

New Cal-Bred Bonuses Begin In Late September



From the Executive Corner

by DOUG BURGE

As an ongoing effort to educate all participants in the racing industry about the new exciting opportunities for California-bred horses, the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA), along with other supporters, published the following press release detailing the specifications of this new program. Scheduled to begin in both Northern and Southern California on Sept. 30, the new lucrative Cal-bred maiden bonus program, and other beneficial opportunities, will greatly increase the return on investment for those with a stake in Cal-breds.

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Through an agreement reached by the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA), the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC) and the various racing associations, lucrative additions to the Cal-bred incentive and racing program will begin in late September during the Oak Tree Racing Association meet at Santa Anita Park and the California Authority of Racing Fairs (CARF) meet at Golden Gate Fields.

With temporary funding from the California Marketing Committee (CMC), a lucrative bonus will be paid to all California-bred maiden allowance winners in Northern and Southern California beginning Sept. 30, 2009. The long-term funding for this program will be provided by legislation that both re-allocates a small portion of existing incentive award money as well as an additional matching amount from the TOC. That legislation, AB 1578, is an Assembly G. O. Committee bill that is currently scheduled to be heard in the Senate.

"We are optimistic that these significant increases in purse money and opportunities will certainly boost the value of Cal-breds and provide the ample return for those breeding and/or purchasing young horses," said Doug Burge, the Executive Vice President and General Manager of the CTBA. "With the Breeders' Cup once again being held during Oak Tree, this is the opportune time to show the rest of the country just how much more valuable Cal-breds will become."

This program, designed to quickly reward those investing in Cal-breds, will significantly increase their value overnight. The bonus amount will be an additional \$20,000 in the South and \$10,000 in the North.

"These enhancements will certainly strengthen the Cal-bred program and were main reasons why we decided to stand Dixie Chatter, a grade I winner, at River Edge Farm (in Buellton)," said the farm's owner Martin Wygod. "Through the commitment of the racing offices, these additions will prove beneficial to the breeding and racing industry in California."

Here are the key provisions of the new plan:

I. Owner(s) of a registered California-bred maiden shall be paid a \$20,000 owner's bonus for winning a maiden allowance race in Southern California, and a \$10,000 owner's bonus for winning a maiden allowance race in Northern California (paid directly to the owner within 30 days after the win).

II. Cal-bred maiden \$40,000 claiming race in Southern California shall be raised to \$50,000-\$40,000. Cal-bred \$50,000 or less maiden winners will be eligible for the current \$40,000 or less starter races.

The bonus will go to the owner of the winner and will be paid directly by the CTBA within 30 days after the race. To put this into perspective: In Southern California, at the recently concluded Santa Anita meet, a Cal-bred maiden allowance race, going long, carried a purse of \$46,000, of which \$27,600 went to the winner. Under the new scenario, the winner would have received the \$27,600 plus an additional \$20,000 for a net amount of nearly \$50,000. In Northern California, the same applies with the owner receiving \$10,000 over and above the purse earned.

With most, if not all, of the Cal-bred or California-sired maiden special weight wins in the North coming in open races, the owner would also receive the current owner bonus available in open company as well as the new amount.

Cal-bred maiden claiming prices at the Southern California racetracks have been at \$40,000 for several years. The increase to \$50,000 will most certainly increase the protection/value of these horses, but also provide an elevated purse to reflect the raise in claiming price.

"The bonuses are like a new spark plug to get the engine rolling again," said trainer Barry Abrams, co-owner of leading stallion Unusual Heat. "This will be a boon to the California breeding industry and to all owners of Cal-breds."

In addition, state-bred wins shall not be considered for eligibility purposes in open first condition allowance races for two-year-olds. This shall include wins in any state-bred two-year-old stakes. State-bred wins shall also not be considered for eligibility purposes in open first condition allowance races for three-year-olds. This shall include wins in any state-bred stakes races. And in all "TWO" other than open allowance races and above, all state-bred wins (including stakes) will not be considered for eligibility purposes.

The agreement is viewed as a sign that industry leaders are working together to improve California racing.

"The TOC is proud to partner with the CTBA on this new program, which we know will benefit both owners and breeders in the state, and thus benefit the entire California racing industry. I look forward to working with the CTBA on more projects in the future," said Marsha Naify, the TOC chair. 🐾