



RACETRACK CONTAMINATION: KENTUCKY'S NEWLY- FUNDED STUDY AND ITS EFFECT ON EQUINE DRUG TESTING.

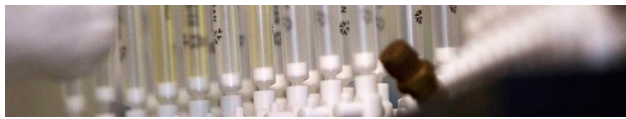
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In October 2017, the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission approved \$25,000 worth of funding for a study regarding the effects of contamination on racehorse drug testing. This analytical study will seek to determine the possible levels of substances—both therapeutic and performance-enhancing—found on the racetrack and its surroundings, and will be based on samples collected through 2019. [i]

This study will likely be the first step in resolving the debate on whether trace amounts of prohibited substances should result in a positive drug test for racehorses, as they generally would.[ii] Enzyme linked immunosorbent assay, or ELISA, screening is extremely sensitive, and capable of detecting the presence of a wide array of substances.[iii] On one hand, some believe that the zero-tolerance, no threshold practice is appropriate, and that any amount of performance-enhancing substances found during the testing of a horse should be strictly forbidden. Others, in contrast, contend that contamination in the horse's everyday racetrack environment can inadvertently cause tiny amounts of such substances to be present, at no fault of the trainer.





<https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1045149/horse-fails-drugs-test-following-fei-event-in-mexico>

This is an issue of vast importance. If even the smallest amount of a prohibited substance is discovered in the testing of a racehorse, organizations such as the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) may impose heavy suspensions and fines upon the horse and its trainer. [iv] Penalties such as these will not only bar the horse or trainer from the racetrack, but can also be severely damaging to their reputations, and can strip them of their achievements.

As of now, Kentucky's new study will start by testing samples to determine the presence of environmental contamination found in the racetrack setting, but will not yet seek to correlate the findings with substances found in racehorse drug testing. [v] Still, the study will expectantly provide credible data that could, and should, begin to change the way equine drug testing is conducted.

[i] Frank Angst, *Kentucky to Examine Drug Levels in Racing Environment*, Bloodhorse (Oct. 18, 2017), <https://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/224178/kentucky-to-examine-drug-levels-in-racing-environment>.

[ii] 2017 Guidelines for Drugs and Medications, U.S. Equestrian Fed'n (Nov. 2016), https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/2Zp2C_YKs4s/2017-drugs-medications-guidelines.

[iii] Thomas Tobin et al., *Testing for Drugs, Medications, and Other Substances in Racing Horses*, Kentucky Equine Res., <https://ker.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/TESTING-FOR-DRUGS-MEDICATIONS-AND-OTHER-SUBSTANCES-IN-RACING-HORSES-126.pdf> (last visited Nov. 6, 2017).

[iv] *Drug and Medications Penalty Guidelines*, U.S. Equestrian Fed'n (Jan. 1, 2016), <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/GZu5HCSAirw/drugs--medications-penalty-guidelines> (last visited Nov. 6, 2017).

[v] Angst, *supra* note i.

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