



*From the Executive Corner*

# A Tradition Of Excellence

by DOUG BURGE

For the 16th consecutive year, the CTBA (California Thoroughbred Breeders Association) and Oak Tree Racing Association teamed up to host California Cup Day. As is customary at this event, owners, breeders and racing fans were offered a great day of racing with full competitive fields, large purses and an on-track atmosphere reminiscent of the “old days.”

Cal Cup continues to be the highlight of our \$10 million restricted stakes program and a date that annually is circled and pointed to by many horsemen across the state. There are other races throughout the year with higher purses, but very few that offer the prestige presented on Cal Cup. As an owner/breeder it continues to be very fulfilling to have your horses compete and be recognized on one of the largest attended racing days in Southern California.

One of the beauty’s of Cal Cup is that races are offered for a wide variety of California-breds, thus increasing the opportunity for owners to participate. Not only are there eight listed stakes races provided, but also two starter handicaps and a maiden allowance on a surface—turf—not typically offered to those particular horses.

With the various racing opportunities, it is no surprise that the day historically yields such large fields. In fact, this year, 117 horses were entered in the 11 races. As large fields yield higher wagering handle and purses, commissions, and incentive awards are fueled by handle, a day like Cal Cup is welcomed by us all.

This year, even with a slight decline in attendance (down about 2,000), the on-track handle was up 22 percent. Also, enhanced by a Pick Six pool of over \$1.5 million, the Advanced Deposit Wagering results increased significantly. It was reported that TVG (Television Games Network) had one of the highest days in their existence.

It is indeed evident that a market exists not only in state, but across the country when the proper product is presented. Cal Cup offers the racing fans many wagering

opportunities and a chance to see some of the top horses in the state. Racing could definitely use more days like this.

Soon we will be planning next year’s Cal Cup XVII and will try to further grow on the success of 2005. I would like to thank all those with the CTBA, Oak Tree Racing Association and Santa Anita Park for all the hard work and effort that went into this year’s event. I would also like to thank our sponsors, particularly the new Classic sponsor Smith Barney, for their support and participation. Cal Cup is certainly something we should all be proud of.

Finally, as the year comes to a conclusion, we can reflect on some of the positives and negatives of 2005. On the positive front, our incentive award and restricted racing program continues to be one of the best in the country. Not only on Cal Cup, but throughout the year, numerous opportunities exist for Cal-breds.

The benefits associated with Cal-bred ownership helped with the success of California’s October Yearling Sale held jointly by the CTBA and Barretts Equine Limited for the first time this year. This centralized yearling marketplace should continue to benefit breeders in the state.

On the negative side, though, the competition both in and out of state continues to hinder the industry. We understand that the economics surrounding the production and ownership of horses needs to improve drastically. Purse revenues and incentive awards need a significant boost in order to justify the investment in bloodstock and capital improvements. Also, we continue to explore the necessary reduction in Workers’ Compensation rates at the stock farm level.

Along those lines, we will continue to work closely with the TOC (Thoroughbred Owners of California), and our racetrack/fair partners to greatly improve the economics for the horsemen and tracks in the state. This remains a high priority of CTBA and is vital to the future of the industry.

Happy Holidays.



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