

From the Executive Office



Golden Opportunities

“Let the Sun Shine” was the title of my editorial in the month of February, when I referred to the Sunshine Millions series featuring California- and Florida-breds. As we announced last month, an agreement has been reached and the “Sun” will indeed shine in 2003.

This event, scheduled for January 25, will feature a total of eight races on the same day, four at Santa Anita and four at Gulfstream Park, with purses totaling \$3.6 million. The purse of each race will range from \$250,000 to \$1 million. This is an extraordinary opportunity for Cal-breds, and will further increase their worth and demand.

Much hard work and compromise was necessary in drafting an agreement that would meet the approval of all the parties concerned. The California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA), Magna Entertainment Corporation (MEC), Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC), Florida Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Association (FTBOA), and the Florida Horseman Benevolent Protective Association (HBPA) all worked diligently to make this a reality.

From the beginning, we were very excited about the probability of such an event. After all, an extremely lucrative day with such high purses would showcase the added premium on owning and breeding California-breds. To put these purse amounts in perspective, the \$750,000 Distaff for California- and Florida-bred fillies and mares will be carded on the same day, as the grade I \$200,000 Santa Monica Handicap for fillies and mares. The other purses for this event have similar comparisons in that they far exceed those offered in the graded stakes arena during that time of the year.

It is obvious to see the potential benefit of adding such an event. We did, however, want to make certain that such an inclusion would not damage our existing program. The existing California-bred restricted stakes schedule offered numer-

ous opportunities (over 60 races) with purses totaling over \$6 million. Thus the placement of the Sunshine Millions and the CTBA's funding of the event had to fit well within our existing calendar. Also, in the beginning, it was made clear that the breeder and stallion award programs would remain intact and not be utilized for funding.

The sources of funding agreed upon includes a \$600,000 contribution from each of the six parties (breeders associations, horseman's purse accounts and the tracks) in the two states. The CTBA's contribution will be derived from a small shift in Cal-bred stakes dollars currently allocated during the Santa Anita winter and spring meets, as well as an allocation from the CTBA-administered Cal-bred Race Fund and Stallion Registration Stakes Fund.

In particular, we will shift \$300,000 out of the previous restricted stakes amount offered during the 2002-2003 Santa Anita meet, and allocate these dollars to the Sunshine Millions. Therefore, in essence, we are parlaying the \$300,000 into \$3.6 million in which Cal-breds will make up 50 percent of the field. The remaining CTBA funding amount, as mentioned earlier, will be derived from the Cal-bred Race Fund and Stallion Registration Stakes Fund.

The date of the event, Saturday, January 25, 2003, fits extremely comfortably within our stakes calendar. Now we have California Gold Rush in the spring, California Cup in the fall, NTRA Great State Challenge in early December, and the Sunshine Millions in late January. The total stakes schedule will now offer \$10 million in purses available to Cal-breds. Therefore, I would say without a doubt, that we continue to offer the best state-bred stakes program overall. Add to this the \$15 million breeder, stallion, and owner award program and one can see why “It Pays to be Cal-bred.”

— Doug Burge