standards, and it clearly has the authority to prevent dangerous trainers from putting more horses in competition.

When authorities saw Bob Baffert’s horse Havnameltdown die in competition in the race card preceding the running of the Preakness, Baffert’s entry for that Triple Crown race, National Treasure, should have been scratched from competition.

Now, HISA has an opportunity to take such action with trainer Rody R. Rodriguez. He has seen four horses under his care die this year, with three deaths occurring at Aqueduct and one at Belmont Park, which this weekend hosts the third leg of the Triple Crown.

There were two deaths of Rodriguez’s horses just last week, with 3-year-old Midnight Empress vanned off and euthanized just days before 6-year-old horse Chaysenbryn suffered a right front

leg injury and was then euthanized at Belmont Park.

“When trainers understand they’ll be suspended if their horses die in competition, then they will take precautions to prevent that terrible outcome. Now there are lamentations without consequences. Young and fit horses dying in competition is no longer acceptable in American racing.”

The recent spate of 12 deaths at Churchill Downs and Baffert’s celebrating a Preakness win just hours after one of his horses died dramatize the problem.

More broadly, Animal Wellness Action and the [Center for a Humane Economy](#) have called for a culture change within the industry and specific actions by the Authority to reduce on-track deaths of otherwise healthy horses:

- Robust enforcement of the race-day doping prohibitions, with meaningful national suspensions and other penalties for violators of the rules.
- Banning the use of the whip in American racing.
- Developing a plan to hold trainers and owners accountable to reduce death rates for racing horses to levels approaching zero, with appropriate national suspensions for trainers whose horses die at the tracks.

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. Twitter: @AWAction_News

Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. Twitter: @TheHumaneCenter

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WAYNE PACELLE

ANIMAL WELLNESS ACTION

+1 202-420-0446

[email us here](#)

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