

From the Executive Office



Quality Counts

As has been the custom over the last several years, I spent the month of April, and then early May, accompanying the Del Mar Yearling Sale inspectors to farms throughout the region. This is, indeed, one of the functions of my position with the Association that I thoroughly enjoy.

During these visits, though, it is often a difficult task informing members that their particular yearling(s) do not meet the minimum conformation standards for admittance to the sale. Although a more lenient evaluation process would be agreeable to some, the majority of breeders/consignors do however, understand the importance of a select marketplace for California-bred yearlings, and support our commitment to maintaining the highest level of quality offered at the sale.

With that in mind, we plan on cataloging roughly 150 select yearlings for the upcoming event. These yearlings survived lengthy reviews on both conformation and pedigree, and are deemed to be the best of the approximately 550 nominations we received. I believe this is one of the better overall groups of yearlings that we have offered in my six-year association with the sale.

With the lucrative advantages of owning a Cal-bred and the unprecedented number of recent successful sale graduates, the Del Mar Yearling Sale is destined to be a very popular event this year. So far this year, we have not only had a host of multiple graded stakes winners, but six 2-year-olds have won, there have also been a number of extremely profitable pinhooks from out of the 2000 sale. Results like these are certain to spark the interest of owners nationwide for the West coast's premier yearling sale.

The results of the recent Thoroughbred Owners of California survey of their membership further solidifies the success and value of the incentive awards and racing programs in the state. Seventy five percent of the owners surveyed agreed that the breeder and stallion awards succeed in encouraging the breeding of better quality horses. Furthermore, another 75 percent of them believe that the current 30 percent owners award program is an appropriate percentage of purse monies being allocated to those finishing first through fifth in open qualifying races.

The results of this survey are clear; the vast majority of racehorse owners in California support and believe in the Cal-bred program. As mentioned earlier, this should continue to bode well for the quality horses produced and marketed in the state. And the Del Mar sale should continue to be at the forefront of this achievement.

On another note. The second annual California Gold Rush Day, held at Hollywood Park on April 28, was once again a huge success. With 10 stake races carrying purses of \$1.26 million and an average of 10 horses entered per race, the day proved very popular to owners, breeders and the wagering public. The nationwide handle of \$17 million confirmed the popularity and success of the event. As handle fuels purses and the incentive award program, days like Gold Rush are of particular importance to all horsemen. We look forward to working with Hollywood Park in continuing to offer such great opportunities for California-breds.