

From: Michael G. Strain [michaelgstrain@icloud.com]  
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2020 4:06 PM  
To: Charles A. Gardiner III  
Subject: Care of Race Horses

Mr Charles Gardiner III  
Executive Director  
Louisiana State Racing Commission

Dear Charles,

As an equine veterinarian and currently serving as the Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry, i wish to impress upon the Louisiana State Racing Commission the fact that racehorses are living, breathing, social animals that not only require constant supervision and care, but must have adequate access to exercise.

It is not in their best interests to be left in stalls for extended periods of time without significant exercise including time on the walker and training.

These athletes are fed carefully selected enriched diets and are also maintained on strict exercise and training schedules. Alteration of exercise and training schedules markedly increase the probability of injury or breakdown as well as the incidence of exertional rhabdomyolysis (azoturia/tying up).

Horses require constant monitoring to make sure they have adequate hay, water, shavings etc. and that they do not become injured or cast in stalls. Further, should one become sick or colic, they require immediate life-saving veterinary care.

Animal agriculture workers as well as those workers involved in life-saving activities are deemed essential personnel under DHS/CISA. It is imperative that the veterinarians, trainers and other attendants have 24 hr access to these horses.

I further recommend that under the Covid-19 restrictive guidelines, that all horses be cared for by essential personnel who are going to operate under stringent measures for personal protection by prohibiting non-essential contact and interaction and maintaining the most current requirements of social distancing.

Addendum:

Specifically in reference to training, it is my opinion that in addition to exercise on the walker, it is critical to the health and welfare of the horses that they be allowed to exercise and continue to train on the track as it is vital to long term muscle tone and stamina as well as strength and integrity of joints, ligaments and tendons. Additionally, this issue is recognized as critical by tracks across the United States. In order to maintain the integrity of the track, workers who perform maintenance of the track, ingress and egress to the track, and all equipment necessary for the maintenance of the track are deemed to critical infrastructure employees.

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Commissioner  
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