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THESIS “EPIDEMIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF EQUINE WELFARE AT OSAF JURISDICTION RACECOURSES”

OSAF is glad to release the Thesis “Epidemiological Investigations of Equine Welfare at OSAF Jurisdiction Racecourses”, a research work written and published by Dr. Teresita Zambruno in the frame of a postgraduate degree carried out throughout 2015 and 2016 at the University of Glasgow with the support of OSAF and the Argentine Jockey Club.

The document is available for downloading (original in English and the translation into Spanish) from OSAF website, through the News section.

Dra. Zambruno, Veterinarian Physician graduated from Universidad del Salvador (Argentina), is part of the staff at the Veterinary Department at San Isidro racecourse, is member of OSAF Veterinarians Committee and also member of IFHA Equine Welfare Committee.



In 2014, she was acknowledged by the ICRAV (International Conference of Racing Analysts and Veterinarians) granting her the Young Scientist Award, and it was this prize which gave her the opportunity to travel to Scotland to carry out the work aimed at discovering the risk factors for fatal and non fatal lesions in OSAF racecourses, as a starting point towards taking decisions to decrease these risk factors - whenever possible - or improving the management of accidents on track.

Summary

“Horseracing activity (flat racing and breeding) in Latin America is nowadays a very important industry and concern regarding the welfare of the Thoroughbred continues to grow.

Even though many epidemiological investigations have been conducted in Thoroughbred flat racing throughout the years, to the best of the author's knowledge, no previous study has been published that identifies risk factors for fatalities and musculoskeletal injuries (MSI) in horse racing in Latin America.

There are several clear differences between racing industries around the world, suggesting that risk factors for unwanted outcomes in Thoroughbred racing are likely to differ. It is therefore important to use local data and knowledge to develop region or even track specific models to identify the risk factors and militate against fatal and non-fatal injury.

This study was focused on describing the prevalence of fatalities and MSI at four different racecourses under OSAF jurisdiction and identifying risk factors amongst them. The analysis involved approximately 500,000 race starts provided by OSAF racecourses. Multivariable logistic regression models were developed for each racetrack independently in order to identify multiple risk factors for both outcomes. A further combined analysis was also conducted combining two racecourses that belong to the same country to improve statistical power.

Many risk factors were identified as being associated with one or both outcomes, such as: older, male and heavier horses were all associated with an increased risk as were horses for whom the trainer had declared the use of phenylbutazone. We believe that this is the first study to clearly demonstrate the relationship between medication regulations and equine welfare.

The results of this study could help develop strategies aimed at reducing and preventing equine musculoskeletal injuries and fatalities and may encourage new medication policies that seek to optimize welfare for Thoroughbred racing in flat races within the OSAF jurisdiction.”